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DOCUMENTS ON
AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN
POLICY

*Australia and
the Indonesian
Incorporation of
Portuguese Timor
1974–1976*

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND TRADE

DOCUMENTS ON AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN POLICY

**AUSTRALIA AND THE INDONESIAN
INCORPORATION OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR, 1974–1976**

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DOCUMENTS ON
AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN
POLICY

*Australia and the Indonesian
Incorporation of
Portuguese Timor, 1974–1976*

WENDY WAY
Editor

DAMIEN BROWNE & VIVIANNE JOHNSON
Assistant Editors

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND TRADE
MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS

PO Box 278, Carlton South, Victoria 3052, Australia

info@mup.unimelb.edu.au

www.mup.com.au

First published 2000

Text © Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2000

Design and typography © Melbourne University Press 2000

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Typeset by Borghesi & Adam Publishers Pty. Ltd.

Printed in Australia by Brown Prior Anderson, Burwood, Victoria

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Australia and the Indonesian incorporation of Portuguese Timor, 1974–1976.

Includes index.

ISBN 0 522 84928 8.

ISBN 0 522 84907 5 (pbk).

1. Timor Timur (Indonesia)—Annexation to Indonesia. 2. Indonesia—Foreign relations—Australia—Sources. 3. Australia—Foreign relations—Indonesia—Sources. 4. Timor Timur (Indonesia)—Foreign relations—Australia. I. Way, Wendy. II. Browne, Damien. III. Johnson, Vivianne. IV. Australia. Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (Series: Documents in Australian foreign policy).

327.940598

Foreword by Foreign Minister

It gives me great pleasure to welcome the publication of government documents relating to Australia's policy towards Indonesia's incorporation of Portuguese Timor between 1974 and 1976.

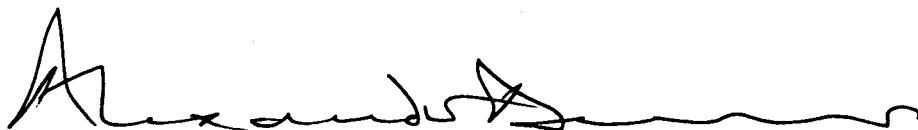
In 1998 the Government decided to open comprehensively those official diplomatic records relating to Australia, Indonesia and Portuguese Timor between 1974 and 1976. The Government considered that there was a compelling public interest in this case in accelerating the normal practice that thirty years elapse before the public have access to departmental documents.

Officers in my Department have assessed all relevant material on the files of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. With the exception only of cabinet records and intelligence material, excluded from the early public release by the Government, they have used their historical judgement to distil and publish the most important of these documents. They include cablegrams, dispatches, memorandums, reports and other documents extracted from the files of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and from Australian diplomatic posts.

I am confident that this publication will provide readers in Australia and overseas with a clearer understanding of the development of Australian foreign policy during this critical period of Australian diplomatic history, straddling both Labor and Coalition governments. In so doing, it is my hope that the publication of these official records will go some way towards answering the many questions of those who have been concerned to obtain the truth about Australian official thinking and action in relation to the Indonesian incorporation of East Timor and the deaths of the Australian-based journalists there.

The book provides full documentary coverage of the period of transfer from one power to another, beginning with the advent in April 1974 of a new government in Lisbon, presaging the dissolution of Portugal's overseas empire, and ending with President Soeharto's signing of the bill incorporating East Timor as the twenty-seventh province of Indonesia on 17 July 1976. It also includes a prologue outlining Australian policy towards Portuguese Timor from 1945 to 1974. For the sake of completeness, a brief epilogue outlines the period up to Australia's *de jure* recognition of the incorporation in 1979.

I am very pleased to acknowledge the leadership of the Secretary of my Department, Dr Ashton Calvert, in the production of this volume. His very strong conviction that the Australian public should be able to make their own judgements about this difficult and controversial period in Australian foreign policy (through access to the key Department of Foreign Affairs documents) has driven this project forward.



ALEXANDER DOWNER
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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Winspeare Guicciardi, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to Portuguese Timor, in Geneva, 1976

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José Ramos Horta addressing the Security Council, 12 April 1976

[UN/DPI]

The Provisional Government of East Timor at the United Nations, April 1976

[UN/DPI]

Abbreviations and Glossary

AAP	Australian Associated Press
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABRI	<i>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</i> : Indonesian Armed Forces
ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
ADAA	Australian Development Assistance Agency
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEST	Australian Eastern Standard Time
AFM	Armed Forces Movement (Portugal)
AFP	<i>Agence France-Press</i> : French Press Agency
agrément	formal approval given by a host government signifying that a nomination for a head of a foreign mission is acceptable
AICD	Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament
AITI	Association for the Integration of Timor with Indonesia
AJA	Australian Journalists' Association
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANP	<i>Ação Nacional Partido</i> : National Action Party (Portugal)
ANZUS	Australia–New Zealand–United States (Security Treaty)
AP	Associated Press
Apodeti	<i>Associação Popular Democrática Timorense</i> : Popular Democratic Association of East Timor; also Timorese Democratic People's Association (Portuguese Timor)
ASDT	<i>Associação Social Democrática Timor</i> : Timorese Social Democratic Association; see also Fretilin (Portuguese Timor)
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and The Philippines)
ASIAT	Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid (Timor)
AUSTEO	Australian Eyes Only
BAKIN	<i>Badan Ko-ordinasi Inteligens Negara Indonesia</i> : State Intelligence Co-ordination Agency (Indonesia)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (United States of America)
Committee of Twenty-Four	Special Committee (of the Fourth Committee, UNGA) on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies (Indonesia)
Deplu	<i>Departmen Luar Negeri</i> : Department of Foreign Affairs (Indonesia)
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DGS	<i>Direção Geral de Segurança</i> : Directorate General of Security (Portugal)
DJIO	Director, Joint Intelligence Organisation
DPR	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat</i> : Parliament (Indonesia)
DPRD	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah</i> : Regional Legislative Assembly (Indonesia)
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
Dwi-fungsi	dual function whereby Indonesian military officers also serve in civilian administrative capacity
ET	East Timor
FAD	Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Cabinet
FAS	First Assistant Secretary
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
Fourth Committee	committee of the UN General Assembly dealing with trust and non-self-governing territories
Frelimo	<i>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</i> : Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
Fretilin	<i>Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente</i> : Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor (Portuguese Timor)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GOLKAR	<i>Golongan Karya</i> : Functional Group, governing party (Indonesia)
HANKAM	<i>Pertahanan dan Keamanan</i> : Department of Defence and Security (Indonesia)
HANSIP	<i>Pertahanan Sipil</i> : Civil Defence Corps (Indonesia)
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICCS	International Commission of Control and Supervision
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IRC	Indonesian Red Cross; also International Red Cross
JIB	Joint Intelligence Bureau
JIO	Joint Intelligence Organisation
KABUPATEN	Regency, sub-provincial region (Indonesia)
KODAM	<i>Komando Daerah Militer</i> : Military Regional Command (Indonesia)

KOMODO	Indonesian operation for the incorporation of Portuguese Timor
KOPKAMTIB	<i>Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban</i> : Operation Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Indonesia)
KOTA	<i>Kilbur Oan Timur Aswain</i> : ‘Sons of the Mountain Warrior-dogs’, formerly the Popular Association of Monarchists of Timor (Portuguese Timor)
MERPATI Nusantara	Indonesian regional airline
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs; <i>Movimento das Forças Armadas</i> : Armed Forces Movement (Portugal)
MPLA	<i>Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola</i> : Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	non-commissioned officer
NIC	National Intelligence Committee
NTT	<i>Nusa Tenggara Timur</i> : West Timor (Indonesia)
OADAA	Office of the Australian Development Assistance Agency
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPM	<i>Organisasi Papua Merdeka</i> : Free Papua Organization, separatist movement in Irian Jaya (Indonesia)
OPSUS	<i>Operasi Khusus</i> : Special Operation (Indonesia)
PDI	<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia</i> : Indonesian Democratic Party
Permesta	<i>Perjuangan Semesta</i> : Overall Struggle, anti-Sukarno rebellion in Sulawesi, 1958 (Indonesia)
PERTAMINA	<i>Pertambangan Minyak dan Gas Bumi Nasional</i> : National Petroleum Mining Corporation (Indonesia)
PGET	Provisional Government of East Timor
PIR	Policy Information Review
PLA	People’s Liberation Army (China)
PM	Prime Minister
PM&C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRC	People’s Republic of China
PRRI	<i>Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia</i> : Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia, anti-Sukarno rebellion in Sumatra, 1958–1961 (Indonesia)
PT	Portuguese Timor
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force

REFTEL/reftel	cablegram under reference
REPELITA I	<i>Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun I</i> : First Five Year Development Plan, 1969–1974 (Indonesia)
REPELITA II	<i>Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun II</i> : Second Five Year Development Plan, 1974–1979 (Indonesia)
RMS	<i>Republik Maluku Selatan</i> : Republic of the South Moluccas, 1949–1950 (Indonesia)
RRI	<i>Radio Republik Indonesia</i> : Indonesian National Radio
SEA	South-East Asia
SMH	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>
TASS	<i>Telegraphnoye Agentstvo Sovyetskovo Soyuza</i> : Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union
TNI	<i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i> : Indonesian National Army
Trabalista	Timorese Labour Party (Portuguese Timor)
UDT	<i>União Democrática de Timor</i> : Timorese Democratic Union (Portuguese Timor)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNO	United Nations Organization
UPI	United Press International
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Chronology, 1974–1976

1974*January**April**May**June**July**August**September**October**Australia*

18 May—Federal Election returns
Labor Government of Prime
Minister Whitlam

12 June—Whitlam's third
Ministry sworn in

13–16 October—Santos visits
Australia

Indonesia

January—Malari riots result in
security crackdown and heightened
paranoia; Sumitro dismissed;
Moerdani and Yoga Sugama
recalled from abroad

19–27 July—Fisher (DFA) visits
Indonesian Timor

5–8 September—Whitlam meets
President Soeharto at Wonosobo

16–19 October—Santos visits
Jakarta

*Portugal**Portuguese Timor**Other*

25 April—AFM coup overthrows
Caetano regime

15 May—General Spínola
assumes Presidency

16 May—Provisional Government
appointed

11 May—UDT founded

12 May—ASDT founded

27 May—Apodeti founded

17–27 June—McLennan (DFA)
and Dunn visit Portuguese Timor

9 July—Prime Minister Carlos
resigns

13 July—Colonel Santos Gonçalves
becomes Prime Minister

17 July—Spínola appoints a new
Provisional Government

10 August—US President Nixon
resigns to avoid impeachment

10 September—Portugal grants
Guinea Bissau independence

12 September—ASDT becomes
Fretilin

28 September—Malik meets
Soares at UN

30 September—President
Spínola resigns and is replaced
by General Costa Gomes

2 October—Whitlam addresses
UN General Assembly

14 October—Murtopo holds secret
talks in Lisbon

20 October—Santos visits Dili

1974

November

December

1975

January

February

March

April

May

Australia

25 December—Cyclone Tracy
devastates Darwin

21 February—Peter Hasting’s
article launches ‘invasion scare’

21 March—Fraser replaces
Snedden as leader of the Liberal
Party

3–5 April—Whitlam meets
Soeharto at Townsville

Indonesia

9–19 December—Barnard visits
Indonesia

21 January—Ambassador Say
appointed to Portugal

8–11 April—Rodgers (DFA) visits
Indonesian Timor

15–16 May—Major Alves visits
Jakarta

*Portugal**Portuguese Timor**Other*

14 November—further secret talks
between Indonesians and
Portuguese

25 November—Colonel Lemos
Pires appointed Governor

3 December—Santos addresses
UN General Assembly

20 January—UDT–Fretilin
Coalition

31 January—Provisional
Government of Angola established

10 February—President Gomes
announces Constituent Assembly
elections for 12 April 1975

late February–early March—
Taylor (DFA) visits Portuguese
Timor

9 March—Secret talks held in
London between Indonesian
and Portuguese officials

11 March—abortive right-wing
coup in Lisbon

17 March—Australian
Parliamentary delegation visits
Portuguese Timor

30 April—fall of Saigon

7 May—preliminary talks between
Portugal and the Timorese parties;
Apodeti boycott

15 May—martial law declared in
Angola

1975

Australia

Indonesia

18 May—UDT leaders visit Jakarta

June

5 June—major reshuffle of Whitlam Ministry—Barnard retires as Minister of Defence and is succeeded by Morrison

July

2 July—Dr Cairns dismissed over Loans Affair

4 July—UDT leader da Cruz visits Jakarta

August

28 July—UDT leaders visit Jakarta

15 August—Major Soares arrives in Jakarta en route for Timor

September

1 September—Santos talks with Whitlam

29 August—Santos arrives in Jakarta

7 September—UDT and anti-Fretilin forces sign a petition for integration

*Portugal**Portuguese Timor**Other*

26 May—UDT withdraw from
their coalition with Fretilin

9–18 June—UN Committee of 24
meets in Lisbon

26–28 June—Macao talks

25 June – 9 July—Taylor and
Curtin (DFA) visit Portuguese
Timor

17 July—Provisional Government
dissolved; General Gonçalves
continues as Prime Minister

17 July—Constitutional Law 7/75
enacts Macao decision, setting end
of Portuguese sovereignty in Timor
as October 1978

10 August—UDT ‘Show of Force’

16–19 August—Fisher and
Rebikoff (DFA) visit Dili

23 August—Pires calls for
international forces to intervene to
prevent bloodshed

26 August—UN Secretary-General
calls for cease-fire and
negotiations

27 August—Portuguese
Administration withdraws from
Dili to island of Atauro

7 September—Prime Minister
Gonçalves resigns

2 September—Santos travels to
Atauro

7 September—Liquica falls to
Fretilin

8 September —Baucau falls to
Fretilin

15 September—Santos returns to
Lisbon

1975

Australia

Indonesia

18 September—Australian Government announces \$100 000 for ICRC programs in Timor

October

1 October—Portuguese corvette *Afonso Cerqueira* arrives in Darwin

14 October—Connor resigns over Loans Affair
16 October—Opposition votes to delay supply in the Senate

21 October—Johnson (DFA) travels to Kupang to investigate missing journalists

November

2 November—Australian Government pledges a further \$150 000 for ICRC operations in Timor

6 November—Rodgers (DFA) travels to Kupang to join Johnson to press investigation for missing journalists

7 November—Australia agrees to make Darwin a venue for all-party talks
11 November—Whitlam Government dismissed by Governor-General; Liberal–National Country Party Coalition forms caretaker government

12 November—BAKIN informs Australian Embassy, Jakarta, of deaths of Australian journalists at Balibo; remains handed over to Woolcott

Portugal

19 September—President Gomes appoints new government under Prime Minister Admiral Azevedo

4 October—Portugal issues invitations to Timorese parties for peace talks

11 November—Angolan independence

30 November—Portugal rejects both the Fretilin UDI and the integration declaration

Portuguese Timor

24 September—UDT retreats into West Timor; Fretilin control most of Portuguese Timor

6 October—Indonesian ‘volunteers’ attack Batugade
8 October—Batugade falls

16 October—five Australia-based journalists are killed at Balibo

20 November—Fretilin agree to talks in Darwin
21 November—anti-Fretilin forces call for talks in Bali
26 November—Atabae falls to anti-Fretilin forces
28 November—Fretilin declares independence
29 November—UDT and Apodeti sign a declaration for integration with Indonesia

Other

1–2 November—Portuguese and Indonesian Governments hold talks in Rome

11 November—Indonesian note to UN: cannot accept Fretilin’s claim to control Portuguese Timor

1975

December

Australia

Indonesia

13 December—Liberal–National
Country Party Coalition wins
general election

1976

January

15 January—Winspeare arrives in
Jakarta
19–20 January—Peacock visits
Jakarta

25 January—Australian
Government siezes illegal radio
broadcasting to Fretilin in
Portuguese Timor

February

2 February—Winspeare arrives in
Darwin

19 February—ACTU endorses ban
on all Indonesian shipping

23–24 February—ASEAN summit
meeting signs a Treaty of Amity
and Co-operation

March

April

13–15 April—Peacock visits
Jakarta

Portugal

7 December—Portugal breaks off diplomatic relations with Indonesia

26 December—Portuguese Government sets 26 April 1976 as date for general election

Portuguese Timor

7 December—Indonesian forces invade; Australian journalist Roger East disappears in Dili

17 December—PGET formed

9 January—Malik visits Dili

3 February—PGET bans all political parties

3 April—revolt by UDT in Dili suppressed by Indonesian military

Other

12 December—UN General Assembly condemns Indonesian aggression against Portuguese Timor; Australia votes with majority

15 December—UN Security Council begins consideration of Timor conflict

22 December—UN Security Council unanimously calls for Indonesian withdrawal from Portuguese Timor

29 December—Winspeare Guicciardi appointed UN Special Representative to Portuguese Timor

8 February—Winspeare returns to Europe

12 March—Winspeare submits report to UN Secretary-General Waldheim critical of Indonesian military's obstruction of his mission

12 April—UN Security Council resumes debate on Portuguese Timor

1976	<i>Australia</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>
		21 April—Malik invites Winspeare to return to Timor
<i>May</i>		
<i>June</i>		
<i>July</i>		17 July—Soeharto signs a bill incorporating Portuguese Timor into Indonesia
<i>October</i>		7–11 October—Fraser and Peacock visit Jakarta

On 20 January 1978 Australia gave *de facto* recognition to Indonesia's incorporation of Portuguese Timor. Between late 1978 and early 1979, during negotiations over the Timor seabed boundary, the Australian Government 'slipped' into *de jure* recognition.

Portugal

25 April—Portuguese general election

27 June—General Eanes elected President

Portuguese Timor

28 April—DFA team (led by Taylor) visits Balibo

2 May—DFA team visits Dili and Baucau

9 May—Taylor (DFA) revisits Balibo

15 May—Fretilin national conference held in Central Region

31 May—‘Popular Assembly’ convened in Dili to approve a petition to Soeharto calling for integration

Other

22 April—UN Security Council again calls on Indonesia to withdraw

Introduction

In December 1974, a former Australian Ambassador to Indonesia used what was to become a familiar metaphor. Gordon Jockel predicted that Portuguese Timor could turn out to be 'a running sore' for Indonesia (Document 66). The phrase was taken up by Australia's Defence Minister, Lance Barnard, who, in the following February, hoped that the final settlement of the problem might not turn into a 'running sore' in Australia's neighbourhood, complicating Australia's relationship with Indonesia (Document 81). By 1976 Australia's new Foreign Minister, Andrew Peacock, worried that the territory might develop 'a festering sore' of guerrilla warfare (Document 410). Time has shown that their fears were justified. Almost twenty-five years after its integration with Indonesia, and after a formal vote to end that integration, East Timor remains a divisive and emotive issue in the history of Australian foreign policy. The complex and difficult policy issue has been overlain by individual tragedies: first the deaths of six Australia-based journalists in circumstances never fully nor satisfactorily explained; later the broader tragedy of a people suffering under a more repressive regime than the policy-makers of the 1970s could reasonably have envisaged; and, most recently, by acts of post-referendum brutality and destruction. The issue is further overlain, for many Australians, by guilt: a belief that a people close to Australia's doorstep have had their wartime kindnesses and suffering on Australia's behalf repaid by betrayal.

Over the years since 1975 sporadic leaks of Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)¹ documents, published recollections and other information have fed speculation and recrimination. Leaks and recollections, by their nature, present an individual view, and often lack the context of related documents. They may also be inaccurate. The publication of this volume of documents, together with the complete release in the National Archives of Australia of DFA files relating to Timor, and similar files from the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet (PM&C), takes place some years ahead of the normal thirty-year release date for Commonwealth files. The purpose of this action is not to challenge strongly held views, nor to blunt criticism. Rather the hope is that publication of this volume, together with early public access to all the relevant material, will permit a more measured appreciation of the bases on which recommendations on policy and decisions were made, provide a fuller context for material which has hitherto been made public, and in general replace speculation with greater knowledge.

Four hundred and eighty-four documents have been selected for publication in this volume from DFA and PM&C files relating to Portuguese Timor from the date of the revolution in Portugal in April 1974 until the Indonesian Act of Incorporation on 17 July 1976. Thus the coverage in depth concerns events surrounding the transfer of the territory from Portuguese to Indonesian control. The Indonesian incorporation did not end the difficulties for Australian foreign and domestic policy in regard to Timor, but did change the nature of those problems, so that July 1976 is a convenient point at which this very large volume should conclude. To provide some later context, a further eight documents show briefly the resolution of the question of recognition of the incorporation. Earlier volumes of *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937–1949* have dealt with Australian policy on Portuguese Timor until 1945. The intervening years, 1945–1974, are therefore covered by twenty-two documents in the opening section of this volume. It should be noted that file

¹ The predecessor to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which is now responsible for the records of all its antecedent departments. To avoid confusion DFA is used throughout this volume in referring to records created by the earlier department and now being published or released by its successor.

material for the periods preceding 24 April 1974 and following 17 July 1976 is not subject to early release, and has been or will be released in the normal way by the National Archives of Australia (NAA) after thirty years.

The editors of this volume acknowledge that documents cannot tell the whole story: general historical accounts and personal recollections play an important role in redressing limitations inherent in the nature of official files. One such limitation relates to the sheer quantity of file records, amassed as they are, day by day. Each new addition adds an infinitesimal piece to a vast jigsaw. Many pieces provide inconsequential detail; a very few supply crucial features; the great majority fall somewhere in between. Thus the documents published here represent but a tiny fraction of the material to be found in the major runs of DFA files dealing with East Timor, which, for the two years covered by this volume, occupy a total shelf space approaching twenty metres. The editors have selected documents from those files using criteria which include significance to policy formation or key issues, and impact. They have attempted to ensure that as many aspects of the issue as possible are represented in the selection. Substantial annotations summarise or draw upon many other documents not chosen for full publication. Their selection, however, remains open to challenge: different editors might well have made a different but equally valid one. The reader will be able to test this particular selection against the full body of records to be released by the NAA in association with this publication. To assist researchers who wish to take a study of the subject further, the editors have provided appendixes on the organisation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and of its records, and a list of files used in the preparation of this volume.

A second limitation is what might be described as the 'tunnel vision' of file material. Files are organised by subject and date so that papers relating to a particular issue can be found easily when needed. They are working tools, not complete histories. Thus, files dealing with the deaths of the journalists at Balibo lack the context of the wider problems of policy on Portuguese Timor. Files dealing with that policy contain little more than occasional hints of many other important aspects of Australia's relations with Indonesia: regional security, trade, aid in various forms, aviation, shipping, fisheries, law of the sea, Papua New Guinea, and others. (Defence co-operation, as one of the most vulnerable to public pressure, is something of an exception.) These files do not provide full accounts of political change and uncertainty in Portugal although Indonesian fears of the possible emergence of a communist regime there are crucial to the story. Nor do they spell out the significant issues of Portuguese decolonisation in Africa. In the period covered by these documents Portugal handed power to armed independence movements in each of its African colonies: to the Party for Independence for Guinea and the Cape Verde in the new Guinea-Bissau on 10 September 1974; to Frelimo in Mozambique on 25 June 1975; and, on 31 January 1975, to a transitional government in Angola comprising three nationalist groups, already competing in a bloody civil war, pending full independence on 11 November 1975. That these newly emergent African States might provide precedents and support for Portugal's simply handing power to one of the Timorese parties not supporting incorporation into Indonesia was a concern to both Indonesia and Australia.

Files are unlikely to explain events of such overwhelming significance as to be taken for granted by those using them at the time, but which need to be kept in mind by later researchers.² Events scarcely making a ripple in the files, but which had important impact on Timor policy, range from the advent of communist regimes in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, to the supply crisis in the Australian Parliament and the dismissal of the Whitlam Government. The scope

² Conversely, writers may lack knowledge of contemporary events which will be known to the reader.

of this volume has been broadened as much as possible by bringing together documents from many files, and by the addition of editorial notes to supply extra information. But readers need to remember that the time was in many ways an extraordinarily eventful one in Australia and in the region. The editors make no claim to providing a complete history of all factors contributing to the Timor problem.

A more fundamental limitation applies to any written record, but especially to official records. Words typed on a page may convey sense but they can never convey nuances expressed by other means: intonation, facial expression, or body language. 'Official' versions of conversations will inevitably be edited and tidied. Various forms of official writing have their own conventions and formats and brevity is usually demanded, if not always achieved. Writers, whether official or private, must be assumed to record events in a way that reflects their own conduct in the best light. Many things will not be recorded at all on official files: casual and private conversations at one extreme and discussions of policy of high sensitivity at the other. There will be no acknowledgement of the hundred and one minor and irrelevant matters, the underlying views and attitudes that complicate all decision making.

These frustrations are part of the challenge accepted by the documentary historian, who must bring to the raw material skills of interpretation and of imagination. The material published here, however, is of such a nature that it can be appreciated with very little of either. In the broad, it will reveal little that is not already known or believed about the events surrounding East Timor's integration into Indonesia, but it does demonstrate complexities, layers of debate, shades of grey. The editors believe that the records written at the time make vivid and compelling reading, and provide a unique contribution to the understanding of 'one of the thorniest problems in Australian foreign policy'.³ This introduction makes no attempt to summarise in full the wealth of material in the documents published here. It seeks merely to draw attention to some of the complexities of policy and diplomacy apparent in them. The detailed tabular chronology which precedes it covers relevant events in Portuguese Timor, Australia, Indonesia, Portugal, the United Nations and elsewhere.

In 1974 a sudden revolution threw open the future of Portugal's colonies, including one of the least noticed by most of the world, half of a small island near the eastern end of the Indonesian Archipelago, and some 400 kilometres from Darwin. Canberra and Jakarta were both taken unawares. Australia's Consulate in Dili had been closed three years before for lack of business and to save money (see pp. 42–3); the Australian Embassy in Jakarta was then given responsibility for reporting on Portuguese Timor, but for reasons of distance, difficulty of access and more pressing issues gave it scant attention. Diplomatic links to the Portuguese authorities were maintained through an Embassy established in Lisbon in 1970. An Indonesian Consulate remained in Dili, as did a Chinese (Taiwan); neither, it seemed, was kept very busy. Visitors were rare, apart from a few backpackers; Timor had little to attract investors or traders; apart from potential gas/oil in its territorial waters its strategic importance was debatable. Early documents in this volume show Australian and Indonesian officials taking stock, and setting about to add to the little knowledge there was of the territory and of its indigenous inhabitants. In the period to September 1974, before Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's meeting with Indonesia's President Soeharto at Wonosobo, there was no official Australian policy on the future of Portuguese Timor, merely a growing awareness that a policy would be needed, and quickly.

The documents published here show that in developing that policy the views of Australian officials, and the Ministers they served, were not uniform, nor were they taken lightly. A

³ Cablegram, Canberra to New York (CH173708, 12 February 1975).

general view, firmly held by the Prime Minister and by most DFA officials, was that an independent Portuguese Timor would not be a viable economic entity. It followed from this view that the logical long-term solution was for the territory to become part of Indonesia and that Australia's 'attitude should continue to be governed by that of Indonesia' (Document 3). Good relations with Indonesia were paramount. But even then, DFA Secretary Alan Renouf immediately questioned the automatic concession of primacy to Indonesian interests (note 3 to Document 3). The importance of a genuine act of self-determination was widely accepted (see, for example, then Deputy Secretary Richard Woolcott's comment in note 3 to Document 12), for reasons ranging from the principled to the pragmatic. It was noted in a departmental paper, based on the first of several official visits to repair the lack of knowledge of the territory, that despite the recent emergence of political parties, the Timorese were 'ill-prepared to exercise genuine self-determination' (Document 13). DFA officials were nevertheless unwilling to write off the possibility of independence (Documents 12 and 16). A preliminary paper by the Defence Department (Document 21) went so far as to favour independence, to which DFA responded, with apparent success, that relations with Indonesia would be damaged by a 'deliberate policy of denying Portuguese Timor' to them (Document 23).

The records show that in talks with Soeharto at Wonosobo in September 1974 Whitlam stated his personal view in favour of the logic of integration, provided it was achieved as a result of self-determination. Australian domestic opinion would only be satisfied if incorporation appeared to be 'a natural process arising from the wishes of the people' (Document 26). He noted that this was not yet formal Australian policy, though likely to become so. But policy papers prepared in DFA in subsequent months drew back from openly favouring integration with Indonesia to a firm policy of non-involvement. The reason for the shift was in part alarm at information leaked after Wonosobo leading to accusations that Whitlam had handed Timor to Indonesia, and indications that Indonesians had so interpreted his comments (Document 61). The dangers of tying Australia to a firm policy in a situation far from settled, either in Lisbon or Dili, were perhaps a more significant factor. At least one DFA officer felt strongly enough to urge instead a more positive view of the possibility of independence and an effort to persuade Indonesia that an independent East Timor could be tolerated (Document 60). The Defence Department remained afraid for the future of broader defence co-operation if Indonesia 'acquires Portuguese Timor by politically unacceptable processes' (Document 63). Defence Secretary Sir Arthur Tange warned the Indonesians accordingly in December (Document 70) and in February 1975 the Defence Minister, disturbed by growing indications of likely military action by Indonesia, and the prospect of regional instability as a result, urged Foreign Affairs Minister Don Willesee to make 'a determined effort to deflect them from any immoderate action', by making Australian views clear, by efforts to moderate Indonesian fears of an independent East Timor and by warning of the effect on relations with Australia (Document 81).

Press reports, probably based on misunderstandings, following military exercises, of the timing of Indonesian intentions, gave impetus and urgency to that view. A warning was given in a letter to Soeharto (Document 98), carried to Jakarta by Australia's new Ambassador, Richard Woolcott, at the end of February 1975. Even then, there was at least one official who considered it an overreaction (see Jockel's views in Document 94). Before the letter was sent, and although they were firmly persuaded of the value of 'studied detachment' to avoid 'the quagmire that Portuguese Timor could become' (Documents 62, 66, 67), Willesee, and officials like Feakes and Joseph, were looking for more positive approaches, of 'carrot' as well as 'stick' (Document 85). They considered 'a helping hand' by means, perhaps, of a modest aid

program, to discourage the Portuguese from precipitate withdrawal from the territory. They hoped it would be possible to allay Indonesian fears and to encourage 'positive [Indonesian] political and economic policies designed to tie the territory to its regional environment'. They sought 'some constructive alternative to the present path of sterile hostility which the Indonesians seem bent on following' (Documents 83, 85, 87). W. B. Pritchett of the Defence Department went so far as to suggest the Timorese might enter into a 'basic treaty relationship' with Indonesia (Document 90).

The alarms of February subsided, but Willesee himself was to grow more uneasy with the established policy of non-involvement, to which, publicly at least, Australia adhered with utmost determination. In April 1975 Woolcott wrote to him of the difficulties created for the Department by the difference in policy emphasis between Willesee and Whitlam (Document 127). That problem was never resolved. While the Labor Government remained in power, and policy was publicly committed to a 'non-involvement' stance, an underlying difference could be discerned not so much in terms of a division, but as a spectrum. Whitlam at one end stressed a preference for integration, with 'obsequance' to self-determination (Document 37); Willesee at the other stressed self-determination, and sought ways to persuade Indonesia to live with whatever the outcome might be. Willesee seemed unwilling to confront Whitlam on the issue, but occasionally made his own emphasis public (Document 147).

The Coalition Government, elected with a large majority in December 1975 after four weeks of caretaker government, was eager to show it could stop the deterioration in Australia-Indonesia relations and at the same time take a firmer line with Indonesia in a way it perceived the Whitlam Government had not. In the caretaker period Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser had sent a 'well received' message to Soeharto recognising 'the need for Indonesia to have an appropriate solution for the problem of Portuguese Timor' and regretting irritants such as trade union bans (Documents 343 and 344). Earlier in the year Peacock had been persuaded by Woolcott to modify his 'pro-independence position' (Document 131); later, in a private meeting in Bali he had, according to the Indonesians, given Tjan and Lim Bian Kie the impression that he fully supported Indonesian aims (Document 357). A statement by Peacock denying recognition to Fretilin's Unilateral Declaration of Independence at the end of November was also well received in Jakarta. It seemed both Fraser and Peacock had confirmed Indonesian expectations of sympathetic understanding, if not support, for whatever course Indonesia might choose in Timor.

Peacock expressed Australia's 'deep regret' when Indonesia invaded, but also his appreciation of the 'gravity of the problems posed for the Indonesian government' (Document 360). Fraser had instructed that a press release be drafted on proposals for a peace-keeping force, an idea discouraged by DFA in favour of simply supporting a United Nations resolution, a course likely to be less offensive to Indonesia (Document 362). Woolcott urged 'weighing carefully Australia's long term interests against short term frustration and disappointment' (Document 365), but Australia's Ambassador in Lisbon, Frank Cooper, wondered whether they had 'all been so mindful of the overriding importance of our long-term relations with Indonesia that it has . . . inhibited us too much in what we have said to the Indonesians' (Document 371). If indeed that had been the case, the new Government's brief honeymoon with Indonesia was about to end. Australia's vote for a United Nations resolution critical of Indonesia was to the Indonesians 'disastrous', a 'double cross' (Document 374), inconsistent with the impressions previously given by Fraser and Peacock (Document 377). Woolcott cabled of 'disillusionment': Indonesia had expected 'greater understanding' (Document 393). A

submission by Renouf to Peacock had already recommended trying to retrieve the situation by accepting Indonesian integration as a fact 'otherwise we should have a running sore in the region poisoning relations between ourselves and the Indonesians for years to come' (Document 394). Peacock was doubtful and thought the whole question should be submitted to Cabinet. Defence, responding to another request by Fraser, argued that Australian involvement in initiating a UN peace-keeping force would be 'neither effective nor politic'. Australia faced a *fait accompli*, and it would not be in Australia's strategic interests if Indonesia were to be 'frustrated in the absorption of East Timor, or that this process be made complicated or delayed'. Australia's objection to the use of force should nevertheless be made clear (Document 417). The Cabinet committee was reported to have been inclined to accept the '*fait accompli*' view, although Peacock still wanted self-determination to remain at the core of Australian policy. 'Non involvement' was no longer acceptable; the term was being replaced by 'minimum as possible' involvement (Editorial Note: Cabinet Decisions on Timor, pp. 711–12).

The fact-finding mission of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Winspeare Guicciardi provided opportunities for Australia to practise 'minimum as possible' involvement, in declining requests for help with transport and information (Document 397), while Fraser continued to look for other forms of action (Document 402). Action, however, was clearly not what the Indonesians wanted. On a brief visit to Jakarta Peacock's offer of help in 'policing order' was obliquely but firmly rejected (Document 404) and Fraser's suggestion of a visit at the end of the ASEAN summit was also rejected, 'because of Timor' (Document 411). Woolcott warned in March that the Government's 'active moral stand' could not alter the fact of Indonesian intervention, and was 'now eroding the fragile and unnatural relationship which has been patiently built up with Indonesia over the last decade'. Peacock was 'close to the limits of having his cake and eating it' (Document 431). The Indonesian Foreign Ministry asked that Australia adopt a 'more helpful' position in the Security Council; Woolcott interpreted their message as saying 'we have gone about as far as we can in criticising Indonesia internationally' (note 2 to Document 433). Australia's stance was muted in the Security Council, but an invitation to attend a declaration ceremony in Dili posed more of a problem, Peacock being advised that 'domestically, it is likely to be a matter of damned if we do [attend] and damned if we don't' (Document 446). Peacock's decision that Australia should not attend, despite Woolcott's advice (Document 447) probably pleased very few, and angered the Indonesians (Document 460). The formal process of incorporation proceeded, with the Australia–Indonesia relationship at low ebb.

For some time afterwards it seemed sufficient to 'isolate the Timor question' from the overall relationship, to 'trade on the previously accumulated store of goodwill', but official recommendations for a review of Timor policy strengthened, despite expected public opposition to any recognition of incorporation (Submission to Fraser, p. 825, and Cablegram JA13174, p. 836). Hopes that Portugal might provide a convenient lead evaporated (Cablegram LB1474, p. 834). Early in 1978 a decision to afford *de facto* recognition was announced in a statement which accepted reality, but referred yet again to Australian opposition to the means used to achieve it (DFA News Release, p. 838), much along lines recommended in 1976. A low-key recognition *de jure* followed at the end of 1978, shortly before commencement of negotiations on seabed delineation (see note 1 to Submission to Peacock, p. 839).

The documents illustrate that no government can ever fully control the outcome of its diplomacy, that unexpected events outside its jurisdiction can sometimes reduce carefully contrived policies

to irrelevance. There is always at least one other player involved. In this case, having chosen not to be itself a party principal in the decolonisation of Portuguese Timor, Australia was forced to deal with two parties principal deeply suspicious of one another, as well as the volatile elements of the newly formed political parties in Timor itself. Increasingly, all the policy officers at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta came to believe that Indonesian fears of communist subversion through East Timor, however misguided, were genuine and deeply entrenched.⁴ Whatever Australians said or did, Indonesia would not change its policy. The Embassy repeated this advice constantly, while Canberra officials continued to cast around for ways of persuading Indonesia that an independent Portuguese Timor could be lived with; of handling expected pressures in the United Nations for rapid independence; or of seeking regional support. The Embassy duly consulted and informed the Indonesians at all levels about Australian views and proposals but was forced to repeat its findings over and over to a Canberra unwilling to believe that nothing could be done. Portugal, itself faced with a daunting range of domestic and external problems did not, indeed probably could not, bring about what Australia believed the situation needed: a long 'measured' decolonisation process, which just might give Indonesia time to win the Timorese round. Portugal's political upheavals did nothing to quieten Indonesia's fears of communism infecting a territory on its eastern borders. Nor did the occasional immoderate claims, the political infighting and undefined nature of the infant political parties of Timor. On 11 August 1975 everybody's worst fears seemed realised when the pro-Portuguese party, UDT, staged its 'show of force' against pro-independence Fretilin.⁵ The Portuguese Administration evacuated to the Island of Atauro, and thus effectively withdrew. Its substantial arsenal was left behind, and appears to have become available to Fretilin once the latter captured the capital from UDT. Canberra and Jakarta watched apprehensively; Portugal asked for and received Australian help with evacuations, but refused Indonesian offers; another proposed round of talks was thrown into doubt. Hopes for a settlement engineered between Portugal and Indonesia faded as Australian diplomats reported on the growing distrust between Jakarta and Lisbon and of hardening Indonesian resolution. By late August, Cooper believed the Portuguese had 'passed the point of no return' (Document 184): 'they simply want out' (Document 201), but would not request Indonesia to intervene to bring about a ceasefire, for fear of a consequent 'bloodbath' (Document 188) as well as pride and lack of trust (Document 193). Early in September, Portugal's Minister for Inter-territorial Co-ordination, Almeida Santos, reached a measure of agreement with the Indonesians on proposals for a Joint Authority in the territory. Australian reluctance to consider participation in the proposal, in spite of urging from Malaysia (Document 206), might be seen as a missed opportunity to steady the parties principal, even if a vague and problematical one. Fretilin's Unilateral Declaration of Independence on 28 November 1975 simply served to ensure Indonesia would move in, without the claim to legitimacy which might have been provided by a Portuguese request.

The documents also point to the difficulties, beyond language and interpretation, which bedevil communications between cultures: 'the gap between Australian openness and Javanese courtcraft and courtesy is, except on the surface, wide. This difficulty is exacerbated in time of

⁴ In contrast to the variety of views presented by officials in Canberra, there is evident unanimity on policy in the Jakarta files. Advice in cables represented the view of all senior policy officers at the Embassy. Most key policy cables were signed by Woolcott, but not all were drafted by him; the Ambassador's signature served to add his authority to the advice. The variety of views in Canberra, of course, can be explained, at least in part, by differing responsibilities.

⁵ Although there were unproven suggestions that Indonesians might have helped engineer the coup.

policy disagreements on an important issue' (Document 440). The term 'Javanese' as used here implies a courteous, oblique approach to discussion, difficult for Australians to handle or to interpret, used as they are to more robust colloquy. It also implies a selective attitude to interpretation, alien to the Western legal mind, trained to give equal importance to all the qualifiers. Whitlam's meeting with Soeharto at Wonosobo may be an example of such a case. The record (Document 26) clearly states Whitlam's 'own thinking' that East Timor should become part of Indonesia, 'in accordance with the properly expressed wishes' of its people. He went on to stress Labor's policy of self-determination for 'even the smallest colonial territories', and the importance, for Australian domestic consumption, of this appearing to be so. The record may be firmer than Whitlam's words seemed at the time (as is hinted in note 2 to Document 24) but two separate records of an informal comment in Canberra, shortly afterwards (Document 37), confirm Whitlam's view that the process of incorporation should be publicly acceptable, and not harm the wider Australia-Indonesia relationship. Yet it quickly became apparent that the Indonesians, already informing Australia of plans for covert and overt activities, had interpreted Whitlam's remarks as unqualified support for integration; as Murtopo put it, obliquely, to Cooper, the remarks 'had helped crystallise their own thinking' (Document 45). Press reports of the Indonesian interpretation stirred public indignation. Officials in Canberra, busy drafting the final policy statements, sought to retrieve the position, but had to acknowledge that the two prongs of the Whitlam policy were incompatible. The solution they found was a double-layered policy. So, ironically, was the Indonesian, which publicly professed readiness to accept any result of self-determination while preparations went on in secret to ensure by whatever means proved necessary that the result would be integration. Australia's public stance would be one of non-involvement or 'studied detachment', which should allow future room for manoeuvre (Documents 62 and 66). In private, though, dialogue should continue in attempts to reassure Indonesia that fears of an independent East Timor were groundless and to promise Timorese leaders that Australia would accept any result of a genuine act of self-determination (Document 67). A second version of the two levels was later developed when it became necessary to assuage public opinion by protesting against the Indonesian use of force (Document 287). The ground was thus laid for Indonesia's later accusations of betrayal.

Misunderstanding existed on both sides. An Australian government yielding to public pressure for humanitarian aid in East Timor would invite charges of undermining Indonesian policy (Document 306). The Jakarta Embassy faced considerable difficulties in explaining to the Indonesians that anti-Indonesian demonstrations, involving a wide cross-section of the Australian community and 'pro-Fretilin' press articles did not reflect government policy. The Labor Government could point to its political difficulties. The new Coalition Government, unfettered by the division in its own ranks that had beset Labor, had more difficulty in explaining why, even with a large Parliamentary majority, it could not control public expressions of distaste for Indonesian actions (Document 431). Panggabean teased Peacock, after a long recital of ways in which Australians 'undermine us', 'I am glad Indonesia is not a democracy' (Document 442). It was in fact no joking matter. The relationship had always been a fragile one, subject to sudden changes of temperature brought about by difficulties of many kinds. Cultural differences could not explain them all, but could often serve to increase them.

Running through the debate in these documents are some of the questions that underlie all public policy. The assertion that the matter is one of principle versus pragmatism is frequently

spelled out, for example in an exchange of cables between Woolcott and Renouf (Documents 250, 251, 255), as is the assertion that pragmatism is more closely aligned with public interest (Document 393). The problem of accepting a *fait accompli* while simultaneously upholding moral principles is tackled in many of the later documents in the volume, nowhere more strongly or succinctly perhaps, than in Cooper's asking 'not whether we can live with it but whether we can live with ourselves' (Cablegram LB1474, p. 835). There is the problem of response to public pressure. Public opinion, and the press which helped form it, were constant and significant factors complicating the playing out of Timor policy. Other more subtle dilemmas of foreign relations are apparent. As early as July 1974 the Embassy in Jakarta was informed of Indonesian proposals for covert operations in Portuguese Timor to manipulate Timorese opinion; Furlonger immediately pointed out the diplomatic difficulties posed for Australia, which was 'in effect, being consulted' (Document 12), and warned that a firm and carefully considered policy could be needed quickly. Provision of such information continued, as did the implication that Australia by virtue of its special relationship would 'understand'. In June 1975 Woolcott foresaw 'the seeds of real difficulties for Australia' which might favour the ends but not the means being considered by Indonesia (Document 137); the answer, for the present, was to keep involvement to an absolute minimum. But the dilemma continued to bedevil officials and Ministers. As Australia was drawn, willy nilly, into the 'quagmire', by increasing Indonesian involvement, Willesee worried, not for the first time, that Australia, having been told so much, might be seen to have connived with Indonesia (Document 299). And questions of how much was known, and of how much could or should be publicly admitted, lie at the heart of the Balibo controversy.

The deaths of five Australia-based journalists in Balibo on the night of 15/16 October 1975 was, in the words of an Embassy cable, 'a sad and dreadful event' (Document 272): 'sad' no doubt in reference to the personal tragedies, 'dreadful' perhaps in its implications for relations with Indonesia, and for the increased likelihood that the whole Timor issue would indeed remain 'a running sore'. The writer of that cable could not have foreseen the long and at times recriminatory aftermath, including claims that DFA's response was 'inadequate, incomplete and incompetent' (Document 430).

There have been accusations of a failure to warn adequately and so prevent the presence of the newsmen in an area which the Jakarta Embassy had been informed would be in the line of an Indonesian advance on that night, or to warn Indonesia against attacking in that locality. The Jakarta Embassy had been warning since 6 September that Indonesia's position had hardened: it had ruled out all options except the OPSUS plan, which would place 'well armed "volunteers" who will provide "backbone" for UDT and other anti-Fretilin forces' to prevent a Fretilin victory (Document 217). On 23 September the Embassy warned that airports could be put out of action (Document 240). On 30 September it reported information that 'a significant escalation', involving 3800 Indonesian soldiers, was imminent but, as before, it had been given no detail as to timing (Document 246). On 13 October, that information was confirmed, with 'vague' details, and further details were supplied on 15 October. The 'main thrust' would begin on 15 October through Balibo/Maliana/Atsabe towards Dili, simultaneously with an advance through Same/Maubisse/Aileu and an amphibious landing at Maubara (Documents 258 and 262). Thus the information of 13 and 15 October, although adding significantly to what had already been reported, was not entirely new.

The Embassy itself, and officials in Canberra, considered the information in the light of other policy problems. From early September (that is, simultaneously with the hardening attitude

on Timor), Australian relations with Indonesia had suffered a serious downturn. Acting Foreign Minister Mochtar had summoned Woolcott on 7 September to deliver a 'quite angry' protest about reports of Australian assistance to Portugal's Minister Almeida Santos, who, it had been inaccurately reported, was about to recognise Fretilin as a *de facto* government. Australia was being drawn into a situation 'contrary to Indonesia's interests' (Document 219). On 13 September Mochtar complained that Australia was the only country in the region 'acting in a way which could be unhelpful to Indonesia and the region's long term interests' and had 'assisted' Portugal in its 'duplicity' (Document 229). On 27 September Moerdani added that Australia had not helped when it had refused an opportunity to co-operate with Indonesia a fortnight earlier to restore law and order in Timor (the Joint Authority proposal) (Document 243). The mood of recrimination went on, culminating in an interview on 19 October when a 'stony-faced' Malik recited a long list of complaints: anti-Indonesian demonstrations, reports of Australians assisting Fretilin, arms shipments, and attitudes of the Australian media (Document 275).

Canberra responded to cables reporting this worsening situation, and Jakarta's hardening line, with instructions to try alternative suggestions, leading finally to an exchange between Woolcott and Renouf (Documents 250, 251, 255). Officials in Canberra, unlike those at the Embassy in Jakarta, were at least inclined to believe that Fretilin's control of East Timor might be sustainable (Document 257). There was also a tendency in Canberra to treat information about Indonesian plans regarding Timor, which the Embassy had been receiving for over a year from Harry Tjan and other Indonesians associated with CSIS, with a measure of scepticism: 'We sometimes get the impression here that Harry is being deliberately outrageous' (Document 158). There was certainly a degree of caution, properly perhaps, in Canberra's acceptance of Tjan's information, and a reluctance to incorporate this information obtained by the diplomats into policy or planning until it had been confirmed by other sources (which almost invariably happened some considerable time later). Thus the information received on 13 October was of sufficient import to warrant a ministerial submission for information, but not sufficient to take action without confirmation from other sources.

The same dilemma existed once reports of fighting in the Balibo area on the night of 15/16 October gave rise to grave fears about the fate of the journalists (Documents 267 and 269). The deaths were soon known from intelligence sources, though the information was sketchy, and not sufficiently certain to use as a basis for advice to next-of-kin. Since 1975, community concern has been expressed that the Government knew more than it publicly acknowledged about the deaths. There have been accusations of a failure, despite knowledge gained early from intelligence, to inform next-of-kin and the public of their fate until much later, and of a failure to ensure that the deaths and any Indonesian responsibility for them were fully investigated. But even if it had been considered possible at the time to reveal intelligence material, early information available to DFA gave no basis either for the confirmation of the deaths of the five journalists or for identification. The editors, having seen all relevant DFA and PM&C material, are confident that no more was known at the time than what is written in the first sentence of Document 272. The findings of Tom Sherman in his *Report on the Deaths of Australian-based Journalists in East Timor in 1975* (June 1996) confirm the lack of material of 'sufficient evidentiary value' to warrant inclusion in his report, and are based on his belief, 'having regard to the nature, quantity and sources of the material I perused, that I was given full access to the relevant intelligence holdings'.

The documents published here show that Ministers and officials in Canberra and Jakarta fully accepted the basic premise that intelligence sources must not be compromised, that

information would have to be obtained from sources which could be quoted without such compromise before it could be made public. Information given to the Embassy by Tjan, while not intelligence material in the usual sense, was also highly sensitive. Indonesia was applying its two-level Timor policy, about which Australia had been informed all along. Publicly, Indonesia denied the presence of Indonesian troops in Timor: an official Australian statement based on information to the contrary, whether gained from Indonesian sources before 15 October, or from Australian sources afterwards, would be tantamount to accusing Indonesians of lying and, it was argued, would achieve nothing (Documents 274 and 280). Persistent attempts to gain some quotable admission about the deaths certainly served only to worsen relations (see, for example, Document 302). The difficulty was compounded, or may even have been caused, by the absence from Jakarta of those ultimately responsible for the real Indonesian Timor policy, Ali Murtopo and Benny Moerdani (Documents 293 and 315). The Embassy had evidence of a tactical division within the Indonesian Government on the journalists question (Document 290). There were also legalities to consider: the journalists died in Portuguese Timor, where Indonesia had no legal standing; Portugal, which did, had no effective control at all, and the area where investigations needed to be made was being contested in battle by groups with a vested interest in making accusations against their opponents. The Indonesians probably made use of these legalities, but it was not possible for Australia to ignore them. The Government believed it had done all that it could: the long and vigorous (Document 280) but fruitless efforts to gain satisfactory answers in Jakarta were supplemented by equally fruitless inquiries in Lisbon, Dili, Kupang, and to the Red Cross in Geneva. Within the limits of the confused and difficult situation, no avenue of inquiry holding even the slightest hope seems to have been ignored. But in the end, the Indonesians held all the cards and were not in a mood to help Australia.

Many of the inherent difficulties in the conduct of relations between governments seem to have come together at this point. It may not be sufficient to say that these difficulties excuse what was done, or not done, but they do help to explain why. The documents themselves provide evidence of anguish, frustration and exhaustion, dogged determination and courage, from senior diplomats hammering the questions day after day to their Indonesian counterparts, from a Third Secretary virtually confined for a month in a hostile Kupang, from consular officials able to convey little more than requests for difficult decisions to distressed and angry relatives. If there are reasons to feel pride in the efforts of a foreign service operating in a situation of considerable difficulty, and the editors believe that there are, it is also reasonable to wish that somehow things could have been managed differently, to question whether the policies and decisions followed with such dedication were in fact the right ones. It is more difficult, even with the benefit of hindsight, to define precisely what the right course might have been.

The editors have chosen to publish as fully as possible all major cable traffic and other documentation on DFA files related to the Balibo issue, so that readers may assess the basis of claims and criticisms as fully as possible. The files from which the published selections are drawn will be available in the NAA to researchers seeking more information.

Original documents reveal much, in a manner that writing about diplomacy cannot, of the way a foreign service operates. It operates simultaneously in locations all around the world; its officers must be mobile and adaptable. An overseas posting usually lasts for three years. Early in the period of this volume the three senior political positions in the Jakarta Embassy changed hands, a new Ambassador took up duty in Lisbon, and there were changes in key positions dealing with Indonesia in Canberra. Allocation of prime responsibility for East Timor

also changed in Canberra, moving from the West Europe Section to the Indonesia Section. Organisation charts (Appendix II) show the structure of DFA and occupants of key positions in the period covered by the documents.

The majority of documents published here are cables, which represented the chief form of communication, and hence the chief medium of debate, between Canberra and overseas posts at the time. There was then a sense of moment about the dispatch of a policy-related cable, a sense less common today as developments in technology have enabled diplomats to communicate by more varied and direct media. An account of numbering systems, classification and priority handling of cables can be found in Appendix III.

Reference has been made to the twenty metres of DFA file material relating to Portuguese Timor from 1974 to 1976. Some explanation for the large quantity lies in the fact that the issue was dealt with simultaneously in many locations around the world; it also lies in the organisation of the Central Office in Canberra on a part-geographical, part-functional basis. Files dealing with Timor were thus kept by several units in Canberra. Researchers therefore have available to them several runs of parallel files, each compiled from a different perspective. Copies of certain documents will be found in all or most of the runs, but each will have its share of unique material. An understanding of the way in which archival numbering reflects the origin of particular files assists an appreciation of these differences, and points to the most likely location of specific material. A description of the system is given in Appendix IV, together with a list of files used in the preparation of this volume.

Terminology can be confusing: words such as 'file' and 'document' are used in many different ways. In the case of official records a file is a collection of papers pertaining to a particular subject, or of a particular nature. Each file is given an identifying number. Some files comprise a single type of material: submissions to a Minister, agenda papers and minutes of particular meetings, financial accounts. Most of the files read for preparation of this volume, however, are 'correspondence' or general policy files. They contain a wide variety of papers, or 'documents' of which the common feature is their subject matter. Some documents on file are brief notes of a few lines; others run for many pages (folios). Once a file becomes too large to handle comfortably it is closed, and a new part of the file is opened, maintaining the identifying number of the first part. Most of the files consulted for this volume run to very many parts: the complete file may extend for many shelf metres. A further point of confusion is that the term 'file' is properly applied to the complete set of all parts, but may often be used to refer to a single part of a file.

There are some considerable discrepancies in part numbers and date ranges in the files of Central Office dealing with Portuguese Timor. Canberra Registry staff recall that after the first media leaks early in 1975, the Head of South-East Asia Branch kept all relevant papers outside the official files, to minimise risks of further leaks. The Central Registry was at the same time instructed by its head to obtain copies as far as possible and to put them on a set of temporary files. At some later stage, the Registry was apparently asked to incorporate the papers from the Branch Head's files into the main policy files on Portuguese Timor. This was done fairly hastily and would have involved quite a lot of guesswork as to the proper relation between the papers. As a result, the Canberra files tend to have overlapping date-ranges and a certain amount of duplication (see notes in Appendix IV). Experienced archival researchers will find that these are relatively minor problems, not unusual in complex research tasks.

Four parts of file A1838, 3038/10/1 have not been located at time of publication. On Departmental records databases, one of these is recorded as having been destroyed in 1995;

the others do not appear. Two of the three were issued by the National Archives of Australia to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 1991, along with other parts of the same file, but were not returned with the rest in 1995/96, and have not been found since, despite extensive searching. The details are noted in Appendix IV. It is not possible to establish precisely the date ranges of the missing files because of the problem mentioned above, and because relevant registry records have not been retained. The quantity of file material available, the duplication of material across many different files, and the cable numbering systems described in Appendix III, enable the editors to be reasonably confident that all significant documents can be accounted for and have been considered for publication.

The Government, in agreeing to the early release and publication of DFA documents relating to Portuguese Timor, specifically exempted Cabinet records and intelligence material. It is expected that relevant Cabinet records will become available when the normal thirty-year release becomes due. In fact, little Cabinet material exists on the issue. One consideration by a Coalition Cabinet Committee took place in 1976. In accordance with the Government's direction two Cabinet records and one document relating to Cabinet discussion from DFA files have been excluded both from this publication and from the general release. Under the Labor Government foreign policy issues remained very much the preserve of the Prime Minister, even after he relinquished the post of Foreign Minister in November 1973. He acted as Foreign Minister whenever Senator Willesee was overseas, took a particular interest in diplomatic appointments (both Woolcott and Cooper had his strong approval: see Document 26) and kept close control of foreign policy. In the unresolved difference between Whitlam and Willesee, Whitlam's view prevailed, and the issue of Timor was not put before a Labor Cabinet.

Intelligence-related material occurs on DFA files, but in most cases it would not have been considered of sufficient interest to warrant selection for publication. In accordance with the government decision, text deemed to be of an intelligence nature has been expunged from the documents released in the NAA; this treatment has been reflected in the published documents. Very few have been so affected and in no case does the sense of the full document suffer by the omission. Some documents in this volume report conversations of Australian Embassy staff with officers of the Indonesian State Intelligence Coordination Agency (BAKIN). These were essentially policy discussions and do not fall under the decision to exclude intelligence material from publication; indeed, Indonesia consciously used BAKIN as a channel for policy dialogue on the East Timor issue.

Editorial Practice

As is the practice for all volumes in the *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy* series, the material selected for publication has been examined by a Committee of Final Review, comprising the Minister for Foreign Affairs and representatives of the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition. The Committee's approval signifies their satisfaction that the material has been selected and edited according to appropriate scholarly and bipartisan practice, and that the volume is an appropriately representative selection of documents. The Committee of Final Review approved publication of the volume but the delegate of the Leader of the Opposition expressed the view that the main body of documents should have been extended to cover the period up to 1979.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the text is faithfully reproduced, and that documents are published as far as possible in their entirety. In order to make use of as many documents as possible, extracts have been published of some lengthy documents, and of

documents dealing with a number of subjects. The words [*matter omitted*] indicate the omission of one or more paragraphs for reasons of relevance, comparative importance or length. In some such cases, where the editors consider it helpful for a full appreciation of the document, a footnote summarises or indicates the nature of the omitted material. In all these cases, access to the full document is available in the NAA. Minor editorial omissions necessary to assist interpretation are indicated by three dots. Changes other than minor corrections to spelling or punctuation are indicated by placing added words or letters in square brackets. Care is taken to ensure such editorial interpolations do not alter sense; annotations are used when precise meaning is in doubt. Layout and presentation have been standardised for print, but paragraphing and headings are preserved as far as possible as in the original.

Acknowledgements

This volume has been prepared by the Historical Documents Project Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The editors are particularly grateful to David Lee for significant drafting and editorial assistance. Kimberley Johnston provided substantial help with editorial tasks; Lynda Spiller, assisted by Zoe Brewer, typed the documents. Other editorial assistance was given by Pamela Andre, David Dutton, Peter Gifford, and Lynda Spiller. Anne Wakefield designed the cover and artwork, with assistance on maps from Andrew Caudle. Brown and Wilton Integrated Publishing Services provided proof-reading and other help with the publishing process. The patience and professionalism of Melbourne University Press contributed much to the production of this volume in a remarkably short time. The editors acknowledge the co-operation of the Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet and the National Archives of Australia. They gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Historical Research and Access Section, and of many other serving officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. They thank in particular Kelvin Birrell, New York, and John Milne, Jakarta, for help in locating photographs. They would also like to record their gratitude to former officers of the Department, including the late Frank Cooper, Ian Cousins, Malcolm Dan, Ralph Harry and Richard Woolcott.

Australia, Indonesia and Portuguese Timor, 1945–1974

During a meeting with Averell Harriman, the United States Secretary of State, in August 1963, Sir Garfield Barwick, the Australian Minister for External Affairs, described the Portuguese Timor question as 'an essay in the hopeless'.¹ This sense of frustration was the keynote of Australian policy towards Portuguese Timor for much of the three decades following World War II. On the one hand was the absolute intransigence of Portuguese colonial policy under the Salazar regime. On the other was the constant threat of Indonesian expansionism. Both of these were at their height through the 1960s, with the Portuguese fighting a desperate rearguard action against decolonisation in Africa, and with the Indonesians engaged in their policy of confrontation with the Western powers in South-East Asia. It was between these extremes that Australia sought to establish a policy of moderation or, at the very least, non-involvement.

Prior to World War II, Australian interest in Portuguese Timor had been relatively limited. There were only a few Australian commercial operations in the territory, mostly failed oil exploration ventures, and very little by way of trade. During World War I Prime Minister Andrew Fisher took up the fanciful suggestion of Australia's taking possession of Portuguese Timor; it could be used as 'a summer resort for settlers in the northern parts of Australia'. The idea was promptly dismissed by Attlee Hunt, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs: 'if residents of the North can afford to go away to escape the summer it is far more likely they will come south . . . where they can have the advantage of the society of their friends and relatives than go to such a place as Timor'.² There was also at this time the occasional scare over the possibility of the territory falling into the hands of a hostile power. These were generally the result of sensationalist newspaper articles and were always dismissed by the Portuguese Government as without foundation.

By 1940 Australian fear of foreign intervention in Timor had become something of a constant, with concern that the extent of Japanese commercial penetration of the territory had created a real strategic threat to Australian interests. In March 1941 David Ross, Flying Inspector with the Department of Civil Aviation, was sent to Dili to act as a counter to growing Japanese influence in the colony. Although there ostensibly as the technical assistant for QANTAS flights from Singapore to Sydney, Ross was in reality Australia's unofficial representative in the colony. In October 1941 his position was upgraded to that of Consul. Two months later Australian troops moved into what had been a neutral Portuguese Timor as a preemptive move against the Japanese. When the Japanese invaded in February 1942, the 2/2nd and 2/4th Australian Independent Companies alongside local Timorese resistance maintained a guerrilla war against the Japanese for almost a year. In July 1943 Prime Minister Curtin cabled his Minister for External Affairs, Dr H. V. Evatt, arguing that although Australia might well act to maintain Portuguese colonial sovereignty over the territory it was clearly time for Australia to press her own interests in the colony.

The war had convinced Australians of the importance of the territory as part of their northern strategic perimeter. When the war ended the Australian Government anticipated that various understandings they had reached with the Portuguese during the course of the war would be realised; namely the granting of Australian bases and facilities in the territory in exchange for Australian recognition of Portugal's continuing sovereignty there. The Portuguese however

¹ '[ANZUS] Agenda Item VI: Portuguese Timor', 1963. [NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, iii.]

² Fisher marginalia dated 2 May 1915 on 'The University of Melbourne: Suggestions re the Island of Timor' and Hunt to Minister of External Affairs, 25 May 1915. [NAA: A981, TIM P15.]

proved extremely reluctant to fulfil their wartime promises. By 1950, the Australian Government felt it necessary to threaten the withdrawal of the Australian Consulate from Dili unless Portugal was willing to accede to greater defence and commercial co-operation with Australia (see *Aide Mémoire*, p. 21). On 29 March the Portuguese Consul in Sydney gave 'an evasive reply',³ and so the Consulate was withdrawn in June 1950. Two years later, however, a new Australian Minister for External Affairs, R. G. Casey, was inclined to be sympathetic to the Portuguese in Timor, remarking: 'Timor is a long way from Portugal—and I expect feels rather lonely'.⁴ A defence paper of that same year reiterated the value of the territory as an Australian base:

The island of Timor . . . lies like an unsinkable aircraft carrier 3[–]400 miles off Australia's north-western coast, covering the approaches to the Le[e]uwin, the Kimberleys, to Darwin and to the Torres Straits.

It is a menace, actual and potential; but if action is taken now it can be turned into a protective shield.⁵

Although an Australian Consul returned to Dili in 1953 there was no serious attempt by either the Portuguese or the Australian governments to revive their wartime plans for defence and commercial co-operation in Timor over the following seven years.

By the 1960s the situation had changed considerably. Despite maintaining a determined resistance to decolonisation, the Portuguese Empire could not resist the 'winds of change'. Nationalist movements throughout Portugal's African Empire were in revolt and the Portuguese military were engaged in bitter wars in Angola (from March 1961), Guinea (from July 1961) and Mozambique (from September 1964). These African liberation movements were greatly assisted by the newly independent states of Africa, which supplied arms and safe bases within their borders, as well as support at the international level. In December 1960 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling on Portugal to accept the principle of decolonisation and to work towards the independence of her African colonies. Australia had until this time taken a strict legal position on the Portuguese colonies, arguing that, as Portugal considered the colonies to be part of Metropolitan Portugal, it was 'not within the legal competence of the General Assembly to pass judgment on the affairs of these territories'.⁶ The deterioration of the situation in Angola, however, led to a shift in the Australian position. In October 1961 Menzies urged the Portuguese Prime Minister, Salazar, to accept the principle of self-determination in relation to the Portuguese overseas territories and indicated that the Australian Government would henceforth treat all Portuguese colonies as non-self-governing territories and so subject to United Nations' supervision.

The Indonesian Government, like that of most ex-colonial states, had long been sympathetic to the liberation movements in Africa and was more than happy to engage in a degree of 'sabre-rattling' over Portuguese Timor. In July 1961, Dr Subandrio, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, warned Portugal against ignoring international support for Angolan independence and pointedly drew attention to Indonesia's proximity to Portugal's small colony in Timor. To emphasise this the Indonesian Ambassador was simultaneously recalled from Lisbon. For the Australian Government, the Indonesian threat against Portuguese Timor was merely part of a wider campaign of Indonesian confrontation with the Western powers in South-East Asia. For the first decade following independence Indonesia had been preoccupied

³ See telegram of 10 September 1951 from DFA, Sydney, to DFA, Canberra. [NAA:A1838, 3038/10/1, i.]

⁴ Casey to L. R. McIntyre, 3 June 1952. [NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, i.]

⁵ Paper by Cdr R. B. M. Long, 30 May 1952. [NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, i.]

⁶ Menzies to Salazar, 18 October 1961, in Cablegram O.15884, Canberra to the Australian Mission to the United Nations, 19 October 1961. [NAA: A1838, 49/1/3, v.]

by questions of internal stability. By the mid-1950s the Indonesian Government began increasingly to engage in a policy of territorial consolidation. The initial target was the Dutch administration of West New Guinea, against which Indonesia had been engineering a campaign of *Konfrontasi* since 1956. From 1961 there was mounting evidence of Indonesian hostility towards Singapore and the proposed Malaysian Federation with the prospect of an extension of *Konfrontasi* to Borneo and the Malayan peninsula.

The Portuguese responded to the Indonesian threats by calling, after fifteen years of neglect, for the negotiation of closer defence ties with Australia (see Blakeney's minute, p. 21; the submission to Barwick, p. 22; and Cablegram I.1895, p. 24). From 1962 to 1965 the Australian Government faced the difficulty of resisting Indonesian aggression against Portuguese Timor without being seen to support Portuguese colonialism, or alternatively, trying to encourage an end to Portuguese rule in Timor without encouraging any precipitate action by Indonesia (see for example, Waller's minute and Rowland's reply, p. 23). The depth of feeling against Portugal in Australia was strong, as witnessed in the acerbic response of Sir Arthur Tange, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, to yet another Portuguese request for defence co-operation: 'neither Australia nor the US would send a man to defend the Portuguese Administrators against Indonesian forcible incorporation' (see note 3, p. 24, and Cablegram I.1785, p. 25). But Australia was equally suspicious of Indonesia, with the Government expressing concern that Indonesia would take advantage of any Timorese independence movement and use the almost-certain Portuguese resistance as an excuse for armed intervention. This situation was further complicated by the Australian Cabinet's belief that there was 'no practicable alternative to eventual Indonesian sovereignty over Portuguese Timor' (see p. 26) and by indications that Britain and the United States were looking to Australia to find a solution to the Timor problem (see Tange's memorandum, p. 28).

By the close of 1963 Australian policy towards Portuguese Timor had not advanced from its predicament. In April 1963 a Department of External Affairs paper (p. 30) had suggested that, following guarded consultations with the Indonesians, Australia should raise the Portuguese Timor question in the United Nations, but this recommendation was expressly ruled out by Cabinet (see Minute, p. 35). Menzies wrote twice that year to Salazar (see pp. 27 and 35), warning him against continued intransigence on the decolonisation of Portuguese Timor, but to no avail (see replies, pp. 28 and 37). The escalation of Indonesia's confrontation of Malaysia in 1964 resulted in a toughening of the Australian defence stance and in late January 1965, sixteen months after Menzies' declaration of support to Malaysia, the Government committed Australian troops to Borneo. Although the Indonesian threat against Portuguese Timor had also increased, the Australian Government continued to rule out any direct military assistance to the Portuguese at that time (see Cablegram O.30115, p. 38). The Indonesian escalation in Borneo also further limited the scope for encouraging Portuguese decolonisation in Timor. This dilemma was made clear in the conclusions of the Joint Planning Committee paper of May 1965 (p. 40) which stated that though acceding to a Portuguese request for assistance in the event of Indonesian aggression would bring the advantage of showing 'our determination to stop further Indonesian aggression', it would also bring the disadvantage of 'associating Australia with Portuguese colonial policies'. When officers of the Department of External Affairs were called on to draft a possible Cabinet submission on the issue in the second half of 1965 their frustration at the hopelessness of the situation was clear: 'At this stage there does not seem to be any scope for further initiatives by Australia either with a view to influencing the Portuguese or to inhibiting Indonesian action' (see p. 41).

In fact the situation was already beginning to change. In the early hours of 1 October 1965 elements of the Indonesian armed forces sympathetic to the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) launched what they called a pre-emptive coup against the Council of Generals, capturing key installations on Java and killing seven members of the General Staff. The coup ushered in a period of political uncertainty within Indonesia culminating in the transfer of power from Sukarno to General Soeharto in March 1967. In the face of domestic unrest, Sukarno's foreign adventurism was abandoned, with former enemies in Borneo co-operating in counter-insurgency measures against communist guerrillas. The new regime sought the approval of the West by pursuing a vigorously anti-communist domestic policy and a 'responsible' foreign policy. The tentative moves the Australian Government had made in the early 1960s towards reaching some understanding with the Indonesians were renewed and by the early 1970s the bilateral relationship was such that Robert Furlonger, Australian Ambassador in Jakarta, felt confident to suggest it offered a real 'opportunity to influence Indonesian attitudes and policies' (see Dispatch, p. 43).

Portuguese Timor after the period of *Konfrontasi* returned to that state of 'fatalistic calm' that the DEA Working Group on Timor identified in 1963 (see the report, p. 30, and note 2, p. 31). Portugal continued to resist decolonisation of the overseas territories, with her attention sharply focused on the deteriorating situation in Portuguese Africa. The Australian Government continued to press the Portuguese to accept at least the principle of colonial self-government, but had otherwise allowed the question of Portuguese Timor to drop. In 1971 Australia closed the Consulate in Dili, largely on the grounds that it no longer justified its cost (see the submission to McMahon, p. 42). An important aspect of this decision was the belief that Indonesia no longer presented an immediate threat to the territory, a belief which strengthened over the next three years (see the submission to Whitlam, p. 44). When in April 1974 a group of radical young Portuguese army officers overthrew the forty-year-old Fascist regime it was not just the Timorese who would be shaken from their complacency. Once again the Australian Government would find itself on the horns of a dilemma: between its commitment to the principles of self-determination and its desire to maintain close relations with an Indonesia willing to subvert those principles in Portuguese Timor.

NOTE TO PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT

Canberra, 7 March 1950

Aide Memoire

The Australian Government have for some time maintained a Consulate at Dili in Portuguese Timor.

It was the Australian Government's hope in establishing this Consulate, which it did at considerable expense, that greatly increased commercial relations might be developed between Australia and Timor. It has, however, been found difficult to promote commercial enterprises in Timor, or to promote trade by Australian interests between Timor and Australia on any firm basis.

In view of these facts, the Australian Government has been considering for some time the possibility of withdrawing its Consul from Timor, as it does not appear to be fulfilling adequately the function for which it was first established. Before taking this step, however, I should be grateful if your Government would be so good as to indicate its general policy on the development of the territory by foreign capital.

We have a very direct interest also in the security of Portuguese Timor. Events during the last war proved this, and developments in South-East Asia since the conclusion of hostilities have tended to increase rather than decrease this interest. It is considered, therefore, that the time has arrived when our two Governments should consult together on matters of mutual security interest, as well as mutual commercial interests.

If we were encouraged to pursue this thought it would be a relevant consideration in deciding the future of the Australian Consulate at Portuguese Timor.

The Australian Government would appreciate any comments your Government has to offer on both matters. The Australian Government for its part would be glad to discuss these matters further at any time.¹

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, i]

MINUTE FROM BLAKENEY TO TANGE

Canberra, 21 July 1961

SECRET

Australian Policy Towards Portuguese Timor

The accompanying notes on current Indonesian attitudes towards Singapore and other neighbouring dependencies indicate, *inter alia*, the need for early re-examination of Australian policy in relation to Portuguese Timor. (Mr. Plimsoll also has referred to the need to define Australia's position in the United Nations General Assembly this year in relation to Portugal's colonial possessions.)

¹ On 29 March 1950, the Portuguese Consul in Sydney gave what was reported as 'an evasive reply' (see telegram of 10 September 1951). [NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, i.] The Consulate was withdrawn on 23 June 1950 and not fully re-established until 4 November 1953.

2. The need for such a re-examination of policy is underlined by reports just received from our Consul in Dili of the active concern of the new Military Commander in Portuguese Timor to secure the greatest possible Australian involvement with the Portuguese position in Timor. As understood by our Consul in Dili, this involvement would include the encouragement of Australian capital and enterprise to Timor, consultation on political matters of mutual concern, and the virtual integration of Portuguese and Australian armed forces. The Consul has already received an inquiry about the calibre of Australian ammunition with a view to standardization in Timor. There are indications that proposals on these lines may well have been discussed at the highest level in the Portuguese Defence Ministry, and may soon be recommended to the Portuguese Cabinet.
3. The suggested re-examination of Australian policy would entail consideration from a Defence point of view. A draft memorandum to the Department of Defence is attached for your approval.¹

F. J. BLAKENEY
Assistant Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, i]

SUBMISSION TO BARWICK

Canberra, 16 January 1962

SECRET

Portuguese Timor—Australian Attitude in Event of Indonesian Aggression

From the attached record of conversation you will see that the Portuguese Chargé d'Affaires, under instructions, has requested a definition of the Australian attitude in the event of Indonesian aggression against Portuguese Timor. He has asked to call on you or me this week to receive a reply.

2. It is suggested that the reply, which should be oral and confidential, might be on the following lines:—

- (a) the Australian Government would naturally take a serious view of any Indonesian aggression against Portuguese Timor;
- (b) the particular steps which it would take in that hypothetical event would, in accordance with normal practice, be decided by it in the light of all the relevant circumstances at the time;
- (c) subject to that general proviso it could be expected that:—
 - (i) political action by the Government would include support of proposals in the United Nations for a cease-fire and for a withdrawal of Indonesian forces, but that
 - (ii) the Government would be unlikely to feel able to give Portugal military or logistic support except in pursuance of a United Nations resolution *or* in association with both the United States and the United Kingdom.¹

¹ The memorandum asked for Defence views on the military importance of Portuguese Timor with 'particular regard to the military implications for Australia of the territory's falling under Indonesian control'.

¹ In an undated note to the Minister, Tange wrote: 'I should like to invite Minister to reconsider my recommendation c (ii)—wisdom of which I now doubt'. [NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ii.]

- (d) the Australian Government would like to know what objectives Portugal has for the eventual political status of the territory, and what is the present state of the Portuguese Government's advance towards this objective.²

3. I suggest that it would be sufficient if I conveyed the reply to him.³

A. H. TANGE

Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ii]

MINUTE FROM WALLER TO SHAW, ROWLAND AND HUTTON

Canberra, 11 January 1963

CONFIDENTIAL

Timor

The Minister feels that for the record we should again urge Portugal to do something about her colonies, particularly Timor. Then when the blow falls, we can say that on several occasions over the last few years, we have urged on Salazar the necessity for action.

2. May I have your comments please?

J. K. WALLER

First Assistant Secretary
Division I

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ii]

MINUTE FROM ROWLAND TO WALLER

Canberra, 14 January 1963

CONFIDENTIAL

I have some difficulty with this.¹

2. I imagine that we would be wise to think carefully about what we say about Portuguese Timor (at this moment especially) to the Portuguese. You know more about this than I, but —

- (i) to preach self-determination in Timor at this moment, picking out this territory for special emphasis, may look like a declaration that we would be happy to see the island go to Indonesia and would do nothing to resist this. This may (or may not!) be the case, but do we want to tell the Portuguese so? I gather from this morning's telegrams that Indonesian activities are already in train so that such an indication of attitude by us would at least need careful drafting.

² Paragraph 2 (d) was added as a marginal note by Tange.

³ Barwick agreed to the submission as amended.

¹ That is, the suggestion in Waller's minute, above.

- (ii) To correspond with the Portuguese about Timor at all is likely to produce a response: the last letter to Dr Salazar produced an invitation to inspect Portuguese territory, which we have not taken up. Any letter of ours may look like a declaration of interest in the island's future and be open to interpretation as an indication of readiness to exchange words with the Portuguese about it. Do we want this?
3. In short, I wonder if it is not already late for the sort of thing the Minister has in mind, as regards Timor. Our approach to Portuguese territories in general is made fairly clear in Mr Menzies last letter.² What do we want the Portuguese to *do* in Timor?³
4. I have dictated, as a chopping block, a shorter version of your draft. The Katanga parallel need not worry us too much, I suppose, but *we have* supported the United Nations approach and have said so in United Nations debates, I think.

J. R. ROWLAND

Acting Assistant Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ii]

CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Washington, 21 January 1963

I.1895/207 SECRET

For Barwick from Beale

On Thursday night, January 17th, I saw Pedro Pereira, the Portuguese Ambassador, an old diplomatic hand and, according to reports, in the confidence of Salazar.

2. We talked about Portuguese Timor, and he said that there was no doubt that Soekarno intended to get it. I said that I hoped he would agree that Australia had given evidence of its friendly feelings towards Portugal, both through the terms of my Prime Minister's letter to his President,¹ and in other ways. He said he did agree and that the Portuguese Government was grateful for this. I then said that I was speaking for myself but, having just had talks with the State Department about Timor, I felt that Portugal's present attitude, if unchanged, would make it difficult for her friends to give her the full diplomatic and political support they would wish in the event of an attempted take-over by Soekarno. In particular, the United States had a long tradition of opposition to colonial rule, and, although the United States was completely opposed to Soekarno's ambitions, it would feel greatly inhibited in giving support to Portugal if the latter's present stand remains unchanged.

3. I said I knew my Prime Minister had written to his President last year,² on aspects of the colonial problem relating in particular to the United Nations, but, regarding the specific problem of Timor, I would like to know whether he (Pereira) thought it would be possible for the

² Menzies wrote to Salazar on 18 October 1961, explaining Australia's general position on Portuguese colonial policy. See Cablegram O.15884 to the Australian Mission to the United Nations, Savingram AP145 to all posts, 19 October 1961. [NAA: A1838, 49/1/3, v.]

³ Rowland added in marginalia: 'I don't think we need worry about the *European* aspects of our relations with Portugal'.

¹ Menzies to Salazar, 18 October 1961 (see note 2 above).

² Presumably this refers to the letter of 18 October 1961.

Portuguese Government to take some steps or come out with some announcement indicating the Governments intention to introduce welfare or education measures and generally to indicate their intention to give the natives an opportunity for self-determination.

4. Pereira said that Portugal had already refused to accede to this sort of suggestion in the United Nations because she regarded Timor as part of metropolitan Portugal. I said 'I know that Pedro, and I do not dispute the legality of Portugal's position, but the fact is that such a stand is unacceptable either to the majority in the United Nations or to the United States Government. On the one hand there is Soekarno's obvious intention to take Portuguese Timor if it can, and, on the other, there is the difficulty her friends have, and the United States in particular, in giving fuller support to you because of the position you take up. Is it possible for your Government to adjust itself to this position so that others may be free to give more support? Doing so would not ensure success, but not doing so would make failure more likely'.

5. Pereira said, 'I am very interested in what you say. I had not thought of the matter the way you put it, and I would like suggestions from you as to what my Government might say or do. If you will let me have these, I will send them on to my President—if you wish as if they were my own proposals'.

6. It may be that, if the Government decided to make representations to Portugal as urged by Harriman, the Prime Minister would wish to make them direct to the President of Portugal. If not, I should be glad of your advice as to whether I should pursue this matter with Pereira any further; and, if I should, what suggestions I should make to him.³

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ii]

CABLEGRAM TO WASHINGTON

Canberra, 28 January 1963

O.1785/174 SECRET

For Beale from Barwick

I do not believe you should give the Portuguese Ambassador any reason to hope that we can support Portugal's position in Timor. Prime Minister has already made clear to Salazar our belief that the principle of self-determination should be applied to the Portuguese overseas territories and we are at present considering the desirability of re-iterating this warning in the context of likely discussions on Timor in the Committee of Twenty-four.

2. You should express as your personal opinion to Pereira that neither Australia nor the United States would be extremely [likely]¹ to send a man to defend Timor against

³ In marginalia on this cablegram Tange wrote to Waller: 'I think Beale shld be told to express the personal opinion to Portugal that (1) neither Australia nor the US would send a man to defend the Portuguese administrators against Indonesian forcible incorporation of the Timorese people in Indonesia. (2) Portugal shld approach some international body to recommend a future for the Timorese. Obviously the Portuguese cannot remain in control any more than the Australians in New Guinea, the British in Malaya or the Dutch in Indonesia & West New Guinea. Why do the Portuguese suppose that they can remain by right of conquest? Submit this to Minister pls'.

¹ The original text read 'unlikely' but given Tange's comment (see note 3 above) and the general thrust of the paragraph this should read 'likely'.

Indonesian attempts to annex the Portuguese parts of the island by force. You could then suggest that Portugal would do well to approach some international body to recommend a future for the Timorese. Obviously the anachronism of this tiny colony cannot remain in their control much longer. Britain, France, the Dutch and of course Australia have recognised the trend of history and realised that colonial territories must be given the right to determine their future. Portugal deludes herself if she believes she can retain indefinitely what she holds by right of conquest.²

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ii]

CABINET MINUTE

Canberra, 5 February 1963

DECISION NO. 632 SECRET

Without Memorandum¹ —Indonesia—Quadripartite Talks

[*matter omitted*]²

4. In relation to Portuguese Timor, the Cabinet accepted the view that in the current state of world opinion, no practicable alternative to eventual Indonesian sovereignty over Portuguese Timor presented itself. It would not be acceptable to Australia or the West for Indonesia to proceed against Portuguese Timor with arms, and this must be brought home to Indonesia. But otherwise the course which it seemed best to follow is for Australia to bring such quiet pressure as it can upon Portugal to cede peacefully and in addition to explore ways by which the international community might bring pressure on Portugal.

[*matter omitted*]

8. Also in the course of discussion, there was reference to proposals by the United States Administration to the effect that Australia should take more defence and diplomatic initiative in South-East Asia, thus sharing responsibility more, rather than, as at present, limiting itself to the support of leads of the United States or Britain. While noting these proposals, the Cabinet indicated that although it did not rule out some action of the kind, it would by no means wish to take initiatives which might lead to the point where Australia came to be seen by Indonesia or other countries as a standing adversary. The objective in relations with Indonesia must be to achieve the greatest available degree of mutual understanding.

² Beale passed on the message to Pereira the following day (Washington to Canberra, Cablegram I.2614/277, 29 January 1963); Pereira 'was not very responsive to the idea of approaching any international body'. [NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ii.]

¹ Cabinet had before it a note prepared by Barwick. On Portuguese Timor it stated: 'The problem of Portuguese Timor is different [from that of Malaysia]. It is difficult to see a practicable alternative to the Timorese people joining Indonesia. Vague talk of raising standards of living will not achieve a permanent solution. We must be at pains to impress on Indonesia our disapproval of a military attack on Timor. We must show that such action could only have a most detrimental effect on our relations with her and that a patient approach to the problem in the United Nations would in the long term be to her real advantage'. [NAA: A1838, TS696/2/1.]

² The omitted matter (here and later) concerns the decision to accept the British invitation to attend proposed talks in Washington between Britain, the United States, Australia and New Zealand in relation to Indonesian expansionist intentions, particularly in Borneo and towards Malaysia.

Therefore, while Australia must observe the course of policy referred to in paragraph 2 above,³ it should at the same time persevere in seeking to improve relations wherever and in whatever ways possible.

[NAA: A4940, C3739]

LETTER FROM MENZIES TO SALAZAR

Canberra, 8 February 1963

I wrote to you on the 18th October, 1961 in connection with the consideration at the United Nations of certain questions of special concern to the Portuguese Government, in particular that of the situation in Angola. On that occasion you did me the courtesy of replying at length, dealing not only with the points raised in my letter but explaining the philosophy, in matters concerning overseas territories, of the Portuguese Government and of yourself as its distinguished leader for so many years.

I have studied your letter with great care and have noted that there is a great difference between our respective approaches, though I would still hope that at some stage we might yet bring our approaches closer together.

However, it is not my purpose to pursue that particular aspect further at this stage. My object in writing to you, as a friend of Portugal is to let you know that the views which I indicated in my last letter to you—notably, support of the principle of self-determination for all peoples—will continue to govern the approach of the Australian representative on the United Nations Special Committee of 24 on the Implementation of the Declaration on Colonialism, of which, as you know, Australia is a member.

Though the Committee has not yet considered its programme of work for the current year, I would think it probable that it may again pay some attention to Portuguese territory in Africa, and that it may also discuss the future of Portuguese Timor. It would be difficult for Australia to refrain entirely from taking part in such a debate. Portuguese Timor is geographically close to Australia and has a land frontier with the people of Indonesian Timor. My Government is concerned that, in the absence of any intention of allowing the Timorese people to express a choice as to the international relationships and status which they desire, there will arise a serious threat to the peace of the Territory.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of my high consideration.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ii]

³ Paragraph 2 outlined the approach Australia should take at the talks, namely continued support for British action in respect of Borneo, and support for a self-supporting Malaysian Federation within the framework of reaching some understanding with Indonesia.

MEMORANDUM TO WALLER

Canberra, 25 February 1963

SECRET

Working Group on Portuguese Timor

Three things are clear:

- (1) The Portuguese will do nothing for the Timorese.
 - (2) The United States will not support Portuguese colonialism.
 - (3) The Indonesians will move against the territory; if they achieve their end by force (and there is nothing to prevent them), it will be a most serious encouragement to irresponsible and expansionist elements in Indonesia and it will do the greatest harm to Australia's long-term interests.
2. The United States and the United Kingdom are looking to Australia to take some initiative to avoid the Western world finding itself in a situation where a nationalistic revolutionary power, backed by Russian arms, can achieve its ends by force of arms. This power is at Australia's doorstep.
3. I want a Working Group on Portuguese Timor to explore all possible measures: and to analyse developments which, if they can be initiated or encouraged, would produce the least embarrassment to Australia's foreign policy and national interests.
4. The deliberations of the Working Group are to be kept highly confidential; and it should report within three weeks.¹

A. H. TANGE

Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ii]

LETTER FROM SALAZAR TO MENZIES

Lisbon, 1 March 1963

EXTRACTS

*[matter omitted]*¹

With regard to self-determination, I would like to observe that an excellent beginning for the Committee's work would be to define the precise meaning of the terms it uses. In the motions voted in the recent sessions of the General Assembly against Portugal and the Portuguese territories, the demand for self-determination is equivalent, because it is simultaneous, to the granting of independence. But freedom of this type, granted to various peoples, precludes all possible options, leaving the peoples concerned only with that of forming independent states, even if these are politically and economically non-viable. The members of the Committee may be convinced that, by demanding self-determination at random, they are working for the freedom of men, but basically they are denying them freedom.

¹ Members of the working group were G. Jockel, W. T. Doig and A. Brown.

¹ The matter omitted summarised the content of Menzies' letter, p. 27.

[*matter omitted*]²

I should think that the greatest concern of Australia would be not a disturbance of order, not an attack on Portuguese sovereignty in Timor, but to know who afterwards would exercise sovereignty in that territory. Given the fact that Timor cannot be an independent State, the territory either continues to be a part of Portugal as an autonomous province that it is or is annexed to the Republic of Indonesia; there does not seem to be any foreseeable hypothesis of an Australian dominion or condominium. However good and intimate Australian relations with Indonesia may be, a Portuguese Timor seems incomparably safer and more attentive to the interests of Australia than the same Timor integrated in that Republic. We continue to see the problem in the light of our relations and of the official statements made by the Australian Government during the Second World War.

In fact, the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated in Parliament, on the 27th of November, 1941, that Australia had a very direct interest in preserving the complete political independence of Timor and that Australia could not see with equanimity any development which threatened the integrity of that part of the Portuguese empire. In the note of the British Embassy in Lisbon, dated the 14th of September, 1943, we were told that His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia trusted that the Portuguese Government would share the view that the two Governments should concert between them measures for a common defence of Timor and Australia.

This was the line of thought of the Australian Government of those days, and it does not appear that the world situation enables it now to think differently.

It seemed to me that Your Excellency's letter expresses a conviction that Portugal's non-compliance with the injunctions of the UNO will provoke a threat to peace in the territory. By whom and why? President Soekarno and his representatives have declared more than once that they do not entertain any desire to possess Portuguese Timor and we cannot doubt their word. This seems to exclude direct attack by their military forces. It remains to be seen if Soekarno will be able, without betraying his word, to accept the territory, should it be offered to him. Given the expansionist fever which we witness in many quarters, there is always a possibility of national or foreign agents undertaking the work of preparing manifestations of popular will to that end.

Your Excellency has perhaps been informed that this has been and is being tried and, since the Consul for Australia in Dili has maintained intimate relations with his Indonesian colleague, I presume that he could not have failed to convey to Your Excellency all the details of these attempts. In these circumstances, I would myself be very grateful if Your Excellency thought it possible, and useful to the Portuguese Government, to acquaint the latter with what Your Excellency's Consul may have found out in that respect. But the attempts to which I refer and the work of subversion which is being promoted have nothing to do with any promises of self-determination. On the contrary, these would be a pretext to unleash movements and hold out threats to the territory.

But, then, if an Australian dominion is impossible, if the independence of Timor (fed with large sums of money given annually out of the metropolitan budget) is impossible, if Portuguese sovereignty is the only safe one for Australia, what does the latter think of doing or what can it do to maintain the *status quo*? Its presence in the Committee of 24 can be precious, if it divests itself of the idea that the people of Timor are in a position to express their

² In the matter omitted, Salazar argued that as the Portuguese overseas provinces were part of Metropolitan Portugal with representation in the National Assembly it could not be said that they were not self-governing. The letter also here referred to the Afro-Asian and communist domination of the United Nations and the inability of the Portuguese to receive a fair hearing in the General Assembly.

choice as regards international relations and to define their internal statute, and that recognition of such a position would result in altering the situation in the territory in a manner that would be favourable to Australia. A little over a year ago the United Nations made the disastrous experiment of Goa. The sincerity of the numerous votes which the Indian Union cast in the course of years in favour of self-determination of the Portuguese State of India led to the annexation of the territory and to the loss of the freedoms it enjoyed as a part of Portugal.

I am very grateful to Your Excellency for the friendship towards Portugal which you have shown once again by your letter and I crave your indulgence for troubling you with these considerations. But I think they are of some use for the understanding of the problems which we are facing.

Please, Excellency, accept the assurance of my highest consideration.

[NAA: A1838, 49/1/3, v]

REPORT BY THE WORKING GROUP OF DEPARTMENTAL OFFICERS

Canberra, 4 April 1963

SECRET

The Future of Portuguese Timor

Summary

Portugal's colonial interests are of major internal importance within the Portuguese State. Some change should follow the retirement or death of Dr. Salazar whose purpose is to maintain the *status quo*.

2. Portugal will not allow Portuguese Timor to be the subject of international action because of the consequences for the much more important African territories. We think Portugal would see less harm in a violent Indonesian annexation than in the processes of orderly internationally-conducted change.
3. Indonesia has put itself in a false position by its public statements. Sooner or later Indonesia will be obliged to declare that Portuguese colonialism in Timor must go. This will arouse fear of expansionism and aggression. While there are many pressures at work in Indonesia, the prospects for a flexible and careful approach need not be ruled out.
4. Bilateral discussions with Portugal will not achieve very much. Nor will Portugal be moved by United Nations discussion.
5. But early discussion in the United Nations has considerable merit:
 - (i) Australia can go on record with a positive statement about the future of the territory;
 - (ii) It would be made more difficult for Indonesia to take unilateral, violent action.
6. What we have to fear in particular is an uprising and bloody suppression leading to Indonesian intervention. If the matter is already actively before the United Nations, Indonesia may itself allow the main action to be determined in the United Nations. In any event there would be better chances of a realistic engagement of the United Nations in such a situation and better chances for Australia avoiding a head-on clash with Indonesia.
7. We should discuss the matter—in terms of consideration in the United Nations—with Indonesia in careful terms at an early date.
8. We should prepare public opinion, so that it can make a balanced judgement in a crisis.

The Future of Portuguese Timor

Report of Working Group of Departmental Officers

The Working Group on Portuguese Timor was established in March 1963 to explore the possible measures for the solution of the Portuguese Timor problem; and to analyse developments which, if they can be initiated or encouraged, would produce the least embarrassment to Australia's foreign policy and national interests.¹

[*matter omitted*]²

Prospects for a solution of the problem

26. We might begin by asking the question 'Will Portugal consider separately the problem of Portuguese Timor?' In our view the answer lies in the fact that Portugal is primarily interested in Angola and Mozambique. We think it is not prepared to embark on any course of action for Portuguese Timor which would compromise its position on those territories either in the United Nations, in the territories themselves, or internally in Portugal. It is most sensitive on questions of self-determination (apart from its own metaphysical usage of the term) as leading swiftly and irrevocably to the collapse of its colonial system. It would seem to follow that Australian and Portuguese interests are widely divergent in important respects:—

- (i) Our concern is to find peaceful and legitimate processes to end Portuguese rule in Portuguese Timor. Portugal's concern is that such processes would have grave implications and would undermine her colonial system;
- (ii) Our concern is that Portuguese Timor should not be forcibly annexed by Indonesia. Portugal, on the other hand, would probably prefer Portuguese Timor to be speedily and forcibly annexed rather than enter into agreements.

27. The problem of self-determination should be mentioned here. Cabinet's view is that Portugal should 'cede peacefully' to Indonesia,³ but the Government would certainly wish cession to be accompanied by some process of self-determination. Moreover, we would expect that the Indonesians themselves would want some expression of self-determination to protect them from the accusation of neo-colonialism by making deals with a colonialist power. Perhaps in theory the problem of self-determination is not insurmountable and might be overcome by a West New Guinea type of arrangement.⁴ Portugal for its part would make a decision to cede or hand-over to an international body, and would not interest itself in the subsequent processes by which Indonesia incorporated the peoples of the territory.

28. We do not think, however, even if the self-determination point can be settled that Portugal can be brought to cede. Portugal could be expected to be fairly indifferent to our warnings that the alternative would be a violent Indonesian annexure without any other country coming to her support. As argued above, their view would probably be that if there is to be another Goa, then let it be. Portugal did not compromise over Goa in the face of the constant likelihood of Indian action; in Timor, on the other hand, they at least have assurances from the Indonesian

¹ See Tange's memorandum, p. 28.

² The first sections of the report examined the nature of Portuguese colonial policy, the state of Portuguese Timor ('a picture of fatalistic calm'), Indonesian and Australian policy towards Portuguese Timor, and the continuing UN interest in the Portuguese colonies.

³ See the Cabinet minute, p. 26.

⁴ On 1 September 1962 the United Nations Temporary Executive Agency took over from the Dutch the administration of the province of West New Guinea, which had since Indonesian independence remained under Dutch control. UNTEA was to serve as an interim administration before sovereignty was transferred to the Republic of Indonesia nine months later. There was then to be a plebiscite on the province's future to be held some time before the end of 1969, although it was widely accepted that after six years of Indonesian control the outcome of that vote was a certainty.

Government. What other forms of persuasions do we have? One might seek to argue that the cession of Portuguese Timor would not prejudice the position elsewhere; Portuguese Timor is an economic liability; it can have no independent future; its position is not comparable to that of the big African territories; it lives in the shadow of a huge neighbour of like race and culture. Portugal is free to dispose of it, especially as it is regarded as part of Portugal. However, at a time when Portugal is under continually growing pressure in the United Nations over the African territories and is facing liberation revolts in those territories the prospects for a separate approach by the Portuguese authorities in Timor, where they do not feel urgent pressures, must be slender if not hopeless.

29. A useful line of approach might be for Catholic authorities to represent the case to Portugal after satisfying themselves (as they can) about religious tolerance in Indonesia. There is evidence that some Indonesian leaders are already working on this line of approach. Our view is that this is useful but that the Portuguese will not make decisions about Timor in isolation. On the most hopeful view we would not expect early action to follow from such representations.

Preparing the ground-work in the United Nations

30. The view was expressed at the tripartite talks in Washington that little could be done in the United Nations because of Portugal's problems with the African territories. We feel, however, after surveying the doubtful prospects for bilateral discussion and negotiation with Portugal that the maximum use must be made of United Nations machinery on decolonisation. A preliminary question we must ask is whether it would be prejudicial to Australia's other interests for the Committee of Twenty Four to turn its attention to Portuguese Timor at an early date. Our present view is that it suits us to have the Committee focus its attention on Africa and it is likely that this preoccupation of the Committee could continue for some time to come. We do not consider this to be of overriding importance.

31. We see no immediate prospect of United Nations pressure causing a change in Portuguese policy, and the most we could expect would be that a line of communication on the matter might be opened up between Portugal and the United Nations e.g. by the former accepting the interest of the Secretary-General in a personal capacity. An indirect consequence would be that statements made by countries like Australia would have some effect within Portugal itself, which is a not unimportant aspect in view of Salazar's age.

32. While they may not offer early hopes of a solution of this problem, we think there are useful steps to be taken in the United Nations which are consistent with our own principles; which are advantageous to our international relationships; and which offer some prospect of increasing our influence and scope for manoeuvre. We think that constructive discussion in the United Nations will 'steal the Indonesian wind' and make it more difficult for them to go off on a course of their own. Moreover, if the Indonesians are disposed to cooperate on the issue, the fact that the United Nations is seized of it might be useful for them internally. In addition, Australia will be on record as having expressed a positive and constructive point of view which would be useful if a crisis should develop.

33. We have in mind that—

- (i) We have made it clear in the United Nations that so far as Australia[n] New Guinea is concerned we accept the obligations of the Charter, and that our policies are to bring about conditions as speedily as practicable for the exercise of self-determination;
- (ii) So far as the Portuguese Overseas territories are concerned, in the Committee of Twenty Four on Decolonisation, we have said (quite sharply) that we have been profoundly disturbed by the professed objectives and by the practices of the

Portuguese Government in its administration of those Territories; that we have found them falling far short of the fulfilment of the obligations laid down in the Charter of the United Nations; and that we believe that the provisions of Chapter XI of the Charter ought to be observed. We have further stated our belief that the peoples of the Portuguese territories ought, in the same way as the people of other dependent territories, to be given the opportunity to determine their own future and that they ought not to be deprived of the right of self-determination.

- (iii) We have adequately warned the Portuguese Government of our view that the Charter principle of self-determination is applicable to Portuguese Timor.

34. Neither we nor the other members of the Committee have specifically referred to Portuguese Timor, the debates having been addressed to the African Territories. We recommend that Australia put itself on record at an early date in the Committee of Twenty Four (or elsewhere in the United Nations) that Portuguese Timor properly falls within the ambit of the non-self-governing territories articles of the Charter, and that we regard the principle of self-determination as applying to the people of Portuguese Timor. We could say that it is the duty of Portugal to promote a rate of social and economic development as will provide a basis for the exercise of this right. We accept that this is a Charter obligation which governs our own policies as it should Portugal's. We could acknowledge (in careful terms) that on account of its size and nature, the future of Portuguese Timor need not be thought of solely in terms of independence and that other possible answers may suit the wishes of the inhabitants. We could also state that the future of Portuguese Timor is of natural concern to its neighbours who may be involved in arrangements and guarantees through the United Nations. (An invitation might be arranged discreetly through the Chairman of the Committee for Indonesia to express its views).

35. We should discuss the future of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia at an appropriate time on the basis that the two countries are its closest neighbours and that the present status cannot last indefinitely. While letting Indonesia understand that Australia would not oppose the territory eventually becoming a part of Indonesia through satisfactory processes of self-determination, we might also urge that there are other worthwhile possibilities for consideration. For example, the Territory might acquire a measure of autonomy under the protection externally of Indonesia. The Indonesians could be encouraged to look at various international precedents for a solution short of full incorporation in Indonesia, although ultimately that might come to pass. In talking to the Indonesians we should avoid being over-eager to suggest that inevitably the territory of Portuguese Timor should pass to them and that we don't have any scruples about that eventuality except the use of force. We should make continued reference to the argument of self-determination. Otherwise, we place ourselves in the position of being an accomplice of Indonesia in an exercise in 'realpolitik' which, we believe, would earn the reverse of their healthy respect. Also, we weaken in their eyes our moral and political stand over Australian New Guinea; some of the arguments which would rationalize an annexation of Timor could be eventually applied to Australian New Guinea.

36. The Working Group thinks there is an argument for having the discussions with the Indonesians first. They are directly concerned and our failure to consult them in advance might rebound against us on another issue where we might expect to be consulted. We could explain to them that we believe it is in the common interest that Portuguese Timor be discussed in the United Nations in the near future, that Australia would follow progressive policies when it was discussed, and that the Indonesian Government would be better placed to handle its own anti-colonial public opinion if it could make reference to the matter being before the United Nations.

37. It is possible that the Indonesians might satisfy us by their attitude that the matter is not urgent, and we may feel sufficiently reassured to let the Committee of Twenty Four keep its attention on Africa. On the other hand, we are inclined to think that the sooner the question is brought before the United Nations the better. What we have most to fear is a movement of resistance which will either be aided by Indonesia or will be so regarded by the Portuguese. We cannot expect that Indonesia would stand idly by. Nor could we. Under these circumstances, if the United Nations was already seized of the matter and Australia and Indonesia were on record there, it might be good practical diplomacy in the interests of both countries to have speedy recourse to the United Nations. We believe this would add a valuable element to our present policy. As matters now stand, our Ambassador has standing instructions to speak in sharp terms if there are clear indications of an Indonesian threat; the subsequent step would be to arraign Indonesia before the bar of the United Nations and go through the sterile procedure of urging a cease-fire and withdrawal of forces. What we are searching for are courses of action which would dispose the Indonesians to cooperate with orderly and constructive United Nations processes rather than taking unilateral action and relying on its appeal to Afro-Asians and communist countries as an anti-Portuguese, anti-colonial, liberating force. Given the importance which Indonesia places upon its standing in the United Nations this is a not unrealistic objective.

38. Whatever the prospects for peaceful developments, it seems to us essential that Australian public opinion be given information which would prepare it to make a balanced judgement in the event of a crisis. The issue should not be allowed to appear simply as Indonesian expansionism. Indonesia will be under pressures; rebel leaders may call for help; the nature of the Portuguese regime is a provocation. It would be helpful to have press articles which describe the poor quality of the Portuguese administration, its unprogressive character, and its inability to offer a future to the Timorese. Also, should Portuguese intransigence be in evidence over a period of time in United Nations discussions there might be less public censure attaching to Indonesia if it took the matter into its own hands.

39. If this line of approach is accepted, further consideration will be needed on the timing of action in the United Nations and with the Indonesians; and the question of further discussion with the quadripartite group of countries will have to be decided.

40. Finally, a reply should be sent to Dr. Salazar's recent letter⁵ which would take up in particular the assumptions he has made about Australian policy.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ii]

⁵ See p. 28.

MINUTE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE COMMITTEE OF CABINET
Canberra, 23 May 1963

DECISION NO. 823 (FAD) SECRET

Without Memorandum—ANZUS Council Meeting—Wellington
5th–6th June, 1963

The Committee had for consideration a ‘Note for Cabinet’ circulated by the Minister for External Affairs.¹

2. The Committee noted the agenda for the ANZUS Council meeting.
3. In relation to the two subjects, Portuguese Timor and Malaysia, specifically discussed in the Minister’s note, the Committee reached the following conclusions:—

Portuguese Timor

The course suggested in the Minister’s note, under which Australia would seek to engage the attention of the United Nations, was not regarded as acceptable—this notwithstanding the nature of the problem as summarised in the Minister’s note, and notwithstanding also the situation that the United States (and Britain and New Zealand) looked to Australia to develop a detailed policy on the future of Portuguese Timor.

It was felt that at the ANZUS Council meeting the Minister for External Affairs might usefully refer to the approach which the Australian Government has made to Portugal, and to the letters which have passed on the Prime Minister to Prime Minister level, and indicate the Government’s willingness to resume this correspondence, but beyond that, the Minister should say that Australia sees no action which it can take.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A4940, C3797]

LETTER FROM MENZIES TO SALAZAR
Canberra, 15 October 1963

I have studied your letter of 1st March, 1963,¹ and discussed it with my colleagues, and I thank you for furnishing me with your further views. We have naturally given your arguments close and careful attention. In spite of this, we have regretfully come to the conclusion that our points of view are no nearer as a result of this exchange of views. It is, I believe, important that I should offer you my further views, especially in view of developments in South-East Asia.

Your Excellency’s letter discusses the question of an Australian dominion or condominium in Portuguese Timor. Let me say that this is not a solution which we have ever contemplated or would contemplate. It is a solution which in my view would appeal neither to the Timorese nor to the Australian people.

I need scarcely assure you that Australia will not be drawn into inadvertent support of forces which work for the disintegration of Western Europe. We are deeply conscious of our

¹ The note essentially set out the recommendations of the Working Group on Portuguese Timor (see p. 30). [NAA: A4940/1, C3797.]

¹ See p. 28.

European heritage and anxious that Europe for its part should maintain its interest in and awareness of our part of the world.

Your Excellency refers to Australia's membership of the United Nations Committee of Twenty-four as providing the Australian Government with opportunities to help preserve the *status quo*. With respect, Your Excellency, it is our judgment that support cannot be won in the Committee of Twenty-four or elsewhere in the United Nations for maintaining the *status quo*. The question to which I would sincerely invite Your Excellency's attention is whether the Portuguese Government could indicate prospects for the future of the Timorese which would be of a character to attract support in the United Nations, thereby creating a positive sentiment in the United Nations that Portuguese Timor should be protected from outside pressures. I cannot feel that such a will exists in the United Nations at present.

In view of the current disturbed situation in South-East Asia, I am sure you have carefully evaluated the assurances you have received from the Government of Indonesia that it has no claim on Timor against the knowledge that Indonesia has declared that it supports all anti-colonial movements. Your notice will no doubt have been drawn to reports in the Indonesian official news agency in September of a rebel movement in Timor asking Indonesia's recognition and help.

These and other statements seem to me to make clear that if there is what Indonesia regards as an 'independence' movement in Portuguese Timor, Indonesia would believe, or at any rate say, that she has an obligation to support it. It therefore seems to me worthy of consideration whether Portugal would not be wise to secure the interests of the United Nations in Portuguese Timor before such an 'independence' movement develops rather than after it is claimed to exist.

I am, of course, familiar with the arguments of your own Government and the principles to which it adheres, particularly as expressed in your speech delivered at Lisbon on 12th August, 1963. Nor would I wish you to regard me as an impertinent adviser. But in all friendliness, and with no illusions about Indonesian tactics, I still say that I am concerned that the attitude of the Portuguese Government and of those who are opposed to its policies will lead to a further series of events which will promote the interest of neither side and which may have wider international implications. May I take this opportunity of sending you the text of a broadcast which I made on 6th September, 1963, in the course of a visit I myself made to the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. I hope you may see in my own Government's approach something of our sense of trusteeship towards these territories and of our continuing effort to bring about the conditions under which the peoples of the territories can freely choose a future separate from Australia.

Accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

LETTER FROM SALAZAR TO MENZIES

Lisbon, 5 March 1964

I thank Your Excellency for your letter dated the 15th of October, 1963,¹ and for the interest you have been taking in the Portuguese overseas policy, very especially in regard to Timor. I have given your letter the closest attention and I take the liberty to place before you the considerations which have been suggested by its contents and some comments prompted by recent developments.

[*matter omitted*]²

4. Your Excellency writes that, as regards Timor, the problem consists in knowing whether 'the Portuguese Government could indicate prospects for the future of the Timorese which would be of a character to attract support in the United Nations, thereby creating a positive sentiment in the United Nations that Portuguese Timor should be protected from outside pressures'. For the reasons I have mentioned above, we have to conclude that the only support obtainable from the United Nations will be for a policy dictated by the majority. We know for certain—I presume that Your Excellency does not doubt it either—that the majority demands a policy linking self-determination with immediate independence; this is what has been voted. But, in the case of Portuguese Timor, not even this much could be expected. Your Excellency is aware that Portuguese Timor cannot constitute an independent nation. Your Excellency is aware that the Republic of Indonesia would never consent to the existence of an independent Timor. In this context, what policy can be formulated which, not maintaining the status quo on one hand, would take into account on the other hand the impossibility of the independence of the territory and would avoid the annexation of it by Indonesia? Your Excellency submits that the interests which the United Nations would take in Timor could protect the territory from external pressures. I do not know whether there might not have been something of naiveté in this suggestion. As for myself, Mr Prime Minister, I believe the United Nations took a profound interest in Dutch New Guinea: but that did not secure self-determination for the people of West Irian. I also believe the United Nations took an active interest in and even intervened in the formation of Malaysia: but the latter has subsisted thanks only to the military protection of the United Kingdom and to the support of some other countries like Australia. I do not know that the United Nations, as an organisation, is ready to defend Malaysia against Indonesia, nor am I convinced that any country or the United Nations will fight to defend an independent Timor.

5. I fully agree with Your Excellency as regards Indonesian statements concerning its respect for Timor. But, if we ought not to believe in the word of governments and if we cannot rely on international law for our security, I do not see how unilateral changes of policy can affect those premises. On the other hand, there is no independence movement in Portuguese Timor nor is there the least desire for union with Indonesia, which would only bring disadvantages to a population whose living standard, though modest, is higher than that of their neighbours on the other side of the island. Besides, as I pointed out in my previous letter, it is not possible, in good faith, to deny the autonomy enjoyed by the inhabitants of Portuguese Timor, their effective participation in the administration of the territory and in the political life of the Nation as a whole, the authentic self-determination which they have been exercising and are living every day. This means: the Portuguese Timorese enjoy in the highest measure the autonomy which

¹ See p. 35.

² The matter omitted concerned the suggestion of an Australian condominium, which Salazar argued was raised only to be dismissed as an impossibility, and the problem of resisting the Afro-Asian and communist blocs in the United Nations in the face of weakness on the part of the Western powers.

can be theirs. Nevertheless, those populations if intensely pressed from outside, can one day declare—they themselves!—that, instead of becoming independent, they desire to join the big neighbouring State. Such annexation will then be regarded by the United Nations as *national* integration respecting all the principles of the Charter. The organization has done so in similar cases. Why entertain illusions as to what the United Nations would do or could do to defend Timor against external pressures?

[*matter omitted*]³

8. I understand the embarrassment of the Australian position in the face of powerful countries, particularly in view of the policy of a white Australia. We understand the difficulties which Australia could experience in openly defending Portugal, though we believe that such defence would serve Australian interests. But we are at a loss to understand likewise certain less friendly aspects of Australian policy in respect of Portugal. Thus, we have to regret the campaign in the Australian press against Portuguese policy, especially with reference to Timor, painting living conditions there as deplorable when it is indisputable that they are better than those obtaining in Indonesia; we regret the impossibility which we always find in securing in Australia small services of logistic support; we regret that Australia has not found it possible to open in Lisbon a diplomatic mission, which would only contribute to a better understanding of our common interests. Having these and other points in mind, we believe that, without prejudice to the policy which Australia finds it necessary to adopt in the United Nations, a profitable collaboration could be established in the real interests not only of our two countries but of other countries as well.

Your Excellency will excuse the frankness with which I express myself; but I think I am obliged to be frank by the friendship which marks our relations.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, iii]

CABLEGRAM TO WASHINGTON

Canberra, 24 November 1964

O.30115/SAVING 292 SECRET

Portuguese Timor

[*matter omitted*]¹

There is evidence to suggest that Indonesia may be intending to take some form of action against Portuguese Timor in the near future.

2. Three main courses of action are open to the Indonesian Government:—

- (i) It may simply sever diplomatic relations with Portugal without mounting any direct operations against Portuguese Timor. This would be in accordance with a recommendation of the Cairo Conference of Non-Aligned Powers calling on participating States to break relations with Portugal. Malaysia has sought to score-off Indonesia by referring to Indonesia's maintenance of diplomatic links with Portugal;

³ Salazar here argued that the United Nations' support for colonial independence movements undermined the necessary work for the material improvement of colonial populations.

¹ The matter omitted indicated that the cable contained the text of a Departmental note on Portuguese Timor which was thought might be useful for Hasluck, Minister for External Affairs, during discussions with the Americans.

- (ii) Indonesia may be intending only covert operations, the framework for which has already been established;
- (iii) Indonesia may be intending an overt attack in response to a trumped-up plea for help. This, Indonesia would assess, would produce a swift and dramatic victory akin to that of India against Goa and which she may think could be won with a naval squadron and a limited number of troops without significantly disturbing present deployments. Indonesia might not annex Portuguese Timor, but merely install a puppet government under Indonesian control.

[*matter omitted*]²

10. The political environment has changed markedly since 1963. At that time Indonesian 'confrontation' of Malaysia had not taken on the character of a military campaign. Since that time, also, the Australian Government has decided to undertake a substantial programme of defence expansion with Indonesian behaviour being a principal motivating factor. In today's circumstances, Indonesian military pressure against Timor—the second of Indonesia's three land frontiers—would produce a very strong public reaction in Australia and present the Government with very difficult problems.

11. It is difficult to suggest an effective policy. The ingredients of policy, in the event of identifiable Indonesian aggression, might include the following:—

- (a) to agree to Portuguese request for reinforcements to transit Australian territory and to assist with the handling of refugees; and arrange air lifts and so on;
- (b) to express the view that, though unsympathetic to the professed objectives of the Portuguese Government in Timor, we condemn attempts to change the *status quo* by forcible interference from outside;
- (c) to support action through the Security Council. It is recognised that this is unlikely to be more successful than it was in the case of Goa; but this would help convert the issue into one of the responsibility of the international community as a whole. (It is not clear at this stage just who would bring the matter before the Security Council);
- (d) possibly to make public the Prime Minister's exchanges with the Portuguese Prime Minister in order to indicate the Government's awareness of the dangers and policy efforts to avert them. Publication of these exchanges would show, also, that we were not to be identified with Portugal as a reactionary colonial power;
- (e) to intervene diplomatically in Djakarta. The Ambassador in Djakarta has standing instructions to speak in sharp terms in the event of a likely Indonesian attack.

[NAA: A1838, 696/5, ii]

² The omitted paragraphs summarised Australian policy of the preceding three years.

REPORT BY THE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Canberra, 27 May 1965

SECRET

EXTRACTS

Strategic Significance of Portuguese Timor to Australia*Introduction*

1. Indonesia with her aggressive anti-colonial policy is likely to turn her attentions towards Portuguese Timor some time in the future. This, allied with her abandonment of her non-alignment policy makes it necessary to review the strategic significance of Portuguese Timor to Australia.

2. This paper therefore examines the strategic significance to Australia of Portuguese Timor in the present and immediate future and the likely trend of events in this area.

[*matter omitted*]¹

Implications for Australia

27. The only defence significance of Portuguese Timor to Australia is the potential of Baucau as a forward airfield. Such an airfield would extend our early warning and air defence in depth and extend the radius of action of our bomber force over Indonesian territory in limited war. In limited war, however any possible requirement to extend the radius of action of our bomber force from this direction would have to be related to the strategic concept of the war and the base would be difficult to maintain, until air and naval superiority were established and in any case the airfield would be difficult and costly to defend.

28. In a covert situation, the only advantage to Australia in assisting the Portuguese, would be to show our determination to stop any further Indonesian aggression. As the United States and Britain would be unlikely to intervene, and the Portuguese unlikely to have the capacity to provide the build up required, Australia if she provided support, would be committed to a long campaign costly in manpower. Intervention by Australia on Portugal's behalf would have the serious political disadvantage of inviting criticism from the great majority of Afro-Asian powers who have repeatedly condemned Portugal's policy towards her colonies.

Conclusions

29. Portuguese Timor is an undeveloped territory with no resources of strategic value to Australia. It has no military significance to Australia.

30. An internal security problem, inspired and maintained by Indonesia is likely to arise in Portuguese Timor. Should Portugal seek Australia's assistance in such a situation, accession to this request might be taken to show our determination to stop further Indonesian aggression but would involve the serious political disadvantage of associating Australia with Portuguese

¹ The paragraphs omitted provided historical background (Portuguese Timor during World War II) and geographical analysis of the territory.

colonial policies. The United States and Britain are unlikely to accede to a similar request and the bulk of operations would fall to Australia.²

31. Acquisition of Portuguese Timor by Indonesia would give her political advantages in the eyes of Afro-Asian countries. It would also improve her air defence environment and would enable her to mount more effectively strikes against Australian targets.

[NAA: A1838, 696/5, ii]

DRAFT CABINET PAPER

Canberra, [1965]¹

SECRET

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor

Australian Initiatives

14. At this stage there does not seem to be any scope for further initiatives by Australia either with a view to influencing the Portuguese or to inhibiting Indonesian action. Portuguese colonial policy is not likely to change so long as Dr. Salazar continues in power, its rigidity in Timor (in which Portugal has little interest) being based on the determination to avoid creating precedents which might affect Portugal's position in Africa. If there were clear indications of an impending Indonesian attack, we would have to make some attempt at dissuasion in Djakarta and the Ambassador there has standing instructions to speak in sharp terms in such an event. We must recognise, however, that this is unlikely to give the Indonesians pause, unless we are prepared to leave them with the fear that they may be exposing themselves to attack from two sides. If Cabinet considers that military assistance should not be extended to Portugal it would clearly be questionable whether that would be worth doing.

15. If Cabinet decides that comments should be given to the British as requested (paragraph 1) the point could be made that, while the nature of our reaction to Indonesian moves in Portuguese Timor would depend on a number of factors, our present military assessment is that the strategic significance of Portuguese Timor is such that further Indonesian encroachment there would not appreciably heighten the dangers to Australia's security. Against this

² In a marginal comment on the covering note of 18 June 1965, C. R. Ashwin wrote to J. A. Piper: 'Our main comment at this stage is that the conclusions still leave the question of Australian intervention somewhat ambiguous. They stress the political disadvantages but do not come out against our assisting PT. We think they should'. When the Joint Committee Paper was taken up by the Defence Committee on 1 July 1965 it contained an amendment proposed by Sir James Plimsoll, Secretary of DFA, altering this paragraph to read 'An internal security problem, inspired and maintained by Indonesia, is likely to arise in Portuguese Timor. Portugal might seek the assistance of Australia and other countries in such a situation. The United States and Britain are unlikely to accede to such a request and if Australia were to do so the bulk of operations would fall on her. This would have considerable disadvantages for Australia without offsetting gains'.

¹ The note was drafted for Ministers to review Australian policy towards Portuguese Timor in light of the Defence Committee Paper of 1 July 1965 (see note 2 above) and a request from the British High Commissioner for Australia's views on the strategic significance of Portuguese Timor.

background, British views on possible Portuguese air reinforcement routes might be sought, including the likely British attitude to a Portuguese request for the use of British airfield facilities in the Indian Ocean area for emergency reinforcement purposes.

[NAA: A1838, 3006/4/3, iv]

SUBMISSION TO McMAHON

Canberra, 1 December 1970

CONFIDENTIAL

Australian Consulate: Dili

The Australian Consulate at Dili (Portuguese Timor) was opened in 1946. Since then it has operated with no more than two consular officers at any one time, and for long periods it has been staffed by only one Australia-based officer. Several appointments as Consul have been on a temporary basis. The annual cost of operating the post is now \$38,000.

[*matter omitted*]¹

4. Day to day political reporting from Dili is, and has been for several years, negligible in both volume and interest. We see no likelihood that internal developments in Timor will become significant from Australia's point of view. Australia's political interest in the colony will be limited to (a) its future disposal in the event (not now in prospect) that the Portuguese voluntarily withdraw their administration, and/or (b) an external 'takeover bid' for its control. There is no early prospect that Indonesia would seek to take over Portuguese Timor; there is no threat from any other sources, and in any event any such attempt from another source would be strongly resisted by Indonesia. In the long term the sensible disposal of the colony would be by incorporation in Indonesia. Our political interest in Portuguese Timor would be better served through our diplomatic representation in Indonesia, Portugal and other countries rather than through consular representation at Dili.

[*matter omitted*]²

7. In June, 1970 the Australian Ambassador to Portugal (Mr Renouf) commented that he thought that a decision to close the consulate would be received with distaste by the Portuguese authorities but he did not think that such a decision would do any great damage to Australia's relations with Portugal. He believed that it might be a good idea to conclude a migration agreement before informing Portugal of the decision. The Department of Immigration considers that the conclusion of a migration agreement with Portugal is a matter which is not likely to be resolved for some considerable time.

8. Since Mr Renouf reported his views, Australia's relations with Portugal have been strengthened by the appointment of a resident Ambassador at Lisbon, so that the closing of our small post at Dili may not now have as much significance for the Portuguese.

9. On balance, the reasons for continuing representation in Timor are not sufficiently strong to override the practical property and personnel difficulties which would need to be overcome quickly if the post is to continue. The benefits accruing from representation do not in the

¹ Matter omitted dealt with capital and operational costs of the Consulate.

² Omitted paragraphs included an outline of the immigration work of the Consulate.

present circumstances justify a large capital outlay and the continuing expenditure of funds and personnel.

10. I therefore recommend that you agree to the closing of the post as soon as this can be arranged. As to the procedure to be followed, the decision and reasons for it could be conveyed to the Portuguese Ambassador in Canberra, who might also be told that the Department would still hope to be able to send Canberra-based officers to Portuguese Timor regularly to maintain Australia's interest.³

KEITH WALLER

Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, iv]

DISPATCH FROM FURLONGER

Jakarta, 19 January 1973

SECRET AUSTEO

EXTRACT

The Soeharto Regime and Australian–Indonesian Relations

SUMMARY

[*matter omitted*]¹

Australian—Indonesian Relations

19. Having identified the salient aspects of the Soeharto regime from Australia's viewpoint in the first four despatches, the remaining despatches seek to draw implications for Australia's relations with Indonesia and to make recommendations for future Australia policies. This has been done in two despatches because aid, which is of overriding importance in the relationship, deserves separate treatment.

20. *The fifth despatch* opens with the observation that the New Order in Indonesia is vastly better than the other likely alternatives with which we were faced in 1965; (or, if development fails, could be faced with in the future). Some of the high expectations of the Soeharto regime have been disappointed and it would be wrong to expect too much. However, Australia's main interest is in an Indonesia experiencing reasonable economic growth and a benign and stable government and pursuing policies of good relations with its neighbours.

21. The Soeharto Government fulfils these criteria. President Soeharto, from the framework of his primary concern with the ASEAN region, is very well disposed towards Australia, perhaps to the point of overestimating the contribution Australia can make. This provides a unique opportunity for Australia, with its own national interests to the fore-front, to develop closer relations with a country in which we have a great stake. There are risks in a larger role, but they are outweighed by the positive benefits of a greater effort in Indonesia.

³ The Australian Consulate in Dili was closed on 31 August 1971.

¹ The matter omitted contained a summary of the first four of Furlonger's despatches, covering the 'ideology, values and social base' of the regime, the 'state institutions and power structure', 'economic policies and prospects', and Indonesian foreign policy.

22. To this end, the despatch recommends a broadening and deepening of Australian representation in Indonesia, continued development of defence co-operation, encouragement to representative institutions in Indonesia, support for Australian cultural and investment activities and an Australian role in interpreting Indonesia and Papua New Guinea to each other. It concludes that we now enjoy a many-sided relationship with Indonesia in which there are some points of difference including our respective approaches to Vietnam and China. But the relationship which we enjoy gives us the opportunity to influence Indonesian attitudes and policies.

[NAA: A1838, 3034/10/6/9, i]

SUBMISSION TO WHITLAM

Canberra, [30 May] 1973

CONFIDENTIAL

Indonesia and Portuguese Timor

In view of recent press and parliamentary comment, you may be interested in the following notes on the Indonesian attitude to Portuguese Timor—particularly in view of the (erroneous) assertion in *The Australian* of 21 May that the Indonesian Embassy had asked the government to clarify its position in Portuguese Timor.

2. Two of the prime policy objectives of the present Indonesian government are to secure international recognition for its own borders and to project an image of a country which does not threaten its neighbours but which on the contrary cooperates peacefully with them. Both these considerations impel Indonesia not to question its common border with Portuguese Timor and not to give the impression that it has designs on that Territory (which in any case is no prize to excite covetousness).

3. Far from fostering a 'Liberation' movement or displaying hostility towards the Portuguese authorities in Timor, Indonesia cooperates with the Portuguese. Occasional border incidents, arising out of cross border cattle rustling or tribal disputes, are settled amicably and without publicity.

4. Last year, on April Fools' Day, the Jakarta daily newspaper *Sinar Harapan* published a hoax story stating that rebels had proclaimed the independence of Portuguese Timor. Mr Malik was asked by the press about this report. He replied that, if there were a nationalist movement in Portuguese Timor, Indonesia would support it. He was obviously speaking in a purely hypothetical context. Mr Malik often speaks to the press off the cuff and without forethought; quite often his statements are subsequently denied. In this case we interpret his remarks as meaning that Indonesia—or at least its Foreign Minister—feels compelled to take an anti-colonial stance if circumstances force it into having to take an attitude. But Indonesia would much prefer such questions not to arise in relation to Portuguese Timor.

5. We would expect the Indonesian Government to be embarrassed and irritated if the present attempt to embarrass the Australian Government over the question leads to Indonesia in turn being asked to take a public position.

6. Unlike the situation pertaining in Portugal's colonies in Africa, there is at present no serious nationalist movement in Portuguese Timor. If one were to develop there, Indonesia

would be principally concerned with the potential effect on Indonesia's own security. Clearly the prospect of prolonged instability or of a weak government open to Chinese or other influences hostile to Indonesia would be unwelcome to Jakarta. The people of Portuguese Timor would probably be marginally better off under Indonesian rule than under any other conceivable dispensation (the Indonesian half of the island is better run than the Portuguese colony and its prospects as a separate entity would be poor). However, Indonesia would be very reluctant to take over, lest this led to fears of Indonesian expansionism being revived in Malaysia and Papua New Guinea.

7. In other words, the *status quo* in Portuguese Timor suits Indonesian interests.¹

R. WOOLCOTT

First Assistant Secretary
South Asia Division

[NAA: A1838, 3006/4/3, iv]

¹ This view was somewhat qualified by Jan Arriens of the Jakarta Embassy, who indicated that 'it would probably be more correct to say that the *status quo* in Portuguese Timor is acceptable to Indonesia, rather than describing it as suiting Indonesian interests . . . [I]f there were a well-established liberation movement that had attracted international attention, Indonesia would lend support. Even so, Indonesia would be extremely careful about lending material support, either overt or clandestine, until they judged that international opinion had reached the point where Indonesia's motives could no longer be impugned' (Memorandum to Canberra, 6 August 1973). [NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, ii.]

Documents

25 April 1974 – 17 July 1976

1 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 29 April 1974

RESTRICTED

Portugal

Attached for consideration is a draft press statement on the events in Portugal.

2. You will wish to consider as a separate issue the question of the Australian Government's attitude to the Junta. Although the regime would appear, from all reports, to be in full control of the country, we have few indications of the attitude which other governments are likely to take. Brazil has recognised the regime and according to a BBC report this morning, South Africa and Rhodesia have also extended formal recognition, which is enough to suggest that Australia would do well to hold its hand. Our view would be that Australia could wait until most other West European governments have either recognised the new regime formally or established relations on a *de facto* basis.

3. The draft press statement refers specifically only to Portugal's overseas territories in Africa (Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique). There is also, of course, Portuguese Timor. If you agree, we would propose that any press enquiries on this point should be answered along the lines that while Australia is interested in these developments from the point of view of Portugal's overseas territories generally, we would regard any initiative in respect of Timor as a matter primarily for the Indonesian Government. For the time being the Australian Government would adopt a 'business as usual' approach to its relations with Portuguese Timor.¹

F. B. COOPER

First Assistant Secretary²

[NAA: A1838, 49/1/3, v]

2 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 2 May 1974

O.CH51736 CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

Although we do not want you to raise the matter formally with the Indonesians at present, we should also be interested to have reports on Indonesian views on the future of Portuguese Timor.

2. In response to an enquiry by the Indonesian Embassy here about Australia's position on the change of regime in Portugal, we referred to Minister's statement of 29 April (our telegram 2836) and stated that Minister's emphasis on Portuguese African territories was deliberate but that we should nevertheless also welcome political evolution in Portuguese Timor.

¹ A handwritten comment in the margin, apparently by Oxley, states that Willesee agreed to the press release, but adds 'I am not confident that he took the point about Indonesia in the second last sentence . . .'

² B. C. Hill was FAS Pacific and Western Division. Cooper signed as Acting FAS.

3. In response to press enquiries on the future prospects for Portuguese Timor in the light of recent events in Lisbon, we propose to say that while Australia is interested in these developments from the point of view of Portugal's overseas territories generally, in the absence of an armed liberation struggle in Portuguese Timor, we see the situation there as different to that obtaining in the African territories.¹ We would also say that, for the time being, the Government proposes to adopt a 'business as usual' approach to relations with Portuguese Timor.²

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, ii]

3 POLICY PLANNING PAPER

Canberra, [3 May 1974]¹

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

The existence of the small and at present not economically viable colonial territory of Portuguese Timor to the immediate north of Australia is likely to attract increasing international attention in the near future. It is a subject on which our own attitudes need clarification. The recent change of government in Portugal and the anticipated shift in Portuguese attitudes towards Portugal's overseas territories will be a contributing factor to this, while in Australia our differences with Portugal over the delimitation of the seabed boundary in the area between the Australian and Timor coasts will also focus attention on the present status of Portuguese Timor. [matter omitted]²

Portuguese Attitudes

(a) Portuguese Timor was considered by the Caetano Government to be an integral part of Portugal proper, and it did not give any consideration to a change in the status of the Portuguese territories. As we understand it, the attitude of the Spínola Government towards independence for the Portuguese territories is one of progressive self-determination within the Portuguese Federation. However, some of the more radical pressure groups in Portugal are likely to seek a further liberalisation of this policy, particularly towards the African territories. The attitude

¹ Cablegram CH53645 (7 May) dismissed the concern of the Embassy in Jakarta that the wording in this sentence might suggest Australia saw armed liberation struggle as a prerequisite for political evolution.

² In Cablegram JA2391 (17 May) the Embassy replied that there was no recollection of the question of Portuguese Timor being raised in discussion between Indonesia and Australia, and there had been no recent indication of any interest in doing so. There was nothing to add to a 1973 assessment that Indonesia would in principle be glad to see the colony liberated 'under conditions favourable to Indonesia', but would not want a small independent neighbour which could be used as a base for subversion.

¹ The paper is undated. It was prepared for the discussion on 3 May recorded in Document 4.

² Sections omitted deal with Australia's limited commercial and aviation interests in Portuguese Timor and possible oil concessions in as yet undelineated areas of the Timor Sea. In 1973 UN resolutions called on governments to discourage participation in commercial enterprises contributing to Portugal's domination of its colonial territories or detrimental to the interests of their inhabitants. While it could be argued that Australian commercial activities were incompatible with support for those resolutions, the lack of 'significant political agitation' or Indonesian interest in the territory meant that its status was unlikely to become an issue at the UN in the short term.

of the Portuguese Government towards Portuguese Timor will certainly be affected by developments in Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, although it is probable that if these become independent, Portuguese Timor could assume greater significance in the eyes of the Portuguese Government and a change in its status could then become less likely.

(b) The attitude of the Portuguese Government will also be affected by its assessment of the future commercial prospects for Portuguese Timor, and in particular for tourism and oil and natural gas. There are good possibilities both for an increase in tourism and the discovery of oil or natural gas deposits (either by an Australian or United States company), and the likelihood of increased revenues would increase the reluctance of Portugal to relinquish control over the territory.

(c) Portuguese Timor has always been useful to the Portuguese Government as a 'safe' territory for soldiers on national service, as an assignment for recalcitrant government officials, and as a prison, and such rationale for retaining its status would become increasingly valid if the African territories became independent.

Indonesian Attitudes

(a) Apart from several minor incidents the administrations in Indonesian Timor and Portuguese Timor have been on good terms.

(b) In the absence of any significant political agitation in Portuguese Timor or an active liberation movement in Indonesian Timor the Indonesian Government has shown no inclination to interfere with the status quo in Portuguese Timor. They are aware that Portuguese Timor could be an economic liability if it became part of Indonesia, and an important consideration is their desire to avoid giving any appearance of having designs on Portuguese Timor which could fuel suspicion of Indonesian expansionist ambitions among neighbouring countries, particularly Papua New Guinea.

(c) Indonesia has opposed Portuguese colonialism at the United Nations, and in the long term undoubtedly regards Portuguese Timor as a colonial vestige whose status must eventually change. If a national liberation movement developed that attracted international attention, Indonesia would probably lend material and moral support. Adam Malik was reported as saying to the press on 29 March 1972 in reply to a question on what Indonesia would do if Portuguese Timor developed its own liberation movement: 'We shall finance and support them if they really wish it'. The question was, of course, hypothetical.

Australian Attitudes

(a) We should recognise that at present Portuguese Timor is not at present a viable economic entity and for this reason and the absence of any local political elite, it would have no capability in the short-term to handle a self-governing or independent status. The logical long-term development is that it should become part of Indonesia.

(b) The Spinoza Government appears unlikely to consider any change of status for Portuguese Timor and our own attitude towards it should continue to be governed by that of Indonesia.³ However, the attitudes of other governments in the United Nations on its status, and the positions assumed by the more liberal groups in Portugal would need to also be carefully considered.

(c) In any public references to the future status of the Portuguese territories we should continue to distinguish between the African territories and Portuguese Timor.

³ In a handwritten note dated 7 May Renouf commented that this section worried him: 'I would like to know *why* we should let Indonesia guide us. There is no I. *claim* to Timor: hence, there is no rationale for such a claim. "Give it to I." is the easy way out but it is not necessarily the right one'.

- (d) We should press ahead with negotiations with Portugal on the Portuguese Timor seabed boundary, but bear in mind that the Indonesians would probably be prepared to accept the same compromise as they did in the negotiations already completed on the seabed boundary between our two countries. Such a compromise would be more acceptable to us than the present Portuguese position. For precisely this reason however, we should be careful not to be seen as pushing for self-government or independence for Portuguese Timor or for it to become part of Indonesia, as this would probably be interpreted as evidence of our self-interest in the seabed boundary dispute rather than a genuine concern for the future of Portuguese Timor.
- (e) We should continue to keep a careful check on the activities of Australian commercial firms in Portuguese Timor.

[NAA: A1838, 696/5, ii]

4 MEETING OF AD HOC TASK FORCE ON PORTUGAL

Canberra, 3 May 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Participants

Mr F. B. Cooper (Chairman)	Head, Europe, Central and Southern Africa Branch
Mr R. J. Greet	Head, West Europe Section
Mr R. M. North	Head, Central and Southern Africa Section
Mr J. M. C. Watson	Head, Defence Plans and Policy Section
Mr A. J. Melhuish	Head, UN Political Section
Mr G. L. Lawless	Head, Trade Sub-Section, E.P. Branch
Mr G. C. Evans	Policy Planning Section
Mr I. Wille	Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines Section
Miss S. Boyd (Rapporteur)	West Europe Section

2. *Summary Record*

Mr Cooper convened the meeting of the ad hoc task force on Portugal to enable a preliminary consideration to be given to all aspects of Australia's relations with Portugal and its Overseas Territories in the light of the coup and its aftermath. He noted that Australia's bilateral relations with Portugal were of relatively little importance and that the real interest of the coup would be in its effects on Portugal's colonial policy. The following is a summary of the conclusions reached from the discussion.

[*matter omitted*]

8. *Portuguese Timor*

The Policy Planning Paper on Portuguese Timor¹ was considered. It was thought that the logical long term prospect for the economically non-viable territory was integration with Indonesia, under United Nations auspices in the first instance. The need to take Indonesia's attitudes to Timor into account was noted. The meeting also considered the possibility of

¹ Document 3.

UN Trusteeship for the Territory but this was not regarded as a viable solution in this day and age.

9. If current oil searches proved successful, the economic situation in Timor might improve but there appeared at present to be no indigenous movement capable of providing an alternative to the Portuguese. Australia has some civil aviation and business interests there, but should beware of possible criticism of an attitude favouring the union of Timor with Indonesia lest it appear that prospects for the settlement of our sea-bed territory (and oil rights) dispute with the Portuguese were colouring our attitude.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A1838, 696/5, ii]

5 MINUTE FROM EVANS TO CURTIS

Canberra, 10 May 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

*Re Secretary's note*¹

2. There is no legal basis for an Indonesian claim to Portuguese Timor, and a transfer of Portuguese Timor to Indonesia could create procedural problems in the United Nations context. The legal issue is not the same as in Irian Jaya because Portuguese Timor was not part of the Netherlands East Indies, of which Indonesia is the successor state.

3. Portuguese Timor is chiefly a problem for Indonesia. If Portuguese Timor were to become independent it could not sustain its present level of administration, services and productivity without substantial outside assistance, and, except in the unlikely event of a drawn-out armed struggle, would have little effective indigenous capacity for government except at the village level. There would be potential for a politically unstable state to emerge on one of Indonesia's land borders. Such a state could become a focus of Great Power rivalries and a rallying point for Indonesian irredentist movements. This would be obviously unacceptable to Indonesia, and for domestic political reasons probably to either party in Australia. For this reason, and because of its geographic proximity and its ethnic and cultural links with Indonesian Timor, the most logical long-term development is that it should become part of Indonesia.

4. In the short-term the Indonesians have been happy to accept the status quo rather than risk the possibility of it becoming independent or having to tackle the procedural difficulties of transfer. The Indonesians are probably also concerned about suspicions of Indonesian expansionist ambitions that any initiatives might raise in the minds of other nearby countries, particularly Papua New Guinea, and also the costs it would have to bear for sustaining the present level of services and administration. Our information about Indonesian thinking is still sketchy.

5. The most likely way in which the issue would come up for us is through the Committee of 24. However, in the absence of any national liberation movement either in Portuguese

¹ See note 3 to Document 3.

Timor or in Indonesia (apart from a nominal movement in Jakarta which is probably an Old Order relic) this would appear unlikely in the short-term, and it would be foolish for us in the light of the relative importance we attach to our bilateral relations with Indonesia to press the matter in the United Nations without thorough consultations with them. The outcome of an act of self-determination under United Nations auspices, in which continued membership of the Portuguese Federation would not be an option, is unpredictable, and presumably Indonesia would wish to bring about a situation in which they were reasonably certain that the Timorese would opt to join Indonesia.

6. An additional reason for us not being too active on the Portuguese Timor issue is that the media, both in Australia and overseas, could interpret this as evidence of our self-interest in the seabed boundary dispute rather than an objective concern for the future of Portuguese Timor. It is, of course, for similar reasons that we have been reluctant to question the status of the French territories in the Pacific because of our case before the ICJ.²

7. Although there is a good case for us not being too active at present on the future status of Portuguese Timor, we also need to be careful about exposing ourselves to the criticism that we are adopting a double standard towards the Portuguese territories in Africa and Timor. As a step towards formulating our own position, including a possible initiative on the future status of Portuguese Timor such as a more explicit reference to it in Fourth Committee resolutions on the Portuguese territories, we should initially consult the Indonesians and develop a clearer picture of their thinking. Because of the primary importance we attach to our bilateral relations with Indonesia, their close support on any initiative should be a precondition for our proceeding with it.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, vi]

6 SECOND MEETING OF AD HOC TASK FORCE ON PORTUGAL

Canberra, 17 May 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Participants

Mr F. B. Cooper (Chairman)	Head, Europe, Central and Southern Africa Branch
Mr R. J. Greet	Head, West Europe Section
Mr T. Sofield	Acting Head, Central and Southern Africa Section
Mr A. J. Melhuish	Head, UN Political Section
Mr L. W. Herron	General Legal and Antarctic Sub-Section
Mr G. C. Evans	Policy Planning Group
Mr I. Wille	Indonesia Section
Dr R. A. Gordon	Political and Social Research Section
Mr M. A. S. Landale	Law of the Sea Section
Miss S. Boyd (Rapporteur)	West Europe Section

² Australia had been engaged in proceedings against French nuclear testing in the Pacific since May 1973.

Summary Record

Recent Developments in Portugal

A paper summarising recent developments in Portugal, including the establishment of a Provisional Government and a Council of State was tabled and discussed. A copy of this paper is attached.

2. A second paper, on the situation in the Portuguese Overseas Territories, is also attached.

Portuguese Timor

3. It was agreed that three alternatives could be envisaged for the future of Portuguese Timor: continued association with Portugal; independence; association¹ with Indonesia (possibly preceded by international administration under UN auspices).

4. It was agreed that before any firm conclusions could be reached, more had to be known about the thinking of the native Timorese themselves.²

5. Equally, more needed to be known about the Indonesian attitude. It might be assumed that Indonesia would not be likely to welcome a small and weak independent neighbour which could be a source of instability in the region. However, before attempting to sound the Indonesians out, we needed to have a clear idea of what our objectives were in relation to Portuguese Timor.

6. It was noted that the future of several small Asian and Pacific territories (e.g. Cocos and Christmas Islands) was already the subject of separate study and that work on Timor should also be co-ordinated with this.

7. Other important elements in our overall attitude would be the extent of Australia's economic interests in Portuguese Timor (e.g. oil concessions in the Timor Sea and civil aviation interests).

8. Methods of gauging Timorese opinion were discussed. Possible sources include JIO and Immigration, which sends teams of officials from Darwin to Timor from time to time. A further possibility would be to send a Foreign Affairs Officer from Jakarta³ or as a member of an Immigration team. The latter would provide a convenient 'cover' and would be less likely to attract attention.

[matter omitted]⁴

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, vi]

¹ A general handwritten comment by Wille suggested the record was too brief and needed elaboration. He suggested here that 'association' should be read 'under context of incorporation into'.

² Wille noted here: 'We also discussed the need for more information on the position of the native Timorese: e.g. the existence of indigenous political groups, trade unions etc'.

³ Wille noted his recollection that this idea had been 'dismissed as too delicate at the present time'. In the event, officers were sent from Canberra rather than from Jakarta (see Document 8).

⁴ Discussion then moved on to Portugal's African colonies.

7 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 22 May 1974

O.JA2479 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Satari (BAKIN) told us today that following the change of government in Portugal, a comprehensive study has been undertaken by BAKIN on Portuguese Timor. The Indonesians do not consider there is any evidence of an indigenous liberation movement in Portuguese Timor; the people there are too backward and are not politically motivated. Indonesia's main concern appears to be that developments in Macao might spill over into Portuguese Timor. As Satari put it, having dealt with China by the front door, they might now have to deal with a backdoor threat. Indonesia does not appear to favour the idea of an independent Portuguese Timor as this too they see as a potential source of instability.

2. Satari reaffirmed that Indonesia wished above all to avoid appearing expansionist. Their expectation is that Portuguese Timor will remain under Portuguese control for some time to come, but he admitted that Indonesia's first preference would be for the eventual incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia, if this could be done in a manner that did not reflect adversely on Indonesia. One possibility might be to make informal [soundings], including the UN, on international opinion towards this possibility.

3. Satari knew nothing of the suggestion in Michael Richardson's press article that the Indonesian Government wished to hold talks with Australia about the future of Portuguese Timor.¹

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, ii]

8 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 24 May 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

The political changes in Portugal are bound to affect Portugal's policy towards its overseas territories, including Timor. The possibility of change in Portuguese Timor is of interest to Australia, not least because of its effect on Indonesia, which is the regional country most concerned. The attitude that Australia adopts could influence its relations with Indonesia in an important way. In addition we have direct interests of our own in Timor (for example, oil).

2. We hope shortly to send two officers to Portuguese Timor in order to make a first-hand assessment of the situation there. The officers concerned are Mr A. D. McLennan, the head of the Indonesian Section in the Department, and Mr J. Dunn, a former Australian Consul in Dili and officer of this Department, who now works in the Parliamentary library. Following on the

¹ Following an interview with Akosah on 20 May the Embassy reported (Cablegram JA2391) the Foreign Ministry's view that the situation in Portuguese Timor was very quiet, with no significant resistance to the Portuguese. No indication was given of any interest in discussing the question with Australia.

closure of our Consulate at Dili in 1971, we made arrangements with the Portuguese for visits to the territory. The embassy at Jakarta has reporting responsibility for Portuguese Timor as well as for the Indonesian half of the island. But in present circumstances we consider that a visit from Canberra would be more prudent.

3. The consulate at Dili was closed down as an economy measure because it had done little business for several years and yielded little political information of value. The changes which have occurred in Portugal have increased the importance to us of Portuguese Timor; and we believe that we should now consider the idea of re-opening the consulate. The visiting officers will look into any problems that might be involved in doing so.

4. While we do not intend making any announcement of the visit or of the fact that the officers making it will be looking into the question of re-opening our consulate, we should not intend trying to keep these arrangements secret—unless you want us to do so. We shall have to seek Portuguese agreement to the visit and we shall be letting the Indonesians know what we are about. (They and the Taiwanese are represented in Dili.)¹

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South Asia Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, vi]

9 LETTER FROM McCREDIE TO FEAKES

Jakarta, 29 May 1974

SECRET

I have no doubt that the Department is paying a good deal of attention to the Indian Ocean at present and, as most of the major developments have particular interest to Indonesia, we have been looking at ways of ensuring that respective policies do not get out of step. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be much more clarity in their policy objectives than in ours. This suggests scope, if not need, for consultation with them, but it is proving particularly hard to make contact except with BAKIN.

Portuguese Timor is clearly of particular significance to them. Satari told Jan Arriens last week that they were doing a study on Portuguese Timor and hinted at some apprehensions here about how things might develop there. One could hazard a guess that the policy options for Indonesia may range from political action to ensure a favourable outcome for Indonesia, through the spectrum of covert activities in support of this, to outright annexation. I would be very surprised if anyone in the governing structure here were amenable to a period of masterly inactivity which would risk resulting in the possibilities assessed with considerable clarity in

¹ Willesee's approval was given on 31 May. In a minute dated 14 June McLennan was instructed to comment on a long list of issues. It included the general political climate and consciousness of the people; social structure and potential racial or social discord; the economy; any distinctively nationalist movements; the most likely outcome of a referendum expected in 1975; views of senior Portuguese officials; attitudes of the Timorese towards Portugal, Indonesia and Australia; Australian commercial interests; opportunities for Australian aid; potential problems if the Australian Consulate were to be reopened; and prospects for development of subversive movements aimed either at Indonesia or Australia.

Kevin Kelly's telegram of 10 May.¹ But I am rather puzzled by the *sang froid* with which other officials are viewing developments. They seem to feel that Timor will drop their way like a ripe plum.

There is as yet no evidence that we are aware of regarding any significant communist activity in Portuguese Timor. It is, of course, possible that there may be latent communist sympathy that could come to the surface if Portuguese control were to become less assured. The Indonesians are already concerned that developments in Macao could have an unsettling influence on Portuguese Timor. While a communist coup there is unlikely it must be regarded as possible, and Indonesian reactions to such a possibility would undoubtedly be hostile. One other factor is that a home-grown separatist movement, if it existed, might look to covert communist patronage in preference to incorporation into Indonesia. However, we know very little about attitudes towards Indonesia in Portuguese Timor; Indonesian administration of their half of the island is hardly a model to be desired, but cooperation between the two administrations is amicable and Jan Arriens detected a distinct sense of racial affinity in Kupang which may well exist on the other side of the border as well.

Perhaps the Indonesians feel that there is bound to be a plebiscite and that an option for incorporation in Indonesia would be bound to win. There is no untoward military activity by Indonesia in the area, but it may be of interest that the Deputy Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, Surono, visited there last week.

There are a few, perhaps obvious, points about Australia's interests, which may be worth making:

- (a) We are at the beginning of an eternity of relations with the Indonesians in the Indian Ocean. They have been very cooperative in getting the Seabed Agreement and in the various PNG areas. On the other hand, they have never responded to Sir Keith Waller's suggestion at the 1972 official talks that we consult more fully on the question . . .² Prima facie Timor may be an issue on which our decision (i) to develop a more cooperative relationship with Indonesia, (ii) to wait and see, (iii) to stay at arms length or (iv) even to take up a legalistic stance seeking genuine self-determination, could be very important for our future relationship;
- (b) In support of (i), Indonesian absorption of Timor makes geopolitical sense. Any other long-term solution would be potentially disruptive of both Indonesia and the region. It would help confirm our seabed agreement with Indonesia. It should induce a greater readiness on Indonesia's part to discuss Indonesia's ocean strategy. We might be able to provide some assistance to a smooth transition. But it seems unfortunate that the Indonesians, on their side, have not yet felt disposed to bring Australia into consultation;
- (c) The problem with waiting and seeing is that time may turn against us;
- (d) The argument for staying at arms length (iii) would be based partly on a hope that things would work out as they may well do without Australia's support. Also the Government could, I suppose, attract some flak if it seemed they were encouraging

¹ LB017, a long cablegram dealing mainly with political prospects in Portugal itself. It noted proposals to establish constituent assemblies in each of the colonies, all of which could be exploited by international power politics. Timor might well survive as a Portuguese colony for longer than most, but was 'clearly embraced by programs of all the contending groups'. If the Portuguese government could be overthrown by a handful of men so too could the government of Portuguese Timor. 'If the Junta and the AFM fail', he concluded, 'one may have to contemplate the coming into existence of a possible Soviet or Chinese base within three or four hundred miles of Darwin'.

² Four sentences here dealing with specific difficulties in arranging negotiations on the Indian Ocean Committee and Law of the Sea have been omitted.

a military regime in taking over a possibly reluctant population close to our doorstep. It might also be argued that, in the long run, this would not do us any good as it would lead Indonesia to regard us as over-anxious to please;

- (e) A legalistic stance (iv) does not seem a very practicable option for us. It is one which could arise, however, if there were a communist-backed effort in the U.N. to set up an independent state. Latest Soviet publicity suggests that the USSR, however, would support its incorporation in Indonesia.

One of our difficulties is that, while our policy in the Indian Ocean is clear enough in the broad—support for the zone of peace³—this does not provide answers to a number of questions, e.g. about bases and Cocos Islands. Indonesia, for its part, would have few inhibitions in fitting its forcible annexation of Timor, in the very unlikely event that it came to that, under the zone of peace formula. It would simply say it took such action as the lesser of two evils and without which there could be no zone of peace. Most countries would probably swallow this. Being on our doorstep, and that of Papua New Guinea, the explanation would be less palatable to us.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, vi]

10 LETTER FROM FEAKES TO McCREIDIE

Canberra, 6 June 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Thank you for your letter of 29 May 1974 about Portuguese Timor.¹ I agree with much of what you say about our interests in Portuguese Timor and the implications of the future of that territory for our relations with Indonesia. My own feeling, which I think would be widely shared in the Department, is that there will have to be an internationally acceptable act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor before any change in its international status takes place. In our view the best result of that act of self-determination would be for the Timorese to choose union, or some form of association, with Indonesia. The diplomatic problem for us is how to bring that result about. We have to face up to the possibility that the Timorese may choose independence, a course which might give rise to the sorts of dangers you mention, although they may be avoided. One complication about Portuguese Timor which you should bear in mind is that radical opinion here may not be at all happy to see the transfer of Portuguese Timor to Indonesia. But another point is that Timorese resistance to absorption by Indonesia may come as a shock to the Indonesians; and we may have a role in suggesting to the Indonesians that they take into account the possibility of such resistance and start to think seriously about how Indonesia might live with an independent Portuguese Timor. We should not assume that it would be beyond the Indonesians' capacity to do so and fairly quickly to gain a dominant influence there.

³ On 16 December 1971 the UN General Assembly declared the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace (Resolution 2832). The aim was to restrict Great Power influence within the region by committing the littoral states to a neutral and demilitarised Indian Ocean which would be underwritten by the agreement of the Great Powers themselves. This latter requirement effectively ensured that the Zone of Peace would never be operative. Australia abstained from voting in 1971, but voted in favour the following year.

¹ Document 9.

You will have noticed that Tim McLennan and Jim Dunn are going to Timor to have a look at the situation there and to see whether we might re-establish the consulate in Dili. After they have come back it will probably be a good idea, if Bob Furlonger agrees, for somebody from the embassy to go down to Indonesian Timor. We shall, of course, let you have a copy of their report and we shall keep you in close touch with developments in our thinking about Portuguese Timor.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ii]

11 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 28 June 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

In private conversation after the informal¹ talks of 27 June Colonel Sunarso elaborated on what he had said in the meeting about Portuguese Timor. The most interesting point he made was that when the Governor of Nusa Tenggara Timor, El Tari, visited Dili in March this year, a number of the tribal leaders there had privately asked him to become Governor of a united Timor within Indonesia. El Tari had naturally not responded to this proposal.

2. I asked Sunarso whether BAKIN took this as an indication of significant indigenous support in Portuguese Timor for incorporation into Indonesia. Sunarso said they did not: they doubted that the tribal leaders were representative of the people as a whole. If a referendum were to be held now, BAKIN judged that the result would favour independence.

3. BAKIN found it impossible to predict how attitudes might develop in the interval before the referendum either in March next year or later. It could be that the tribal chiefs would prove to be opinion makers, but equally it was possible that there could be a gulf between the educated and non-educated. A period of reflection and intensified political activity might lead the elite to see the difficulties of going it alone—but it could also see a strengthening of separatist sentiment. (Sunarso agreed wryly that the scope—and temptation—for manipulative guidance was very obvious.)

4. Sunarso said that El Tari had been directed to maintain the levels of cordial cooperation that existed between the administrations of Portuguese and Indonesian Timor. It was still too early to tell whether there was any change of attitude on the part of the Portuguese authorities.

5. Sunarso implied that Indonesian Consulate's reporting from Dili left something to be desired. It was intended shortly to send a team of officials from Kupang to Dili, as part of the regular exchanges, to assess the situation. Sunarso said that in the past the Portuguese administration had gone to some lengths to prevent officials on Indonesian delegations visiting Dili from mixing with indigenous inhabitants. Delegations were invariably kept busy with a string of official calls that left no time for anything else. It would be revealing to see whether this now changed.

¹ Less than half a line has been expunged here.

6. Sunarso said that one of the difficulties about incorporating Portuguese Timor into Indonesia was the status it would have to be given. There were indications that Portuguese Timor would expect to be a province in its own right. The alternative of adding Portuguese Timor to the existing province of Nusa Tenggara Timor might not be acceptable to Portuguese Timor, which might expect some special recognition of its status. The creation of a new province consisting of Portuguese Timor alone might lead to resentment in Indonesian Timor, which formed only part of the province of Nusa Tenggara Timor, along with the islands of Flores and Sumba. Apart from the political problems, such an arrangement could cause resentment on financial grounds if the new province received assistance from Jakarta equal to that granted to the whole of Nusa Tenggara Timor. Sunarso agreed that it was even possible that Portuguese Timor might attempt to negotiate favourable financial terms as a precondition for agreeing to join Indonesia.

7. Sunarso referred to the fact that Portuguese Timor would almost certainly be a financial liability. I asked Sunarso how this consideration was weighed against the benefits that absorption would bring in the form of greatly reducing political and strategic uncertainties in Portuguese Timor. Sunarso replied that the latter considerations were overriding: the financial burden would be unfortunate but a small price for the potential problems a takeover would help avoid.

8. I asked Sunarso whether there were any indications of a movement favouring an independent united Timor. He said that some such feeling existed in Portuguese Timor, but that there was no evidence whatever of such thinking in Indonesian Timor. I then asked Sunarso whether Indonesia had taken into account the possible effect that a unified Timor might have elsewhere, especially Irian Jaya. Sunarso replied that the Indonesian authorities were concerned about possible separatist pressures in Irian Jaya, but BAKIN had not as yet given thought to how developments in Portuguese Timor could affect Irian Jaya.

9. Sunarso said that BAKIN was expecting a report on Portuguese Timor in the next few days, and that they would like to discuss it with us. Sunarso's comments about the constitutional problems of creating a new province would seem to indicate that Indonesian thinking on the possibility of taking over Portuguese Timor is well advanced, to the point of ascertaining likely local Indonesian reactions in the immediate area.

10. A copy of this memorandum is being sent to Lisbon.²

J. W. ARRIENS

First Secretary

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ii]

² In a letter to McLennan on 2 July Arriens commented on this memorandum: 'It is difficult to substantiate this, but I have a feeling in my bones that the Indonesians are going to find interference in Portuguese Timor irresistible. They will see too many dangers in allowing matters to develop naturally: at the very least they will wish to be able to interfere if things look like going wrong. Obviously they are going to watch matters very closely, and this will include resort to secret sources of information. If they cannot be confident of an outcome favourable to Indonesia's interests, I cannot see how they would resist the temptation to interfere in such a malleable society—there are obvious parallels with Irian Jaya . . . Portuguese Timor is simply too important to them to take a chance.'

'We can, however, be assured that anything they do would be done very discreetly: the one consideration that holds them back is the fear of appearing expansionist. We may expect, therefore, that Indonesia will wish to draw on our intelligence as far as possible, and that the Indonesians may wish to build up a close degree of cooperation which could, in due course, include some delicate diplomatic manoeuvring on our part.'

12 LETTER FROM FURLONGER TO FEALES

Jakarta, 3 July 1974

TOP SECRET

Indonesia: Clandestine Operation in Portuguese Timor

Harry Tjan told Jan Arriens on 2 July that he intends to submit a paper to the President this week recommending that Indonesia mount a clandestine operation in Portuguese Timor to ensure that the territory would opt for incorporation into Indonesia. The paper will include a list of the specific actions that would be possible or required. These would include working through Catholic priests (some of whom are trained in Flores) and other indigenous contacts that exist between Kupang and Dili. Tjan observed that in view of the rudimentary nature of political development in Portuguese Timor effective manipulation should not prove difficult. He mentioned that Indonesia had a clandestine operation of some sort going in Portuguese Timor during confrontation. The recently established political party favouring incorporation into Indonesia provided a ready-made starting point.

Tjan also discussed the possibility of diplomatic cooperation between Australia and Indonesia, a subject he apparently discussed very informally with Wilenski in Yogyakarta last week. As Tjan sees it, Australia's role could be to 'neutralise' unfavourable opinion in other countries towards an Indonesian takeover; to prevent untoward repercussions in Papua New Guinea; and to take initiatives (or persuade others to) in the United Nations for the international formalisation of a transfer.

We have sent by bag (memorandum No. 738 of 28 June 1974) a copy of a paper produced by the CSIS on Portuguese Timor which suggests the possibility of a period of 'home rule' for Portuguese Timor and warns of the risks for Indonesia of an independent Portuguese Timor. Tjan said that this paper, which is of a purely background nature, has been put up to the President. It was after talking with Wilenski that it occurred to Tjan that there might well be scope for more than a diplomatic initiative alone. He discussed the subject with Ali Murtopo on 1 July, who would appear to have directed Tjan to draft a paper setting out the operation.

Tjan's extreme frankness indicates that the Indonesians are confident that we would favour an independent Portuguese Timor as little as they do. (Tjan appears to have gained this impression from Wilenski.) His remarks also reveal a fascinating glimpse of OPSUS at work using the Catholic network.

The information was elicited by some leading questioning in which Arriens stressed that in his personal view Timor would scarcely be a viable state, that he was aware of marked concern in Indonesian circles about the potential dangers of an independent Portuguese Timor, and that it seemed to him a relatively simple matter to do something about it. Tjan then revealed his intentions, but at no stage sought Australian cooperation. Nor was there any suggestion that we should be privy to Indonesia's activities in exchange for diplomatic cooperation.

It is interesting to note the Indonesian preoccupation with Portuguese Timor which is now coming through to us—from Ali Murtopo, at the discussions¹ last week (Arriens sent a report to McLennan),² and now with Tjan. It is true that all these discussions were initiated on our side, but the Indonesians clearly decided to take the opportunity offered by them to try to take us along on a *realpolitik* approach to the problem; and they are speaking surprisingly

¹ Half a line has been expunged here.

² See Document 11.

frankly. We are, in effect, being consulted. They clearly expect a response from our side: a failure to do so soon will be taken by them, I fear, as tacit agreement.

Although I recognise that there are sometimes evolving situations where policy is best left grey and obscure, I doubt that that is desirable in this case. In some respects now, I imagine, and certainly in some quarters, the Portuguese Government may be regarded as internationally more respectable than the Soeharto Government. It seems to me that, whilst we would doubtless prefer Indonesia to control the whole island, independence cannot be ruled out in all circumstances, and that the nature and extent of our support for Indonesia would need careful consideration. What domestic problems the Government would have to take into account you would be better able to judge than I.

The Indonesians will expect the Prime Minister to be able to discuss the whole question but the prospects of a productive discussion would, I think, be enhanced if some of the issues involved could be identified more clearly in advance. Any guidance you can let us have would be very helpful.³

[NAA: A11443, [1]]

13 SAVINGRAM TO POSTS

Canberra, 3 July 1974

O.CH79457¹ CONFIDENTIAL BY BAG

Portuguese Timor—Political Situation and Prospects

Summary

The coup in Portugal has undermined the colonial order in Timor where the authorities now permit freedom of political activity. Political change has influenced the small elite in Timor but has scarcely permeated to the mass of Timorese. Three parties have been formed which advocate different approaches to the political future of Timor. Because of the backwardness and inexperience of the Timorese, genuine self-determination will require careful preparation. Timorese dislike of the Chinese could lead to difficulties. Colonialism has isolated Timor from the region but Indonesia and Australia may exercise powerful influence in the future.

Introduction

2. This assessment is based on the visit which McLennan and Dunn made to Portuguese Timor between 17 and 27 June. It supersedes and corrects some inaccuracies in our preliminary assessment of 7 June (Savingram O.CH68549).

³ A handwritten marginal note by Woolcott, dated 11 July, reads: 'I think our policy should be one of discouraging a weak non-viable independent state and of encouraging (or at least simply favouring) association with Indonesia. But we shall need to go along with the freely (and fairly) expressed will of the people—and put this to the Minister. I think Sec. should see'.

¹ The document is widely referred to as Savingram 26, i.e. by its Jakarta post serial number. It was also sent to Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Lisbon, London, Manila, Moscow, Peking, Port Moresby, Singapore, Washington and Wellington.

Political Setting

3. The coup in Portugal has undermined the settled colonial order in Timor, which has endured for over four centuries on the basis of Timor's political and economic backwardness and isolation from external influence. The Pacific War briefly exposed Portuguese Timor to Japanese and Australian influence. But it escaped the post-war process of decolonisation in South-East Asia. In the absence of a nationalist movement, political evolution in Timor has awaited the stimulus of change in Portugal itself.

4. Following the coup, the Portuguese authorities introduced freedom of political activity in Timor and declared their commitment to the principle of self-determination. The new situation brought about by these actions has most directly affected the educated elite in Timor, who number 20–25,000 in a population of about 650,000. The composition and interests of the elite are divergent. As well as educated Timorese, it includes the Portuguese army and administration, expatriate elements and a Chinese community of perhaps 10,000, which dominates Portuguese Timor economically and is disliked by the other communities, both expatriate and Timorese.

5. The implications of the new situation are but dimly perceived by the ill-educated mass of Timorese. The Portuguese technique of indirect rule and the absence of pronounced economic change under colonial rule have preserved and rigidified the traditional character of Timorese society. Social and economic standards are very backward and depressed but the Timorese, having no other standard of reference, are unaware of the wretchedness of their condition. Their political outlook is coloured by emotional loyalty to Portugal. They are vulnerable to influence by conservative Portuguese interests that are entrenched in the administration and they are suspicious of points of view that envisage an autonomous future for Timor. At present, the Timorese are ill-prepared to exercise genuine self-determination. They will need, firstly, political education to increase awareness of their interests if the possibility of a neo-colonial relationship with Portugal is to be averted.

6. Poverty, backwardness and inexperience are not the only constraints on the free political development of Portuguese Timor. The prospect of self-determination is beginning to break down the unnatural isolation of Timor from its regional neighbours. The politically alert are conscious that Australia and Indonesia will overshadow Timor in the future and believe that they could circumscribe its independence and identity. Attitudes towards Australia and especially Indonesia, and the relations that develop with those countries, will have a strong bearing on future internal politics in Timor.

Developments since the Coup

7. After initial hesitation, the administration in Timor fell in with the coup in Portugal. The Provincial Governor, Colonel Alves Aldeia, reputedly acted under pressure from young army officers. Following consultation with Lisbon, the Governor was confirmed in office and the program of the Portuguese armed forces movement was officially announced in Timor. The older order apparatus of repression was quickly disbanded, including the Political Police (DGS), the Corporate State Party (ANP) and the Censorship Commission. With few exceptions, DGS personnel have been returned to Portugal, where most face imprisonment. The proposed transfer of the former head of DGS in Angola to Timor was successfully resisted. Freedom of political expression and association in Timor now receives official encouragement, including the formation of political parties and a press that is open to different points of view. Elections to a Portuguese national constituent assembly are promised, as is a plebiscite on the political future of Timor.

The elections will be held next March or April. The date of the plebiscite is less certain, in recognition of the need for adequate political preparation.

8. Much of the drive for political progress in Timor seems to stem from the Army Chief of Staff, Major Metello, who is the official delegate in Timor of the Portuguese Junta. (Contrary to our previous impression, a separate *junta* was not established in Timor.) The colonial administration remains largely unchanged except for the liquidation of the repressive apparatus. But changes in administrative personnel are expected soon, possibly including the Governor. The new political climate challenges the security of vested interests among the Portuguese in Timor. Many Portuguese welcome greater political liberty but few are enthusiastic for self-determination that could lead to independence. Conservative Portuguese wish to perpetuate their privileged position by ensuring the continuing association of Timor with Portugal.

Political Parties

9. Their interest is expressed through support for the strongest of the three political parties that has emerged in Timor, the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), of which Carrascaloa and Oliveira are the principal leaders. While advocating political freedom and Timorese rights, the UDT also aims to preserve Timor's association with Portugal in the name of 'progressive self-determination'. The UDT leadership, which is native, places much faith in General Spínola's promise that Portugal will not forget the overseas provinces that choose to remain with it. The Party's leaders are conscious that an independent Timor would be very weak and they value the Portuguese connection in terms of Timor's distinctive cultural identity. They emphasise the need for continuing Portuguese economic assistance to Timor. UDT could gain the reputation of an Uncle Tom party because of its expatriate backing. The opponents of the UDT say that it is supported by the administration and the attitude of some Portuguese administrators bears out this claim.

10. The Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), led by Xavier and Ramos Horta, represents itself as the party of the native 'intellectuals' who favour independence. (Few Timorese have received higher education. For the most part the 'intellectuals' have secondary or ecclesiastical education.) The ASDT leaders generally talk in terms of independence after thorough preparation, lasting from five to fifty years. But, last week, Ramos Horta returned to Timor from a visit to Jakarta advocating independence within a year. His radical attitude stemmed from the guarantee of Indonesian non-interference which he believed that he secured from Adam Malik in Jakarta. Horta probably sees himself as independent Timor's first President. His visit to Jakarta was tactically clever because all parties recognise the decisive influence that Indonesia can exercise on Timor's future. Horta plans to visit Australia shortly, presumably to seek political assurances that would have similar domestic usefulness to him.

11. The Timorese Democratic People's Association (APODETI), which is led by Osorio, advocates the integration of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia. Osorio argues that only association with Indonesia can achieve effective decolonisation as Timor is too weak to maintain viable independence and continuing association with Portugal would be neo-colonial in character. He sees separate provincial status in Indonesia as the best means of preserving Portuguese Timor's distinctive identity and interests. The integration proposal has aroused hostility, particularly on the part of tribal chiefs in some regions. The adverse reaction was sufficient to prompt the Portuguese authorities to suggest changing the Party's original name, which was the Association for the Integration of Timor with Indonesia (AITI). APODETI is the weakest of the three parties. But it is said to have support from some Timorese priests.

APODETI is seen as the political heir of the 1959 rising against the Portuguese in Viqueque which was instigated by refugees from the Permesta/PRRI rebellion in Indonesia.

12. At this stage in the political development of Timor, the parties represent little more than their organizing committees. The leadership of the three parties is drawn from the small native elite and is linked across party lines by family relationships. Differences between the parties probably reflect personal rivalry and competition among potential leaders as much as they do issues of principle. There is obvious scope and need for a unified national movement. Ramos Horta of ASDT says that, on Adam Malik's advice, he will try to promote unity among the parties and is confident that he can win over at least APODETI. Horta seems to be emerging as the most skilful of the political leaders.

The Parties and Political Authority

13. The sincerity of the party leaders and their wish to gain knowledge and experience is impressive. But their ill-developed party organisations might be exposed to outside manipulation, especially in the case of UDT. The parties have no mass base. They are still at a primary stage of organisation and explanation. The concept of competitive parties and political activity is alien to the great majority of Timorese. UDT has a strong advantage with the village people because it can evoke the symbol of the Portuguese flag.

14. The parties have no exclusive claim to exercise future political authority. Tribal and regional divisions could provide an alternative basis to political alignments in Timor. Some of the tribal chiefs have great authority with their people and maintain private armies. (Such forces are not usually equipped with firearms.) The army itself is an obvious source of future political power. At present there are very few Timorese officers but an officer training scheme will be introduced this year. Current Portuguese army strength in Timor is about 4,000, including 1,200 Portuguese personnel. The progressive officers in Timor have a strong sense of political mission. They see their role as to encourage orderly political development and to ensure that political competition is fair and peaceful. The army claims, probably with justification, that its presence prevents regression to tribal fighting among the Timorese.

The Chinese

15. The problem of accommodating the Chinese could have an unsettling influence on political development in Timor. The Chinese keep to themselves and have resisted assimilation or identification with Timor. Most still hold Taiwan passports. Except for a few Portuguese enterprises, they dominate the commercial economy down to village level. The Timorese see the Chinese as rank exploiters. In the new political climate there is wild talk about expelling the Chinese or, at least, forced assimilation. With the introduction of political freedom, the Timorese adopted an assertive attitude towards Chinese property, claiming that it would soon be their own. The Chinese community was badly scared by a Timorese criminal attack on a Chinese family, which occurred in Dili in early May, and placed a political interpretation on the incident. Subsequent action by the Portuguese military police, who are now responsible for public order, seems to have restored Chinese confidence for the time being. While colonial authority lasts and the Portuguese are committed to orderly political procedures, they cannot afford to allow anti-Chinese violence.

16. The Chinese are keeping their options open and are probably trying to assess with which of the emerging political forces they should identify themselves. Some have joined UDT but for the most part the Chinese have avoided open political commitment. Continuing association with Portugal would probably best suit their interests. They are attracted to Australia as an

escape route. If Portugal recognised Peking, the Timor Chinese would adjust their allegiance to the mainland. PRC representation in Dili in place of the present Taiwan consulate could cause serious problems. The Timorese are opposed to the idea on grounds that it would provoke Indonesian intervention. Certainly, PRC representations in advance of re-establishment of a Chinese embassy at Jakarta could lead to tensions in Timor and difficulties with Indonesia. In view of the recent Chinese rejection of Portuguese overtures for recognition, the problem might not arise.

External Factors—Timor and the Region

17. Because of their fear of Indonesian attack during the Soekarno era, the Portuguese have educated many Timorese to a deep suspicion of Indonesia. Today, the Portuguese have good relations with the Indonesian authorities in Western Timor and their past fears have relaxed. But the old attitude persists among Timorese. At the same time, it is said that many Timorese might be sympathetic to the idea of association with Indonesia if they felt free to express their opinion. But they are fearful that the Portuguese might return to Timor after decolonization as they did after the Pacific War. There seem to be regional and tribal differences on the question of association with Indonesia. It is hard to gauge the real character of Timorese opinion about Indonesia and the relative strength of different attitudes. Present opinion could change with increasing political maturity. The Indonesian Consul at Dili anxiously emphasises Indonesia's attitude of non-interference and professes embarrassment at APODETI's advocacy of integration with Indonesia. But there is some suspicion in Dili that a subordinate member of the Consulate staff is engaging in interventionist political activity.

18. Timorese who fear Indonesia are apt to assume that Australia would support Timor against Indonesia. Some even talk about Australia succeeding to the Portuguese colonial mantle in Timor. A sentimental association with Australia lingers from the Pacific War, as do memories of the destruction caused by Australian operations. Some Timorese, notably the ASDT, claim that Australia has an unsettled debt to Timor dating from the War. There is some feeling that Timor's Chinese population could be removed to Australia and that in its past attitude towards the people of Timor, Australia had displayed bias in favour of the Chinese. Politically educated Timorese assume that Australia will play an important role in the future of Timor as a protector and aid donor. There is a uniform demand, among Portuguese and Chinese as well as Timorese, for Australian representation in Timor. The administration want a mission for practical reasons. The Timorese incline to interpret the closure of the former Consulate as a betrayal of their interests in favour of Portuguese colonialism.

19. Apart from Australia and Indonesia, the people of Timor, including the Portuguese authorities, are ignorant about their regional neighbours. They are unfamiliar with regional cooperation—which in the long run might provide a means of drawing Portuguese Timor into the regional community and of harmonising its relations with Indonesia. Among regional neighbours, PNG's development experience could offer Portuguese Timor much by way of example.

Prospects

20. Authentic political life in Timor is just beginning and prediction of its future course is difficult. The lack of preparedness of the Timorese to exercise genuine self-determination in the near future is widely recognised. In a speech on 24 June the Governor made the 'personal' suggestion that self-determination should be deferred for at least five years. There is much to be said for a gradualist approach provided that in the meantime a serious effort is made to

develop the political consciousness of the Timorese people and their power of choice. Some vested interests will resist such preparation. It cannot be assumed that the parties will emerge as the authoritative vehicles of political activity in Timor. Insecurity and violence are possible, particularly if Portuguese authority and the army's determination to see that there is political fair play were weakened. The Chinese would be likely targets of violence. The Timorese may realise only through hard experience that the Chinese are economically indispensable. Disorder should not be assumed but it is a possibility that needs to be taken into account.

21. Timor's problems will be externalised to some degree because of the importance of its links with Portugal, Indonesia and Australia. Expatriate sentiment in Timor favours continuing association with Portugal. But possession of Timor has lost its political significance for Portugal and Portuguese domestic opinion might come to regard Timor as an expensive and pointless liability. Slow and careful political development will probably suit Indonesia's interests by increasing its chances of winning the confidence of the Timorese and perhaps of fostering the idea of integration. For Australia, an opportunity is emerging to develop stronger bilateral relations with Timor if it chooses to do so.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ii]

14 MEMORANDUM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 5 July 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

We should like you to discuss our assessment of the political situation in Portuguese Timor (SAV 026)¹ with the Department of Foreign Affairs and other interested Indonesian agencies. Those parts of the assessment that relate to the role and interests of Australia and Indonesia obviously require sensitive handling.

2. Our overriding impression from visiting Portuguese Timor was of the infant state of political development. Time is required to develop the political consciousness of the people to a point where genuine self-determination is possible. The lapse of time should suit both Australian and Indonesian interests.

3. We wish to avoid any possibility of differences between Australia and Indonesia over Portuguese Timor. At the same time we consider that the Timorese should not be denied the chance to exercise self-determination. The impression that we wish you to convey to the Indonesians is that there seems no cause for immediate anxiety about Portuguese Timor. The situation there is

¹ Document 13.

² On 10 July the Embassy reported discussion of the paper with Colonel Setiawan (BAKIN) and Tjan. Setiawan asked about influence of the priests, China, and Portuguese Communists, and whether Horta had any chance of welding together a more national movement. Tjan commented that Indonesia would accept independence for the territory provided it did not involve dependence on a foreign power whose interests might be inimical to Indonesia; an important consideration in Indonesia's policy would be the views of its neighbours, particularly ASEAN countries and Australia and New Zealand. Indonesia had not yet focussed on the need for an active policy: HANKAM had not given it serious consideration, while BAKIN had put up a preliminary paper to the President which canvassed options but reached no conclusion.

orderly and is developing in a favourable direction.²

4. As discussed with the Ambassador during his visit to Australia, it would be useful if you could now arrange a visit to Indonesian Timor. The Indonesian consul at Dili was somewhat concerned at the extent of private links that have developed between Dili and Kupang. Such has been true in relation to Darwin as well. (Please see the attached supplementary report on our visit to Portuguese Timor which is strictly for your own information.)

5. We are interested in the Americans' assessment following their recent visit to Portuguese Timor from Surabaya. An additional copy of SAV 026 is attached which you could pass to the United States embassy. We shall also give the report to the Americans in Washington and propose to keep them informed about our thinking.

6. While we intend to brief the Indonesian embassy here about the findings of our visit, we see Jakarta as the main point of contact with them on Portuguese Timor.

A. D. McLENNAN
Indonesia Section

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ii]

15 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 16 [July] 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: Visit to Australia of Ramos Horta

Mr Ramos Horta, a leader of the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), arrived in Canberra on Tuesday evening, 16 July.

2. ASDT is one of three political parties in Portuguese Timor. Despite its name there is nothing at this time to suggest that it is a social democratic party in the accepted international sense. It has a small following, predominantly of intellectuals. Like the other two parties, it has yet to develop any substantial support among the mass of ill-educated Timorese. For most Timorese political awareness is still circumscribed by emotional loyalty to Portugal. Ramos Horta is the brightest politician to have emerged in Portuguese Timor. He is ambitious and may see himself as leader of an independent Portuguese Timor. ASDT favours strongly independence, as opposed to continued links with Portugal or an association with Indonesia.

3. Ramos Horta visited Jakarta in late June where he obtained from Malik what he described as assurances of Indonesian non-interference in Portuguese Timor. Of some significance is that Horta tended to put his own gloss on meetings he had in Indonesia and to tailor his accounts of meetings with Indonesians to his (Timorese) audience.

4. His visit to Australia undoubtedly follows from the common Timorese perception that Australia is of major potential importance to Portuguese Timor, and possibly even a counter-balance against Indonesian influence.

5. In the formulation of policy on Portuguese Timor, we need to try to avoid courses likely to irritate Indonesia without good reason. Indeed one of our over-riding concerns must be to pay careful attention to Indonesian susceptibilities over Portuguese Timor. There exists a

possibility that politicians such as Ramos Horta, irrespective of any good intentions they may have, may seek for domestic consumption to exploit supposed undertakings from us by claiming Australian assurances against Indonesian interference.

6. Horta may seek to see Australian officials and Ministers. (In Jakarta he saw Malik three times. This was largely a product of very favourable publicity he obtained through the influential Christian newspaper *Sinar Harapan*.) We envisage responding at the official level to his visit but see little advantage, and some disadvantages in his being received at the Ministerial level. Ministerial attention would give too much weight to his visit, which he would be certain to publicize, or even misrepresent. As a result, he could pre-empt our policy options on Portuguese Timor or even embarrass our relations with Indonesia. At this inchoate stage of politics in Portuguese Timor, it would be prudent for us to avoid too close a contact with one or other of the emerging groups.

7. Horta may seek assurances of the opening of an Australian consulate in Portuguese Timor. The Department is, in fact, considering recommending this but any assurance given to Horta is certain to be exploited domestically by him on his return. We have not yet given an indication of our thinking to either the Portuguese or the Indonesians.

8. *It is recommended:*

- (a) that you should avoid receiving Mr Ramos Horta;
- (b) that discussions be conducted at the official level.¹

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South Asia Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, vii]

16 LETTER FROM FEAKES TO FURLONGER

Canberra, 26 July 1974

TOP SECRET

Portuguese Timor

I am sorry to have delayed in replying to your letter of 3 July about Portuguese Timor.¹ While you were on leave in Australia, John McCredie and I wrote to each other on that subject and you may be interested to have the following extract of what I had to say to him about our general outlook on Portuguese Timor.

[*matter omitted*]²

The information conveyed to Jan Arriens by Harry Tjan was most valuable, but I think that you would agree that we should not encourage the Indonesians in any way to talk to us along those lines. Australia could not afford to be associated with an Indonesian covert operation because of the risk of exposure, if for no other reason. Any hint of Australian involvement or

¹ Willesee approved the recommendations.

¹ Document 12.

² The first paragraph of Document 10, from 'My own feeling . . .', was repeated here.

even acquiescence would be damaging to the government's reputation overseas, to its domestic credibility and to the confidence in us of small countries, especially PNG. In terms of domestic opinion, there are enough problems in maintaining our present policy towards Indonesia without the complication of association with a doubtful operation in Timor which would scarcely be consistent with the government's support for self-determination in Portuguese colonial territories.

I wonder whether the Indonesians may not under-estimate the difficulties of a covert operation in Portuguese Timor and the risk of exposure. They are not in administrative control of Portuguese Timor unlike West Irian, and they might find themselves with very little international support. The suggestion that Australia might help by 'conditioning' opinion in countries such as PNG makes me nervous. It indicates a serious Indonesian misreading of the character of Australia's approach to foreign policy: the sort of point I have in mind is that depending on the conclusions that we reach about Australia's interests in Timor, we may yet find ourselves offering the Indonesians diplomatic support on the condition that they do not resort to subversive activities or pressure in Portuguese Timor.

What the Indonesians do in Portuguese Timor has, of course, implications which go beyond our own relations with them. The Indonesians seem to realise the danger to their regional policies if they overreach themselves over Portuguese Timor—hence their emphasis on not *seeming* to be expansionist. One can guess at the thinking underlying Harry Tjan's idea. It might go like this: Indonesia can have the best of both worlds by employing covert tactics for expansion in Timor; OPSUS has the necessary skills and has demonstrated them in West Irian; the agency or political interest that secured Portuguese Timor for Indonesia would gain great kudos domestically. It seems to us that the danger which this approach illustrates is that self-interest may distort rational thinking and the assessment of risks.

At this stage, as will be apparent from the extract from my letter to John McCredie, we cannot endorse the bare proposition that the absorption of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia would probably best suit Australia's interests. It might not, for example, if the means used to bring about such a result seriously damaged Indonesia's regional standing and aroused fears of Indonesian expansionism. The alternative solution of an independent Portuguese Timor is at least conceivable. As I suggested to John McCredie, it should not be beyond the capacity of Australia and Indonesia together to contain the problems that an independent Portuguese Timor might present. There is much to be said for patience all round. A deliberate approach to the future of Portuguese Timor should suit the interests of the Timorese themselves and of the external powers principally concerned—Portugal, Indonesia and Australia. The lapse of time that careful preparation for self-determination would entail should increase the chances of the Timorese agreeing to association with Indonesia.

As I say policy towards Portuguese Timor is still being considered but the Prime Minister will be fully briefed and we look forward to a substantive exchange of views between him and President Soeharto. Our preliminary view is that Australia should not adopt firm and binding positions at this stage. We should prefer to see how the situation develops. In the meantime you might like to consider the following points to put to the Indonesians as opportunity offers in Jakarta:—

- (a) Australia is publicly committed to the principle of self-determination in Portuguese colonial territories. We have not yet come to firm conclusions about our policy towards Portuguese Timor. We should prefer to see how the situation develops. There is no need for hasty decision or action. The lapse of time that deliberate preparation

for self-determination in Timor would entail should suit Indonesia's interests by increasing its chances of persuading the Timorese to agree to association with Indonesia. In considering policy, we shall keep Indonesia's interests in mind. We look forward to a fruitful exchange of views on Portuguese Timor between the Prime Minister and President Soeharto.

- (b) Australia is sympathetic to Indonesian interests in Portuguese Timor. But it considers an approach based on covert operations and efforts to manipulate opinion in Portuguese Timor carries serious risks. Such operations could easily become exposed or misfire. Exposure would be damaging to Indonesia's standing in the region, not least in Australia, and to the credibility of its foreign policy. (This point might be used only to Harry Tjan or other Indonesians who raise the possibility of covert operations in Timor.)³

You might be interested to see Alan Renouf's record of his conversation with Peter Wilenski.⁴

[NAA: A11443, [1]]

17 LETTER FROM FURLONGER TO FEAKES

Jakarta, 30 July 1974

TOP SECRET

Thank you for your letter of 26 July.¹ I was particularly interested in what you wrote to John McCredie earlier in the year, since it seems to me that your thinking has changed a little since then. Am I right in thinking that we are now more neutral about the most desirable outcome of the plebiscite whereas formerly we saw the best result of an act of self-determination as union of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia, if it could be reasonably decently arranged?

I am concerned that we may not yet have adopted a definite policy towards Portuguese Timor and that this may catch up with us when the Prime Minister visits Indonesia. The subject is bound to be raised by the President with him, and, if not, the Prime Minister should himself raise it, as there are seeds of possible future misunderstanding if we do not talk frankly. It would appear very odd to the Indonesians if we had developed no clear views on the subject. The reasons for their concern over Portuguese Timor apply in only slightly lesser degree to ourselves and they will expect us, like them, to have developed clear ideas about the most desirable course of development in Portuguese Timor.

I think that the very least that Soeharto would expect from us would be to share his judgment that it would be in the interests of the region—not only Indonesia—if Portuguese

³ Arriens wrote to McLennan on 22 July that Tjan's paper, described in Document 12, had been submitted to Soeharto on 18 July. Tjan initially said the President's reaction was 'favourable', then later that he expected Soeharto to say that the arguments left no option other than integration, which should be done in a discreet and 'honourable' manner and so that the President could not be embarrassed or implicated. Arriens surmised that he might in fact have been conveying indirectly Soeharto's actual reaction. [On file NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, viii.]

⁴ Wilenski told Renouf on 23 July that he had discussed Timor with Tjan who had 'pleaded' that Indonesia and Australia should work together towards early incorporation. Wilenski had undertaken to have the proposition studied, but stressed that it must satisfy the principle of self-determination. Renouf replied that McLennan's report suggested Timorese opinion favoured either independence or remaining with Portugal, and undertook to have a position paper prepared for Ministers in readiness for Whitlam's discussions with Soeharto. [On file NAA: A11443, [1].]

¹ Document 16.

Timor were to become part of Indonesia. I personally have no difficulty in accepting this as a proposition: the thought of a poor, uneducated, probably unstable, independent Eastern Timor on our doorstep, and susceptible to subversion and exploitation by other Powers, should be no more attractive to us than to Indonesia. Despite Indonesia's imperfections, the Timorese would probably be no worse off under Indonesia than if they were independent. And we would have one problem, which we have developed some skill in understanding and dealing with, and not two, one of them completely unpredictable. Let us not be too swayed by possible criticism from radical academics.

Could the Prime Minister not say that he shares the assessment that it would be in the interests of the region that Portuguese Timor unite with Indonesia? He could then go on to qualify this by saying that, in the modern world, self-determination cannot be ignored, and that there could be problems in bringing about union. This could in turn open up the question of independence and other options. But I think Soeharto would expect us to begin by seeking a shared assessment of what would be in the best interests of the region, if it is attainable.

I am concerned that the President might indicate obliquely to Mr Whitlam that Indonesia is thinking of guiding developments in Portuguese Timor through covert activities. This is perhaps unlikely, but it is possible. Mr Whitlam would then have no option but to say no, as he could never be on the record as having even tacitly acquiesced to such a proposal. I think it is important that we forestall any such possibility. I note your point that we should not encourage the Indonesians to talk to us along these lines but I think that Arriens should talk to Tjan again before the Prime Minister comes here. When Tjan first conveyed this information to him,² Arriens made the point that if a decision were taken about running a covert operation he doubted that we would wish to hear about it officially. I think Tjan has taken this point, but it might be as well to reiterate it with him so that the Indonesians would not be under any possible illusion that we might take a diplomatic initiative as our part of a deal in which they did the dirty work in Portuguese Timor.

I am not sure that I agree that the Indonesians underestimate the difficulties of a covert operation in Portuguese Timor and the risk of exposure. There are ample means at their disposal to influence developments in Portuguese Timor and they have obviously given a good deal of thought to this already (as Fisher's findings in Kupang confirm).³ Nor are they unaware of the risk of exposure; this is one thing holding them back.

I am not sure that an operation would be undertaken largely out of OPSUS self-interest. The decision will have to be taken by the President, who will weigh all the relevant considerations. All the Indonesians we talk to indicate deep concern about the potential for instability in Portuguese Timor and do not disguise their preference for incorporation into Indonesia. There is no other body that could do this apart from OPSUS. Of course it would be a prestigious trick for OPSUS to take, but I think it is significant that the initiative for a covert operation has come from Harry Tjan and not from the person who would probably run it, Lim Bian Kie. Tjan's reasons in favour of such an operation coincide, I think, with those of the other relevant authorities such as BAKIN, and have very little to do with internal politics.

Apart from the imminence of the Prime Minister's visit, one other reason why I think we need to develop a position quickly is that I am not at all so sure that we may have as much time as we would like to think. It is true that the Indonesians themselves do not appear to foresee any rapid development in Portuguese Timor, and that, as McLennan found on his visit, the Portuguese Timorese also emphasise the need for time. Nevertheless, it appeared at one stage

² See Document 12.

³ See Document 18.

that a plebiscite might be held as early as next year and if there is progress towards decolonisation of Portuguese territories in Africa, we cannot afford to overlook the possibility that events in Portuguese Timor could be accelerated by the pressure of international opinion. I myself would be surprised if we had as much as five years grace. It might be helpful if a United Nations mission were to visit the territory fairly soon; their findings could hopefully lead to the recommendation that more time was needed.

I am attaching a summary record of Fisher's visit to Indonesian Timor from which you will see that preparations for a covert operation are well in hand. You will note also the emphasis on union with Indonesia.

[NAA: A11443, [1]]

18 REPORT BY FISHER

Jakarta, [July 1974]¹

CONFIDENTIAL

Visit to Indonesian Timor and Flores

The main purpose of my visit to Indonesian Timor and Flores from 19–27 July was to try to ascertain attitudes to Portuguese Timor in light of the recent developments in Portugal and in Portugal's overseas provinces. The following is an assessment of the current state of relations between the Indonesian and Portuguese parts of Timor and the attitudes of the Indonesian part to its neighbour.

[*matter omitted*]

5. The Indonesians seem relaxed about security in the border areas. There are no regular patrols and border posts are located only at the rare exit and entry points used by travellers. Border surveillance is the responsibility of the police who are assisted in more inaccessible areas by civil defence personnel (HANSIP). The Commander of the NTT Defence Resort (KOREM) informed me that of the NTT based battalion (consisting of about 700 infantry) only a small percentage were located within reach of the border area at Atambua. (I heard independently that the number of troops in Atambua was about 100.) The KOREM Commander pointed out that the Portuguese guarded the border area more tightly than the Indonesians. Incidents were rare and were limited largely to settling disputes such as who owned cattle which wandered over the border. There was a good working understanding between the Indonesian and Portuguese security authorities in the border area. The recent establishment of a new Indonesian immigration office in Atambua was not so much due to Indonesian concern about dangers of infiltration from Portuguese Timor but intended more to cope with the increase in the number of tourists entering Indonesia by road from Dili. It was apparent from the discussions I had that the Indonesians saw the advantages of loose border surveillance as outweighing the disadvantages.

Developments Since the Coup in Portugal

6. There is a heightened interest in developments in Portuguese Timor among educated

¹ The report itself is undated. A covering letter bears the date 31 July.

people in Kupang. However, except perhaps in border areas such as the Kabupaten of Belu (the main city in which is Atambua), people living in the interior, although aware of the existence of Portuguese Timor, have no real knowledge of or interest in developments there.

7. Following the coup in Portugal, a delegation from Portuguese Timor, headed by a major, visited Kupang to explain developments to Governor El Tari. The delegation mentioned the possibility of an early referendum in Portuguese Timor and requested El Tari to respect this and retain a business as usual approach while Portuguese Timor sorted out its future. El Tari reportedly gave this assurance to the delegation.

8. For his part, Governor El Tari has been directed by the President to 'seek a solution' to the Portuguese Timor question. This Presidential instruction to El Tari, himself a Timorese, is understandable in view of El Tari's long association with the Portuguese authorities in Dili. From my discussions it became clear that the solution being sought was eventual fusion of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia. In a recent closed session of the local Provincial Parliament (DPRD), the Governor outlined the instruction that he had received from the President. The DPRD responded by passing unanimously a resolution supporting the unification of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia on the basis of similar race, culture and language. Kupang was, however, clearly not to make any initiatives aimed at bringing about this objective. Tactics to be followed were still being worked out in Jakarta. It was pointed out to me in Kupang that any major contact between the provincial Government of Indonesian Timor and the Portuguese authorities in Dili had prior approval from Jakarta. This was even more so in relation to any steps taken to influence the situation in Portuguese Timor in the direction of unification with Indonesia.

9. The only discernible step being taken at this stage to influence the situation in Portuguese Timor is being taken through the Indonesian Government Radio Station in Kupang. Broadcasts are being made in Bahasa Tetum, one of the regional languages spoken on the Indonesian side of the Timor border which also happens to be a type of *lingua franca* in the Portuguese part of Timor. Although these broadcasts, begun on the initiative of the Governor (presumably with approval from Jakarta), were being made before the coup in Lisbon they have been stepped up since then and now occupy half an hour a day (with three-quarters of an hour on Saturday). The program deals mainly with news, but also contains material on the culture of NTT, economic developments there and indirectly extolls the virtues of being an independent nation (a general characteristic of RRI's broadcasting). The arranger of the program told me that he was being careful about the content of the program, but admitted that although the program was ostensibly aimed at those in Indonesian Timor who spoke Bahasa Tetum, one of the purposes of his broadcasts was to make his 'brothers' in Portuguese [Timor] aware of the fact that they were still under colonial rule and to give them some idea of how good it would be to become part of independent Indonesia. He said that RRI Kupang planned to make radios more readily available to people living in the border area by providing them for sale at a slightly cheaper rate than the normal price. Hopefully some would find their way across the border. He had recently received letters from a number of Bahasa Tetum speakers in the Portuguese part of Timor. So far Bahasa Tetum is the only regional language that Kupang RRI is using in its broadcasts though it is planned to begin broadcasting soon in another regional border language, Bahasa Dawan, which is also spoken in parts of Portuguese Timor proper as well as in Oikuse [*sic*], a small area of Portuguese territory enclosed, except for its coastline, within Indonesian territory. There has apparently been no complaint about these broadcasts from the Portuguese authorities in Dili.

10. Ramos Horta, the Secretary General of the Timorese Social Democratic Party, visited Kupang following his recent visit to Jakarta. Because of his party's advocacy of independence

for Portuguese Timor, it is not surprising that his welcome in Kupang was less than warm. He commented during his visit that Indonesian Timor was still visibly poor, a comment which was somewhat resented. He also asked about the motives the Indonesians had in allowing RRI Kupang to broadcast in Bahasa Tetum. He explained that although his party advocated independence for Portuguese Timor he did not rule out the possibility that Indonesian Timor might eventually fuse with an independent Portuguese Timor to form an independent Timor State. This was not well received by the educated Indonesian Timorese who, though conscious of being different from other Indonesians, especially the Javanese, regard themselves as Indonesians in the fullest sense. Horta entered the local provincial Parliament to observe a session, but a motion of one of the members of the DPRD that he be excluded from the sitting was carried. Kupang's OPSUS agents see Horta as an opportunist who has his own self-aggrandisement more at heart than the true welfare of the Portuguese Timorese people. They stressed to me that Horta was half Portuguese and therefore was ill-equipped to lead the native Timorese. On prospects for economic development in Portuguese Timor Horta spoke in only vague generalities and failed to convince the Indonesian Timorese that an independent Portuguese Timor would be economically viable.

OPSUS and Portuguese Timor

11. A key element in the Kupang situation is the role of OPSUS (Special Operation), which has a strong nucleus there. One of the more influential OPSUS agents, who is still only in his mid-twenties, is a Catholic from Ende in Flores and a member of the PDI faction in the DPRD. He served in Irian Jaya as an OPSUS agent at the time of the Act of Free Choice, which he admitted had been a carefully organised operation. Achieving the right result in Irian Jaya had not been difficult, and he readily admitted that it would likewise not be difficult to influence the result of a plebiscite in Portuguese Timor. At the same time, he acknowledged the completely different set of circumstances that obtained in the case of Portuguese Timor. The Indonesians could not claim that Portuguese Timor properly belonged to Indonesia because of former Dutch rule, as the Dutch had never ruled what is now Portuguese Timor. He stressed that Indonesia would need to be very careful in its handling of any action taken to influence Portuguese Timor in view of possible unfavourable international reaction to any evidence of Indonesian foul play. However, in view of the similarities in race, culture and language between those on both sides of the border, it would be an easy matter to launch a sophisticated infiltration campaign. Those used in the operation would be largely Tetum-speaking residents of the Kabupaten of Belu. Although their dialect of Tetum varied somewhat from that spoken in Portuguese Timor, there would be no problem in their being understood or passing for Portuguese Timorese. Producing the required Portuguese passports would not represent a problem.

[*matter omitted*]²

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ii]

² The remainder of the report compares East and West Timor, noting some similarities but also diversity of culture and traditions predating Dutch and Portuguese colonial influences.

19 MEMORANDUM TO POSTS¹

Canberra, 7 August 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor—Visit to Canberra of Ramos Horta

Attached is a report prepared in the Department on the recent visit to Canberra of Ramos Horta.

A. D. McLENNAN

Indonesia Section

Attachment**AUSTRALIA–PORTUGUESE TIMOR RELATIONS****VISIT OF RAMOS HORTA***[matter omitted]*

3. Horta's visit, as the first by a Timorese political leader to Australia, was of some importance. It stimulated interest in Portuguese Timor and was a step in the development of Australia's relations with the territory. Horta hoped by means of the visit to secure certain political objectives, notably an Australian commitment to support of his party, to the independence of Timor and to give aid. Undertakings along these lines would have enhanced Horta's personal political standing in Portuguese Timor. During his visit to Jakarta, Adam Malik gave Horta a letter guaranteeing Indonesian support for Portuguese Timor's right to independence (copy attached, see para [7] below). Such a guarantee has direct implications for internal politics in Portuguese Timor, for among the three political parties, it is only the ASDT which seeks independence.

4. Department officials told Horta that they had not yet asked ministers to consider Australia's policy towards the future of Portuguese Timor. But they expected that ministers would endorse the objective of self-determination as consistent with Australia's policy towards other Portuguese colonial territories and in the belief that the people of Portuguese Timor should be free to decide their own future. Australia would expect an act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor to be a genuine one. Officials expressed understanding of the need for delay in order to prepare the people to exercise self-determination. The difficulty about endorsing the objective of a particular party or otherwise seeming to prefer one party over the others was explained to Horta. He was told that the provision of Australian aid would require the agreement of the Portuguese Government at this stage. Officials also explained to Horta the need for Australia to explore Portuguese thinking about Timor.

5. Horta was somewhat disappointed by the outcome of his visit to Canberra, which he contrasted unfavourably with that to Jakarta. He emphasised Australia's 'debt' to the Timorese for the assistance that they provided during the Pacific War and dropped hints about looking elsewhere for friends, particularly among the communist countries. But Horta did not complain to the Departmental officials about the treatment that he received. Although he probably felt that more facilities could have been offered to him, he wrote to the *National Times* to deny a report that he was 'cold shouldered' by Foreign Affairs. (Mr Dunn helped him write the letter, which was carefully worded.) We understand that Horta initially hoped to see the Minister but he did not ask the Department to arrange a meeting.

¹ Jakarta, Lisbon, Port Moresby, Washington and New York.

6. While the outcome of the visit may have disappointed Horta's personal hopes, it was probably salutary. He should have received the impression that, while Australia's disposition was friendly, it would move deliberately in relation to Portuguese Timor and not in such a way as to favour a particular party or individual. Another lesson was that Portuguese Timor had to compete among many claims for the attention of the Australian Government. Horta's attempt to solicit financial aid for ASDT from the federal secretary of the A[L]P was unsuccessful. He indicated that he might attempt to obtain funds from the Liberal Party (in the course of an interview he had in mind with Mr Peacock) but in fact he did not do so.

7. A factor colouring Horta's attitude was the ease with which in Jakarta he obtained Adam Malik's endorsement of the idea of independence for Portuguese Timor. The wording of Malik's letter (para 3 above) is unequivocal but it probably leaves a false impression of Indonesia's position which, in fact, is far from certain. There is a strong temptation for the Indonesians to work for the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. Malik's commitment to Horta would be unpopular among several interested groups in Jakarta. It is difficult to know why Malik gave such an undertaking. Perhaps it represented a belief on his part that Portuguese Timor should have the right to independence and was an effort to block those who may be disposed to interfere.

8. The Indonesian Embassy took an active interest in Horta's visit. Representatives of the Embassy told the Department that Horta had exaggerated Malik's commitment to the principle of Timorese independence. (Malik's letter belies this claim but the Embassy was probably reflecting the tone of its briefing from Jakarta. There ha[ve] been other indications that the Indonesians wish to play down Horta's visit to Jakarta. The Embassy has informed us that Malik received Horta only because of their journalistic associations and because the Indonesian press—notably *Sinar Harapan*—had made a fuss over him.) The Embassy was surprised to learn that we had not officially sponsored Horta's visit to Australia. It received Horta at his request and plied him with questions in order to avoid answering any awkward questions from Horta himself. The Embassy expressed relief that Horta was officially received in the Department because otherwise there would have been a too noticeable difference between his reception in Jakarta and in Canberra.

[matter omitted]

15. Horta's visit to Canberra was premature in terms of the evolution of Australian policy. Portuguese Timor is a sensitive factor in our relations with Indonesia. The Prime Minister's visit should provide an opportunity for an authoritative exchange of views with the Indonesians after which we should be able to develop our policy towards Portuguese Timor more confidently. At that stage there may be more scope for cultivating the Timorese political leaders.

20 MINUTE FROM ARRIENS TO FURLONGER

Jakarta, 14 August 1974

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

Harry Tjan called today on his own request to discuss Portuguese Timor. He said that he had put up a second paper to the President on 13 August. This paper was in anticipation of Mr Whitlam's visit next month. As I had discussed with him last week, Tjan strongly advised the President not to make any reference to Mr Whitlam about any clandestine operations that Indonesia might be considering in Portuguese Timor. The other main point of the paper was to suggest that the President might discuss with Mr Whitlam the scope for international initiatives to pave the way for the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. Tjan mentioned the possibility of raising the matter in the United Nations, for example placing Portuguese Timor under the trusteeship of the United Nations. Indonesia also had in mind explaining internationally its problems and interests in Portuguese Timor and talking to the Portuguese Government.

2. The President replied to Tjan's paper that he would only be prepared to talk to Mr Whitlam if he could be assured that Australia's attitude to any such Indonesian initiatives would be favourable. He does not apparently wish to sour the atmosphere of the meeting by getting a rebuff from Mr Whitlam. He therefore asked Tjan to clarify Australia's attitude. If necessary, he said that Tjan should visit Australia as soon as possible to investigate Australian attitudes for himself.¹

3. I told Tjan that our policy was still under consideration in Canberra and that the subject had not yet been referred to the Minister or to Cabinet. I said that the mood at present in the Department appeared to be one of keeping our options open and allowing matters to take their natural course in Portuguese Timor. Tjan said that he had already reported to the President to this effect.

4. Tjan stressed, as he did last week, that time might be running out in Portuguese Timor. From the example of the speed with which the Portuguese territories in Africa looked like obtaining independence without a plebiscite Tjan was apprehensive that the Portuguese Government might decide within the next year unilaterally to grant Portuguese Timor independence. Other factors that have accelerated the Indonesians' thinking on Portuguese Timor are the return from Europe of the Governor of Indonesian Timor, El Tari, and the visit to Jakarta of the President of Apodeti. The latter has been in Jakarta for two weeks and looks like staying a while longer. Unlike Horta's visit, the Apodeti Chairman's visit is not being

¹ Arriens also submitted a draft cable intended 'to apprise the Department of the facts without leaving them room to reject a private visit at Presidential direction'. His draft was not sent, but shortly before Tjan's departure, Canberra was advised (Cablegram JA4227, 19 August) of the substance of this discussion and that 'Tjan's mission is thus one of considerable delicacy and importance and for him to return home empty handed could adversely affect the Prime Minister's visit'. The reply (Cablegram CH100160, 19 August) expressed concern that Ministers would not have time to consider detailed policy on Timor much before Whitlam's visit, and that thinking had not progressed beyond that described in Feakes' letters (Documents 10 and 16). It doubted that Ministers could or would wish to give the kind of commitments Tjan might seek. A marginal comment on the latter [copy on file NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, iv] reads 'I have always had the feeling that we've been rushing our fences over Timor. Now we're in the position of finding this issue a possible impediment in the PM's visit to Indonesia . . . R. G[reet]'.

publicised. There will be no press conference. The Chairman has appealed for Indonesian assistance and Tjan said that the appeal could not very well be refused. Unlike the other two parties, they had received no funds. The Chairman had only been able to fly to Jakarta when an Indonesian booked on the plane had given him his seat at the last minute; until then the Chairman had been told the plane was full, although on embarkation this proved not to be the case. Ali Murtopo's group is thinking of sending him to Australia to explain his party's policies. Tjan asked me whether this would be a good idea; I said that I thought it would, as a follow-up to Ramos Horta's visit. (I briefed him on Horta's visit.)

5. Tjan said that the President implicitly trusted Australia but that Mr Malik did not. He had yesterday discussed Portuguese Timor with Malik who had in some way managed to convey distrust about Australia's intentions. It seems he even implied that the Centre was indirectly acting on Australia's behalf. Tjan was also called in by HANKAM to discuss Portuguese Timor and Cocos and Christmas Islands. He found HANKAM, like the President, to be confident of Australia's good intentions. Only Malik, it appears, is off-side and he seems to have been isolated in this exercise. As, Tjan explained, the policy towards Portuguese Timor was very much directed by the President himself, Mr Malik would have to fall into line.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ii]

21 MEMORANDUM TO ROGERS

Canberra, 15 August 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Defence Significance of Portuguese Timor

In response to your oral request of some months ago, I now attach a paper on the Defence Significance of Portuguese Timor.

2. Please note that the status of this paper is only a departmental working paper. It has not been submitted to the Chiefs of Staff Committee or to the Defence Committee. It is hoped, however, that it will provide adequate guidance for your own departmental consideration of political policy.

3. Should your considerations advance to the point of recommendation to the Government of political policy regarding the future status of Portuguese Timor, it would be necessary for the nation[al] defence interest to be taken into account. In this case, the Defence Committee's endorsement of the attached paper would have to be sought. We should be grateful, therefore, for timely advice in this respect so that a meeting of the Defence Committee could be arranged.

W. B. PRITCHETT

First Assistant Secretary
Defence Planning Division
[Department of Defence]

Attachment**Defence Significance of Portuguese Timor**[matter omitted]¹**STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE TO AUSTRALIA**

12. The strategic significance of Portuguese Timor to Australia may be related to:
- a. Australia's sea lines of communication and developing offshore resources in the area;
 - b. a major power threat to Australia;
 - c. an Indonesian threat to Australia.

Sea Lines of Communication and Off-Shore Resources

13. About 37 per cent by volume and 8 per cent by value of all Australian seaborne overseas trade passes through the eastern Indonesian archipelago; 96 per cent by volume and 75 per cent by value of the trade which passes through this area is between Australia and Japan. While other traffic could be re-routed without inconvenience, re-routing of the Australia/Japan trade (or any trade that might develop between the North & West of Australia & the other states of the North West Pacific) would result in increasing the length of this trade route by 50 to 100 per cent, dependent upon whether or not the traffic could traverse Torres Strait. Such an increase could seriously prejudice the prospect for the continuance of that trade.

14. A power established in Portuguese Timor would be well placed by virtue of the availability of airfields to intensify the threat which its long range maritime forces might in any case pose to shipping serving Australia through the eastern Indonesian archipelago and to Australia's off-shore resources to the north-west of the continent. Indonesia, without access to Portuguese Timor, is already well placed, geographically if not by capability, to do this. An important objective of our defence policy should be to ensure that no country additional to Indonesia attains a position where it could readily exert major pressure on these important sea lines of communication or to our off-shore resources. Specifically in this context therefore Portuguese Timor assumes a strategic significance to Australia comparable with that of PNG and the Solomon Islands and eastern Indonesia generally.²

A Major Power Threat

15. A major power posing a threat against Australia would necessarily possess a wide range of long range maritime capabilities of a relatively sophisticated character. Such capabilities would be adequate in themselves to pose a nuclear threat to Australia, irrespective of whether the major power had gained access to Portuguese Timor. To counter a major power nuclear threat, Australia or an allied power would require to pose a nuclear threat, over very long range, against the metropolitan territory of the major power concerned. Australian or allied access to Portuguese Timor would not significantly alter the effectiveness of such a nuclear counter-threat.

16. Access to forward base areas in the island chain to the North of Australia would very greatly facilitate the posing of a conventional threat against Australia by a major power. Moreover, access specifically to Portuguese Timor by a major power would:

¹ Paragraphs describing Portuguese Timor and its strategic potential have been omitted. Failing the discovery of significant mineral or oil resources, the latter was considered to be restricted to its relevance to the security interests of Australia and of Indonesia. The major importance of the territory lay in its potential as a location for air bases.

² In a minute dated 27 August, Jockel suggested this argument was questionable: Indonesia was unlikely to tolerate a major power acquiring control and introducing major military capability into Timor, or into the straits and waterways of the archipelago. He also suggested point 18c be qualified as unlikely, and criticised the paper for failing to deal with indigenous Timorese thinking or with the Indonesian interest.

- a. greatly facilitate the application of strategic pressure against Indonesia to make additional base areas in eastern Indonesia available to it. Indonesia might well be susceptible to such pressure;
 - b. seriously prejudice the potential military capability of Australia or its allies to support Indonesia against such pressure; and
 - c. enable the development of air bases which would enhance a major power's operational capabilities as suggested at para 11 above.
17. On the other hand, were access to Portuguese Timor to be available to Australia or an ally, especially if it were available irrespective of the strategic posture of Indonesia, the possibility of stiffening Indonesian resistance to pressure would be improved and deterrence of major power physical intrusion into eastern Indonesia would be increased.
18. It is concluded that Australian (and allied) access to Portuguese Timor in circumstances of threat by a major power would:
- a. have negligible significance in relation to the deterrence of a nuclear threat against Australia;
 - b. afford to Australia (and any ally) substantial strategic advantage in the deterrence of a conventional threat;
 - c. to the extent that access were available irrespective of the strategic posture of Indonesia, afford Australia significantly improved prospects of stiffening Indonesian will and ability to resist major power threats to eastern Indonesia; and
 - d. marginally lessen the threat to our lines of communication and off-shore resource areas off the north-west coast of Australia.

An Indonesian Threat

19. Were Indonesia to threaten Australia with conventional forces it would have negligible military need to gain access to Portuguese Timor in order to enforce its threat. Were Australia to have the option to deploy forces into Portuguese Timor in Australia's own defence, however, a significant potential counter-threat to Indonesian forces and lines of communication in eastern Indonesia and in the Timor sea could be posed. To ensure that option, however, Australia would need to have assured bases in Portuguese Timor and secure lines of communication to support its forces deployed from the mainland. Assuming this could be achieved, Indonesia would need to nullify the effects of Australian operations as a necessary pre-condition for the mounting of conventional attacks on north-western Australia in particular and to a significant degree on north-eastern Australia.
20. Were Indonesia to pose a nuclear threat against Australia it would have available to it facilities in the eastern Indonesian area adequate to support that threat.
21. An Indonesian nuclear threat to Australia could be countered only by a nuclear counter-threat. A nuclear armed Australia or a nuclear armed ally of Australia could readily pose a nuclear threat against Indonesia without access to Portuguese Timor; such access would however add marginally both to the improvement of Australian defence against the threat and to the effectiveness of the Australian/allied nuclear counter-threat.
22. It is concluded that, in the context of threat against Australia from Indonesia, the potentiality of Australian (or allied) access to Portuguese Timor would:
- a. add significantly to the possibility of deterrence of an Indonesian conventional threat, especially in relation to North West Australia.
 - b. add only marginally to the deterrence of an Indonesian nuclear threat.

THE DEFENCE INTEREST IN THE POLITICAL STATUS OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR

23. The conclusions in paras 18 and 22 above suggest a substantial Australian Defence interest in maximising the future option for Australia to deploy military capabilities into Portuguese Timor irrespective of the strategic posture of Indonesia and/or of potentially hostile major powers and irrespective of whether Australia would decide at the time to exploit that option militarily. Australia thus has a clear Defence interest in opposing the political or military domination of Portuguese Timor by either major powers or by Indonesia.

24. It appears likely that any Portuguese Government would wish to maintain a strictly neutral posture as between Australia on the one hand and an enemy or potential enemy (including Indonesia) of Australia on the other. It would thus seem likely that Portuguese Timor under Portuguese control would deny to Australia the option of exploiting Portuguese Timor's strategic position in Australia's defence.

25. While Portuguese Timor remains an overseas territory of Portugal there is a possibility that Indonesia or another foreign power could provide support to an independence movement or seize or gain military access to the territory under the guise of liberating it from colonial domination. It will remain in our Defence interest to preclude as far as possible such a development. [*An act of self determination which resulted in the emergence of*]³ an independent Portuguese Timor would provide no grounds for external intervention under guise of liberation from colonial domination.

26. As an independent state Portuguese Timor, like an independent PNG, would be inherently weak and thus sensitive to external pressures, especially from Indonesia.

27. Out of regard for their individual strategic interests in the Pacific and the Indian Oceans all major powers will tend to share Australia's interest in avoiding the emergence of any major power into a dominant political position in Portuguese Timor. Australia could therefore hope to receive a range of major power support in inhibiting such a development. Likewise it could expect the close co-operation of a friendly Indonesia if such a situation were to threaten.

28. On the other hand there could well be little major power resistance to the development of Indonesian political dominance in the territory if that were Indonesia's aim. Such an Indonesian aim could conceivably be pursued as an ostensible response to a threat of subversion emanating from an independent Portuguese Timor. In pursuing its interests in this matter however Indonesia would risk international disapproval. [*Given its concern to maintain strategic co-operation with Australia, Indonesia*] would also require to be as sensitive to Australian policy and strategic interests in Portuguese Timor as already in PNG.

29. To the above must be added that if Australia were to acquiesce in Indonesia gaining control of Portuguese Timor through pressure or subversion the [*credibility*] of Australian support of PNG against Indonesian pressure could be seriously and overtly damaged. [*There could be adverse implications for the effectiveness of our political and defence policies in PNG and elsewhere in the South Pacific.*]⁴

30. In circumstances, not at present foreseen or assessed to be likely, where a third power might threaten to gain a position of dominant influence in Portuguese Timor it would be appropriate for Australia to concert with Indonesia (so long as that country remains friendly [*and strategically cooperative*] with Australia) and with other interested powers, in resisting the intrusion of that third power.

31. It is concluded that Australia's Defence interest in inhibiting the political domination of Portuguese Timor by any major power and by Indonesia would be best advanced if Portuguese

³ Italicised words in square brackets indicate amendments sent to DFA on 21 August.

⁴ Jockel thought paragraphs 28 and 29 overstated.

Timor were to emerge from Portuguese tutelage as an independent state with the right to seek, in time of threat to its independence the support of the international community including Australia and Indonesia acting in co-operation.⁵

[32. *It is recognised that, depending inter alia upon the views of the Indonesian Government, inflexible pursuit by Australia of the interest defined in para 31 above could lead to difficulties in our relations with the Indonesian Government and could undermine our strategic cooperation with that Government. Australia has an important interest in avoiding this.*

33. *Consultations on this matter with Indonesia will need to take account of the depth and intensity of Indonesian views as they develop. Meanwhile in any consultation it will be important for Australia to establish clearly at the outset that*

- (i) *the strategic significance of Portuguese Timor to Australia gives Australia a deep interest in the future status of the territory and*
- (ii) *without prejudice to our concern to see Indonesia[n] strategic interests satisfied as well as our own, we would, for our own part, favour the emergence of the territory through self determination, as an independent state.]*

CONCLUSIONS

[34. *It is concluded*] that:

- a. Portuguese Timor could be an important factor in the security of our important sea lines of communication through the eastern Indonesian archipelago and to the security of north-western Australia and to our contiguous off-shore resource areas;
- b. A foreign power with access to bases in the territory would have the potential to threaten those interests;
- c. Australian access to bases [*or facilities*] in the territory could enhance our position in the context of an emerging threat to Australia from Indonesia or an emerging threat to Indonesia and/or Australia from a major power;
- d. The exclusion of major powers and of Indonesia from Portuguese Timor and thus the maximisation of Australia's option to deploy forces to Portuguese Timor would be best served by its development [*through self-determination*] as an independent state;
- e. In circumstances—not at present foreseen or assessed to be likely—where a third power might threaten to gain a position of dominant influence in Portuguese Timor it would be appropriate for Australia to concert with Indonesia (so long as that country remains friendly to Australia) and with other interested powers, in resisting the intrusion of that third power.
- [f. *There is a need to retain some flexibility in Australia's diplomatic position in the matter and to avoid prejudicing prospects of strategic cooperation with Indonesia in particular.*
- g. *Indonesia should be informed at the outset of any consultations on the matter that*
 - (i) *the strategic significance of Portuguese Timor to Australia gives Australia a deep interest in the future status of the Territory; and*
 - (ii) *without prejudice to our concern to see Indonesian strategic interests satisfied as well as our own, we would, for our own part, favour the emergence of the territory through self determination, as an independent state.]*

[NAA: A1838, 696/5, iii]

⁵ Jockel suggested that the words 'in co-operation' seemed to 'avoid the question of possible Indonesian pressures which would face Australia with the problem of supporting the independent Portuguese Timor against Indonesia'.

22 RECORD OF MEETING WITH TJAN

Canberra, 21 August 1974

SECRET AUSTEO

Officers Present:

Mr G. B. Feakes	First Assistant Secretary, South Asia Division
Mr J. L. Lavett	Assistant Secretary, South East Asia Branch
Mr A. D. McLennan	Indonesia Section
Mr G. J. Forrester	Indonesia Section

Indonesian Policy Towards Portuguese Timor—the View of the Palace Group

Mr Feakes invited Mr Tjan to explain his view of Portuguese Timor.

2. Mr Tjan said that he should be seen as a private citizen. Any view he might express on Portuguese Timor could not be taken as Indonesian foreign policy. His views were shared within his 'group'] (the Palace advisory group including Major-General Ali Moertopo) and had received the endorsement of the President. His point of view might eventually become official policy. But Indonesia's foreign policy towards Portuguese Timor had not been finally determined and there were divergent attitudes within the Indonesian Government. Tjan believed that the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia would be in the best strategic interests of Indonesia and Australia and of the region as a whole. Independence for Portuguese Timor might lead to instability in the region by virtue of subsequent penetration by a power inimical to both our interests, such as the USSR or China, or by virtue of tribal rivalry and warfare which could conceivably follow the precipitate granting of independence by Portugal.

3. Mr Tjan said that he had put this view in a paper to President Soeharto. The President had expressed support for integration but had insisted that Indonesian policy should take account of two conditions. First, the incorporation of Portuguese Timor should not require a change in the constitution or the structure of the Indonesian state. It could not expect to be treated like a state within a federal system. Such an arrangement would undermine the constitutional principle of the unitary state and endanger national unity. It could be incorporated, however, as a special district (*daerah istimewa*) like Yogyakarta. The second condition was that the implementation of a policy of integration should not prejudice regional harmony. Indonesia must be seen to observe the wishes of the Timorese people. Tjan had told the President that Australia would be crucial in helping Indonesia to meet problems of public presentation. The President had since instructed Tjan to seek our help in encouraging the support of PNG, Portugal and the international community for the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. Tjan added that his visit had gained more urgency as a result of an Indonesian Foreign Ministry report from New York that the Portuguese were foreshadowing rapid decolonisation. Tjan said that the precipitate granting of independence to Portuguese Timor would be viewed with concern by Indonesia and might lead it to take action.

Foreign Affairs View

4. Mr Feakes proposed that he explain the views that had been developed within the Department of Foreign Affairs. He emphasised that he spoke only as an official and as an official of only one Department. He spoke to the following points prepared before the meeting:

- (a) In the absence of ministerial decisions, we could not as officials of one Department of Government speak definitively. We had expected that the Prime Minister would discuss Portuguese Timor personally with President Soeharto. Our obvious interests in Timor provide us with a status in international discussion about the territory's future. The issue of the future of Portuguese Timor is one in which Australia and Indonesia should see the opportunity for co-operation.
- (b) We have been deliberately cautious about developing a policy towards Portuguese Timor, partly because of our consciousness of Indonesia's interests. We have received conflicting indications of Indonesia's policy. It would help in making up our own minds if we knew what Indonesia's policy was.
- (c) We are sympathetic to Indonesia's concern about the problems that an independent Portuguese Timor could pose. We have a common interest in avoiding a situation in which control of Portuguese Timor passed to a power potentially inimical to us or to Indonesia or to us both.
- (d) The general tenor of Australia's foreign policy and the forthright attitude that we have adopted on the decolonisation of Portugal's African territories commits us to the principle of self-determination in relation to Portuguese Timor.
- (e) Independence for Portuguese Timor, the continued association of Portuguese Timor with Portugal or the association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia by means of an internationally acceptable act of self-determination would be consistent with the principle of self determination.
- (f) We want to discuss the future of Portuguese Timor with the Portuguese authorities. It is our impression that Timor has low priority in Portuguese thinking. The Portuguese have indicated that they are willing to accommodate the wishes of the Timorese. But they sometimes give the impression of being anxious to be rid of the burden of empire. The Portuguese do not seem to be opposed in principle to effecting decolonisation by means of uniting Portuguese Timor with Indonesia or indeed that they are opposed to any of the other possibilities mentioned in (e) above.
- (g) Like the Indonesians, we are concerned that the Portuguese should not prematurely transfer political authority to an unrepresentative group in Timor as a short-term solution to their own problems. We see great advantage in a deliberate political evolution in the territory, given the backwardness of the Timorese and their lack of political education.
- (h) So far Australia's response to developments in Timor has been very cautious. But the government will not be able to ignore Portuguese Timor indefinitely. Public pressure is growing for a declaration of its attitude towards the territory.
- (i) Indonesia should expect developments to occur in due course in Australia's bilateral relations with Portuguese Timor. We are thinking in terms of a modest aid program, of inviting a representative group of Timorese political leaders to Australia and of reopening our consulate at Dili.
- (j) We consider the development of greater awareness among the Timorese of their regional neighbours, especially of Indonesia and Australia, is important to the progress of self-determination. We can see reason for making this point to the Portuguese. We suggest that the Indonesians should also develop their lines to the Portuguese.
- (k) We are concerned that Portuguese Timor should not become an obstacle to good relations between Australia and Indonesia. We expect that differences will emerge from time to time. It will be important to talk about them and to keep closely in

touch. Indonesia's interests will weigh heavily in our thinking. We should hope that Indonesia, similarly, will continue to take Australia's interests into account. There are problems on our side in maintaining the Australian Government's policy of close relations with Indonesia, arising from public criticism of issues like political prisoners. Precipitate action by Indonesia in Portuguese Timor, which reminded the Australian public of West Irian, could add very seriously to our problems in maintaining the present policy.

[matter omitted]¹

Indonesian access to Portuguese Timor

15. Tjan was asked how Indonesia could maintain publicly a policy of support for self-determination, which he had seemed to endorse earlier, while working towards integration. He replied that Indonesia wanted legal access to Portuguese Timor for political and cultural indoctrination on behalf of APODETI. (Indonesia was already providing aid and other consumer commodities to the province.) Indonesia wanted Australia to lobby the Portuguese and the international community in support of such access.

16. It was pointed out that legitimate access of this kind could come within the terms of our earlier statement that progress towards self-determination should entail the development of greater awareness among the Timorese of their regional neighbours, including Indonesia. It would be important for Indonesia itself to raise this matter with the Portuguese. To this end Indonesia's diplomatic relations with Portugal should be fully restored. There was need also for expanded and better informed Indonesian diplomatic activity in Portuguese Timor. Precipitate Indonesian action was not necessary. There was considerable scope for careful and deliberate development of Indonesian interests. The development in recent years of cordial relations with PNG should be taken as the model in developing the confidence of the Timorese. Tjan was reminded of the indications we had received that the Portuguese were unaware of Indonesian interest in integration. Indonesia should not assume that their legitimate interests would be denied. He was warned again of the repercussions on Australian and international opinion of a crude Indonesian campaign in Portuguese Timor aimed at incorporation of the province by stealth.

Discussions of Portuguese Timor during the Prime Minister's Visit to Indonesia

17. Tjan said that, at his suggestion, Portuguese Timor would come up in the talks between the Prime Minister and the President. He suggested that a different approach might be taken in some of the points we had earlier explained to him. The reference to Irian Jaya should be modified. Indonesia was sensitive about references to shortcomings in the Act of Free Choice. In Indonesian eyes, there had never been any doubt about Indonesian sovereignty over the province. The Act of Free Choice had been allowed to proceed in order to satisfy the international community. Moreover, it was the New Order which had allowed it. Soekarno had refused to accept international scrutiny. He suggested that our point about concern for international reactions be cast in terms of Indonesia's continued adherence to regional harmony and public disavowal of territorial ambitions. It would be important also to express our approach in terms of joint co-operative effort.

[matter omitted]

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, iii]

¹ Paragraphs omitted deal with Portuguese attitudes to decolonisation of Timor, Horta's visit to Australia, Indonesian suspicion of Australia, Malik, discrimination against Apodeti and political detainees.

23 MEMORANDUM TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

Canberra, 26 August 1974

SECRET AUSTEO

Defence Significance of Portuguese Timor

I refer to your paper on the defence significance of Portuguese Timor (sent to us with your memorandum of 15 August¹) as revised by the amendments you sent us on 21 August.

2. We have a major disagreement with the paper because it seems to us to consider the defence significance of Portuguese Timor in isolation from the defence significance of Indonesia. The paper leaves out of account, or does not give sufficient weight to, the following important considerations:—

- (a) *The importance to Australia's defence of maintaining good relations with Indonesia.* We appreciate that, in paragraph 32 of the revised version of your paper, there is some recognition of this consideration but there is no attempt to weigh the significance for Australia's defence of the advantages of pursuing a deliberate policy of denying Portuguese Timor to the Indonesians (which is a major implicit recommendation of your paper) against the significance for our defence of the damage to our relations with Indonesia which, in our view, the pursuit of that policy would entail. Although they are mentioned in paragraph 8, the paper does not consider the security interests of Indonesia and the effects which developments in Portuguese Timor might have on those interests or might be perceived by the Indonesians to have on them. But these effects will have important repercussions for Australia's strategic interests. We attach the more importance to this consideration because, as will appear below, we are unconvinced by your arguments that Australia 'has a clear defence interest in opposing the political or military domination of Portuguese Timor by . . . Indonesia'. The paper seeks to preserve the narrow option of Australian defence access to Portuguese Timor without taking account of the argument that the preservation of that option would be counter-productive in the sense that it could provoke Indonesia.
- (b) *The obstacles in the way of Australian access to bases or facilities in Portuguese Timor in the context of an emerging threat to Australia from Indonesia.* Point (c) of the conclusions in paragraph 34 of your paper refers to this access as possibly enhancing our position in the context of the threat mentioned. Paragraphs 19 to 22 of the paper are also relevant. We doubt whether access would be possible. Portuguese Timor will continue to be associated in some way with Portugal or it will be independent or it will be associated with Indonesia. It would seem that the argument in paragraph 24 of your paper precludes Australian access to Portuguese Timor in the event of a continuing association between the territory and Portugal and in the event of an emerging threat to Australia from Indonesia. Likewise that argument, it seems to us, would preclude Australian access to the territory if it became independent, because in the event of an emerging threat to Australia from Indonesia, it would surely be in the interests of an independent Portuguese Timor to maintain a strict neutrality between Australia and Indonesia if not a pro-Indonesian neutrality. The question of Australian access to the territory would not arise in the third case, that of an association of Portuguese Timor and Indonesia. The only likely situations in which an independent or Portuguese-protected Portuguese Timor would be likely to encourage Australian access to bases

¹ Document 21.

- or facilities in Portuguese Timor would be in circumstances in which (a) Portuguese Timor alone was threatened or (b) the territory and Australia were both threatened.
- (c) There can be little difference between the strategic importance to Australia of Portuguese Timor and the importance to us of Indonesian Timor and the other small islands of the eastern Indonesian archipelago. Indeed the last sentence of paragraph 14 of the paper specifically recognises this lack of difference. If, as we argue in (b) above, Australian access to Portuguese Timor in the context of an emerging threat to Australia from Indonesia is not a practical possibility, why should we have a clear defence interest in opposing the political or military domination of Portuguese Timor by Indonesia any more than we have a clear defence interest in opposing Indonesian domination of any other of the Indonesian islands close to Australia? (cf the first sentence of para 19 of the paper). A related point emerges in para 18(b) of the paper in which it is stated that in circumstances of a threat by a major power Australian and allied access to Portuguese Timor would afford an Australian ally substantial strategic advantage in the deterrence of a conventional threat. The only ally it would be realistic to consider in this context would be the United States and we doubt whether it is realistic to see a role for the United States in the circumstances envisaged in para 18(b).
- (d) The danger that an independent Portuguese Timor would pose to the stability of the region and to Indonesia. Paragraph 34(d) of your paper states that 'the exclusion of major powers . . . from Portuguese Timor . . . would be best served by its development through self-determination as an independent state'. Paragraph 26 of the paper states that 'as an independent state Portuguese Timor . . . would be inherently weak and thus sensitive to external pressures, especially from Indonesia'. Our concern is that a weak independent Portuguese Timor would be unstable and a continuing temptation to outside intervention and not only from Indonesia. There is a serious danger that outside intervention would be directed at Indonesia and might therefore endanger Australian strategic interests. There would be a grave risk of competition between Indonesia and other outside influences to which the Indonesians would be specifically sensitive in view of their common border with Portuguese Timor.
3. It will be apparent that, as we accept the foregoing considerations, we disagree with much of the paper from paragraph 12 onwards and with its conclusions. There are, however, major points in the paper with which we agree; in essence, they are summed up in paragraph 16 and in the sentence in paragraph 14 which states: 'An important objective of our defence policy should be to ensure that no country additional to Indonesia attains a position where it could readily exert pressure on these important sea lines of communications or to our off-shore resources'. We also agree with the references to PNG in the paper.
4. We understand that it is not your intention to submit a paper on this subject to the Defence Committee before the Prime Minister's next visit to Indonesia. We are preparing a paper for the Prime Minister which will make recommendations about how he should approach the subject of Timor in his discussions. We have been informed by the Indonesians that this matter will be raised. We understand that you are agreeable to contributing to this paper. Because it may not be possible for our two Departments to reach an agreed position on this subject in time for its inclusion in the brief, it will probably be necessary to identify separately in it the views of the two Departments.

K. H. ROGERS

First Assistant Secretary
Defence Division

24 BRIEF FOR WHITLAM

Canberra, 2 September 1974

SECRET AUSTEO

Prime Minister's Visit to Indonesia—Portuguese Timor

During your forthcoming visit to Indonesia, President Soeharto will expect to receive an authoritative statement from you of Australia's attitude towards Portuguese Timor. A visit to Canberra between 20 and 22 August by Mr Harry Tjan of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta to sound out our thinking at official level confirmed earlier indications of the importance that President Soeharto attaches to this aspect of your visit. Mr Tjan is President Soeharto's principal adviser on Portuguese Timor.

2. There is uncertainty about the future of Portuguese Timor which arises from Portugal's commitment to the decolonisation of its overseas territories. Portuguese Timor does not have great intrinsic importance in terms of population (about 650,000), area (14,925 square kms) or economic resources, unless substantial oil discoveries are made. It is an historical anachronism that resulted from the arbitrary division of Timor between the Netherlands and Portugal. Portuguese tutelage for over 450 years has, however, produced a distinct sense of identity in Portuguese Timor. The territory is at a primary stage of political development. Considerable progress is needed in the political awareness and education of the Timorese people before they could exercise a well-based choice in relation to their political future.

3. The Portuguese have not announced firm plans for the future of Portuguese Timor which, compared with the African territories, has low priority in their thinking. The broad possibilities for Portuguese Timor lie between continuing association with Portugal, association with Indonesia and independence. The Portuguese seem disposed to accept whatever the Timorese people may decide about their own future. At the same time, they are sensitive to international opinion about their management of the decolonization process.

4. The colonial *status quo* in Portuguese Timor suited the Indonesians. Now that the future of the territory is in question, the thrust of their thinking is that they would rather absorb Portuguese Timor than see it emerge into independence. This preference underlies the Indonesians' strong interest in Australia's attitude and the importance of Portuguese Timor in your discussions with President Soeharto. There is some evidence of policy differences among the Indonesians, notably on the part of Adam Malik who is at odds with the defence and security establishment. The latter are anxious to discount a letter that Malik gave to Ramos Horta, the leader of the Timorese Social Democratic Association, which virtually endorsed Portuguese Timor's right to claim independence. It is our impression that President Soeharto finds the view that Indonesia should absorb Portuguese Timor persuasive. He has endorsed the idea of its integration into the unitary Republic of Indonesia, subject to the condition that integration should not prejudice regional harmony, and has directed the Governor of Indonesian Timor to find a solution along these lines.

5. Given the prevailing Indonesian belief that the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia would be in the interests of the region, the Indonesians' view of what might prejudice regional harmony could differ appreciably from our own. The presidential agency OPSUS ('Special Operations') has planned a covert political operation to persuade the people of Portuguese Timor to accept absorption into Indonesia. Agents to carry out the operation are already in place

in Indonesian Timor. We believe that, during his visit to Canberra, we persuaded Harry Tjan to advise President Soeharto against proceeding with the operation before you visit Indonesia.

6. The importance of Portuguese Timor to Australia's interests stems from its location some 250 miles from Darwin, and near our resources zone and close to major shipping routes; its prospective influence on our relations with Indonesia and other regional neighbours, particularly PNG; its effect on opinion in Australia; and the status of Portuguese Timor as a poor and backward territory in process of decolonization. The future of the territory is inevitably of strategic interest to Australia, although the Defence Committee has not yet considered and defined the precise nature of that strategic interest nor placed it in the context of Australia's wider strategic interests in relations with Indonesia and the region as a whole. It is clear that we share a strategic interest with Indonesia in excluding any potentially hostile external influence from Portuguese Timor and in avoiding a situation in which developments in Portuguese Timor (including Indonesia's relations with it) have an unsettling effect on regional relations. We should aim with the Indonesians at maintaining a dialogue about the problem that Portuguese Timor represents in order to divert them from a forward policy in Timor that would place our other interests at risk. Our stance in the United Nations in support of the principle of self-determination, including in respect of Portugal's African territories, commits us to this principle in the case of Portuguese Timor. The principle should not exclude any of the three future options for Portuguese Timor outlined in paragraph 3 above. The economic backwardness of Portuguese Timor provides compelling humanitarian grounds for some Australian aid.

7. Indonesia regards itself as the successor state to the Netherlands East Indies. By definition, this claim does not extend to Portuguese Timor. During Confrontation, the Indonesians made half-hearted efforts at subversion in Portuguese Timor but, at that time, and subsequently, they have made it clear that they make no legal claim to the territory. However, the Indonesians undoubtedly see Portuguese Timor as a geographical extension of their own territory, and, for cultural, ethnic and historical reasons, they consider that its inclusion in Indonesia is natural and desirable and would represent valid decolonization. They also have strategic anxieties about Portuguese Timor, which seem to us understandable. The Indonesians are concerned that an independent Portuguese Timor would be poor and weak, and that it would be prey to foreign influence hostile to Indonesia which would seek to use Portuguese Timor as a channel to threaten Indonesia's security and national unity. We believe that President Soeharto is likely to emphasise this strategic interest in his discussion with you and that he might invite you to agree that the inclusion of Portuguese Timor in Indonesia would be in the strategic interests of Australia and the region generally, as well as of Indonesia itself.

8. According to Harry Tjan's account, as set out in the attached record,¹ Portuguese Timor has become an urgent issue for Indonesia, partly through misapprehension of Australia's attitude. Events such as the visit to Portuguese Timor by Australian officials in June (actually, for fact-finding purposes), the subsequent visit to Australia by Ramos Horta, who is the principal advocate of independence for Portuguese Timor, and widespread rumours that Australia intends to re-establish a consulate in Dili led the Indonesians to conclude that we were embarking on a forward policy in Portuguese Timor. According to Tjan, Adam Malik in particular embraced this view and in consequence has expressed antagonism towards Australia. Another factor which influenced the Indonesians' decision to plan a political operation in Portuguese Timor was the conviction that the Portuguese were on the point of abandoning Timor to the independence party. This belief arose from misunderstanding of a recent Portuguese statement in the United Nations.

¹ There is no attachment to the cited copy. The reference may be to Document 22.

9. Against this background, we suggest that you could make the following points in your discussion with President Soeharto:

- (a) Australia has no ambitions in Portuguese Timor. As demonstrated in PNG, our concern is to withdraw from colonial responsibilities. Nevertheless Australia must be concerned with the future of the territory because of its location close to Australia, its importance to Indonesia and the effects of its future disposition on other regional neighbours, particularly PNG.
- (b) Australia appreciates Indonesia's grounds for strategic concern about Portuguese Timor and is itself concerned:
 - (i) that potentially hostile external influence should be excluded from Portuguese Timor; and
 - (ii) that the situation in Portuguese Timor should not have an unsettling effect on the region.
- (c) In keeping with the general tenor of Australia's foreign policy and our attitude towards Portugal's African territories, we are committed to decolonization in Portuguese Timor on the basis of valid self-determination. Australia would be bound by the result of a genuine and internationally acceptable act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor.
- (d) On this basis any of the three options for the future of the territory—continuing association with Portugal, independence, or incorporation into Indonesia—would be legitimate in Australia's view.
- (e) Conversely, any future disposition of Portuguese Timor which was contrary to the wishes of its people would be likely, in Australia's view, to have a destabilising influence in the region. It would be important for this reason that the act of self-determination should be accepted as a genuine test of Timorese opinion by the Governments and people of countries in the region.
- (f) Because of the political and economic backwardness of Portuguese Timor, there is a need to proceed slowly and deliberately towards self-determination in order to prepare the people. Australia believes that the Portuguese would accept this view if it was put to them by Australia and Indonesia.
- (g) You could suggest that Australia and Indonesia might coordinate an approach along these lines to Portugal. Such coordination could extend to the reopening of an Indonesian mission in Lisbon and Australian mission in Dili to facilitate understanding and increase pressure on the Portuguese to act responsibly in Timor.
- (h) Australia hopes that Indonesia understands its interests in relation to Portuguese Timor. Australia has so far proceeded very cautiously but the government will come under increasing pressure to declare its attitude on Portuguese Timor. You could say that, having discussed Portuguese Timor with President Soeharto, you had in mind initiating steps towards developing Australia's bilateral relations with Portuguese Timor such as offering some scholarships for Timorese students and inviting a representative group of Timorese political leaders to visit Australia. You could usefully explain to President Soeharto that Ramos Horta's visit was at his own initiative and that he was deliberately kept at arms length, not less because we did not wish to give the impression of according priority in advance of an act of self-determination to Horta's advocacy of independence. You could encourage the Indonesians to adopt a similar approach to their relations with Portuguese Timor

and emphasize the importance of breaking down the artificial barriers that have isolated the territory from its neighbours.

- (i) You could conclude by saying that, underlying Australia's attitude, is the wish that Portuguese Timor should not become an obstacle to good relations between Australia and Indonesia. You would be worried if Australian public opinion became agitated about developments in Portuguese Timor or if they gave PNG grounds for concern. Differences may develop from time-to-time between Australia and Indonesia about Portuguese Timor because the interests of the two countries are not identical. This possibility makes it all the more important to keep closely in touch.

10. Our recent discussions with Harry Tjan did much to reduce misconceptions on both sides. We believe that the approach which we advocate would satisfy President Soeharto and would at the same time serve our interest in heading-off the Indonesians from over-hasty action that could disturb public opinion in Australia or confidence in PNG.²

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

25 CABLEGRAM FROM FURLONGER TO WHITLAM

Jakarta, 2 September 1974

O.JA4494 SECRET PRIORITY

You may find it helpful to have, on the eve of your departure from Australia, the following up-to-date assessment of President Soeharto's personal position and of the political atmosphere in Jakarta, as well as some observations on matters relevant to your private meeting with the President.

2. From the viewpoint of the Indonesians, President Soeharto has made a major gesture towards Australia and yourself in proposing a private meeting of a type which he has so far had only with Razak, Marcos and Ne Win. In the President's view, Australia is an important part of the Indonesian neighbourhood, and is destined to play a significant role, particularly in the resources and technological fields, in supporting the future development of the whole West Pacific region.

3. The President, and indeed Indonesians generally, also believes that Australia is unique among countries of Western origin in the degree of understanding that we show towards the problems of Indonesia and the region. Soeharto thus fully shares the objective of closer Indonesian-Australian relations, which you identified in your 1972 policy speech as one of Labor's four major commitments in the foreign policy field.

[*matter omitted*]¹

6. The President already feels that he has a personal bond with you, and he and those around him admire your re-shaping of Australian foreign policy. With their new oil wealth, Indonesian leaders are seeking greater independence in their own foreign policy, although generally it will remain pragmatic, non-doctrinaire and primarily concerned with encouraging stability and cooperation in Indonesia's immediate regional environment. Towards the Americans, the

² Woolcott forwarded this copy to Furlonger after the meeting, noting that it was 'in the end agreed with Defence' and that Whitlam had read it on the plane to Jogjakarta. A handwritten comment by Furlonger reads: 'This was all very cautious, and rather different from the line the PM actually took'.

¹ Paragraphs omitted refer to Soeharto's reassertion of personal authority, political prisoners, aid and regional issues.

Indonesians are currently somewhat disenchanted, due to the sharp aid cuts being forced by Congress and to the Indonesian belief that, philosophically at least, the Americans were in sympathy with the Westernised intellectuals and political figures who the regime alleges were the intellectual main-spring of the January riots. Towards the Russians and the Chinese, the government remains suspicious, although some gestures towards more even-handed treatment of Communist countries have recently been made.

7. In our own case, we have made great progress in our relationship with Indonesia in recent years. But we would be wrong not to recognise that it is still fragile and unnatural in significant respects. Your meeting with Soeharto will be a critical test of whether, despite the internal political problems and sensitivities on both sides, a basis for an enduring relationship can be established. On the Indonesian side, there is a mood of enhanced sensitivity to outside criticism. This arises from resentment of foreign criticism of their internal affairs; from their new feeling of independence in foreign affairs produced by the oil bonanza; and from a revival of the nationalism, and even xenophobia, which is so much a part of the Javanese character.

8. Although President Soeharto is naturally hard-headed and unsentimental, he has an almost uncritical belief in Australian good faith and understanding towards Indonesia. Given this attitude, he would, I think, be excessively sensitive to any sign that we might be considering backing off either him personally or his regime. I appreciate that the image in Australia of his government may now be such that over-identification with Soeharto personally may be considered undesirable. The problem, however, is that constitutionally he, like the U.S. President, *is* the Government, and there is a real danger that any attempt to appear more detached from Soeharto would, in this highly personalised country, be misinterpreted. The Indonesian Government has still not fully recovered from the shock of the January riots, and would be likely to over-react to what they would probably regard as an indication of declining Australian interest and sympathy. This is not a time for change. There would undoubtedly be voices that would say that any change in the Australian attitude derived from the foreseeable sympathy of a Labor Government for the Westernised PSI-type intellectuals who are under current attack by Soeharto's Government.

[matter omitted]

13. Portuguese Timor will also be seen by Soeharto as a test of the extent to which Australian and Indonesian perceptions of South East Asia are shared. The President recognises that Australia, as well as Indonesia, has a major interest in the future of this territory, and he will be looking for an understanding with you on this subject. The Indonesians acknowledge the principle of self-determination but seek to avoid introducing into the region a weak and impoverished state which would be a tempting client for other major powers, particularly but not exclusively China. If it can be achieved, Soeharto sees union with Indonesia as the best way of achieving this, in the interests of the whole region and not merely of Indonesia (on which it would be an additional economic burden). He may well wish to discuss with you the scope for international initiatives on Portuguese Timor, for instance in the United Nations.

[matter omitted]

16. Most of the discussions with the President will, I think, be in a broad philosophical vein. That is his normal way. The President will not be taking many advisers with him, and I expect that much of the time he will want to spend with you alone (except for interpreters). We understand that Malik, who will be accompanying Mr Kiki² to Irian Jaya on 3-4 September, will not be present and that the main policy advisers will be Major-General Sudharmono (the head of the Presidential Staff who has the rank of a Minister), a senior official, as yet unnamed,

² Albert Maori Kiki, Papua New Guinea Minister for Defence, Foreign Affairs, Trade, Migration and Customs.

from the Foreign Ministry, and probably Lieutenant-General Yoga, the head of the State Intelligence Agency, BAKIN.

17. I regret inflicting on you a telegram of this length, but, in view of the importance of your first private meeting with the President, it seemed desirable to convey to you the local atmosphere in which your visit will take place.³

[NAA: A10463, 828/4/1, ii]

26 RECORD OF MEETING BETWEEN WHITLAM AND SOEHARTO

State Guest House, Yogyakarta, 6 September 1974, 10 a.m.

SECRET

President Soeharto said that he was most pleased to receive the visit of the Prime Minister. The visit planned for April had, unfortunately, been postponed. It was fortunate, however, that the visit could proceed. President Soeharto hoped that with the visit the two countries could strengthen cooperation and friendship. There would be many things to discuss: bilateral relations and a number of matters relating to developments in the region and internationally.

The Prime Minister replied that he too was very happy to be visiting Indonesia. It was unfortunate that the visit which had been planned four and a half months ago had to be postponed. The Prime Minister said that during his discussions with the President he hoped to be able to describe domestic developments in Australia, including election possibilities for the future.

Portuguese Timor

The Prime Minister said that Mr Harry Tjan had recently visited Australia and had discussed the question of Portuguese Timor with Foreign Affairs officials. He wished now to explain his view to the President. He asked that, if the President had any misgivings or suspicions about Australian attitudes or policy towards Portuguese Timor, he should raise them frankly during the discussions.

The Prime Minister said that since coming to office in 1972 the decisions he had made about Australian foreign policy had been accepted by his party, the party of Government. What he might say to the President about his own views on Portuguese Timor was most likely, in the course of events, to become the attitude of the Australian Government. The Prime Minister said that he felt two things were basic to his own thinking on Portuguese Timor. First, he believed that Portuguese Timor should become part of Indonesia. Second, this should happen in accordance with the properly expressed wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor. The Prime Minister emphasized that this was not yet Government policy but that it was likely to become that.

The Prime Minister said that he felt very strongly that Australia should not seek, or appear to seek, any special interests in Portuguese Timor. They were people with a different ethnic background, languages and culture. It would be unrealistic and improper if we were to seek some special relationship. At the same time he believed that Portuguese Timor was too small to be independent. It was economically unviable. Independence would be unwelcome to

³ In a minute to Woolcott on 4 September, Lavett commented that Furlonger's cable 'conveys some apprehension about how we intend to approach the visit'. Lavett had written to Furlonger to reassure him that the brief anticipated the points he raised. Lavett noted in the same minute: 'we are anxious not to draw press and public attention to the discussion of Portuguese Timor on grounds that we should not wish to be seen to be deciding the future of the territory with the Indonesians over the heads of the Timorese'.

Indonesia, to Australia and to other countries in the region, because an independent Portuguese Timor would inevitably become the focus of attention of others outside the region.

The Labor Government, since coming to office, had been very anxious to ensure the right of self-determination for all remaining colonial territories. This was particularly so of Africa. We had recently recognised Guinea-Bissau. We would support independence for the large African territories, Angola and Mozambique. Since we support independence in these large territories, to be consistent we ought to apply the principle of self-determination to all territories, even the smallest colonial territories.

The Prime Minister noted that Australia had an Embassy in Lisbon. Indonesia did not. Australia had had a Consulate in Dili. Indonesia still had a Consulate there. We had thought that it would be important and useful if Indonesia were to re-open its mission in Lisbon in order to put to the Portuguese Government its own interest in Portuguese Timor. Our own objective in Lisbon would be to put to the Portuguese Government the view that Portuguese Timor was part of the Indonesian world. The Prime Minister commented that Australia had recently appointed a new Australian Ambassador in Lisbon who was a skilled diplomat and who enjoyed his personal confidence. We were confident that we would be able to put our views effectively to the Portuguese. In this way we would be making a significant contribution in support of Indonesia's position.

The Prime Minister noted that, for the domestic audience in Australia, incorporation into Indonesia should appear to be a natural process arising from the wishes of the people. He recalled adverse public opinion towards Indonesia which had arisen almost twelve years ago, both in Papua New Guinea and in Australia, in relation to Irian Barat. There was suspicion of Indonesia and its methods in effecting the return of the province. The Prime Minister said that he personally had expressed himself in favour of the return of Irian Barat to Indonesia from the time that he had first entered Parliament. Indonesia should be aware, however, of the effects on public opinion in Australia of incorporation of the province into Indonesia against the wishes of the people.

The Prime Minister referred to the visit to Canberra in July of Ramos Horta, a member of the party in Portuguese Timor in favour of independence. The Prime Minister said that he had not received Horta. Nor had the Foreign Minister, Senator Willesee. As far as he knew no Minister had received Ramos Horta. The President should be aware that the Australian Government had been very careful in its approach to Mr Horta. The Prime Minister said that he had learned during the journey to Indonesia yesterday that some suspicion had been aroused within the Indonesian Government because Ramos Horta had stayed with Mr Dunn, a former Consul in Dili. The Prime Minister emphasized that Mr Dunn was no longer an official of the Department of Foreign Affairs. He was a Research Officer in the Parliamentary Library. His actions did not reflect official government policy in any way.

The Prime Minister said that it was possible that the new Portuguese Government might attempt to get rid of Portuguese Timor. In those circumstances, Australia would be quite happy to convey to the Portuguese Government that the territory needed careful and patient development before an effective act of self-determination was possible. In this regard our interests coincided. The Prime Minister said that he realised the importance of regional harmony to the security of the Australian people. It would do us no good to have our neighbours in conflict with each other. At the same time he hoped that the President would keep in mind the need for support from among the Australian public for the incorporation into Indonesia of Portuguese Timor, based on respect for democratic expression of the wishes of the people.

Indonesian Policy Towards Portuguese Timor

President Soeharto thanked the Prime Minister for his clear explanation of Australia's position on Portuguese Timor. He explained Indonesia's support for the principle of decolonisation and recalled Indonesia's own independence struggle. At the same time, he emphasized his concern that decolonisation in Portuguese Timor should not upset either Indonesian or regional security. He noted the geographical situation of Portuguese Timor in the midst of Indonesian territory and on the periphery of Australia. He said that incorporation of Portuguese Timor raised important constitutional and legal problems for Indonesia. The 1945 Constitution provided for a unitary State. The Constitution, adopted as a challenge to colonial rule, would neither accept colonialism nor allow the Indonesian Government to seek to colonise others. Indonesia has no territorial ambitions. The emphasis in the Constitution on the unitary state also meant that incorporation of Portuguese Timor could not lead to a violation of the Constitution by giving the territory any special status.

The President said that Portuguese Timor faced two alternatives:

- (i) independence; and
- (ii) incorporation with another country.

If Portuguese Timor were to become independent, it would give rise to problems. It was not economically viable. It would have to seek the help of another country but Portuguese Timor would be of interest only because of its political importance. There was a big danger that communist countries—China or the Soviet Union—might gain the opportunity to intervene. This would lead in turn to intervention by the other great powers. Portuguese Timor in this way would become 'a thorn in the eye of Australia and a thorn in Indonesia's back'.

Indonesia was committed to the principle that the people of Portuguese Timor had a right to self-determination but, if it proved that they in fact wished to be independent, this would certainly give rise to problems. If the process of self-determination led to approval of incorporation into Indonesia, this also would give rise to problems. Portuguese Timor could not be incorporated as a separate state within the Indonesian Republic, which was not a federation. Portuguese Timor could be incorporated, as an autonomous region, or *daerah*, like the special district of Yogyakarta. Ultimately the Indonesians hoped for the incorporation of Portuguese Timor as being in the best interests of the region, of Indonesia and of Australia. The President shared the belief that this should occur on the basis of the freely expressed wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor.

[*matter omitted*]¹

The Prime Minister said that Indonesia and Australia could come to an understanding about Portuguese Timor. Australia could applaud Indonesia's efforts in bringing peace between Malaysia and the Philippines. The situation was different in Vietnam and Thailand and Cambodia. The United States, China, and sometimes the USSR, were involved in these countries. What can we do?

President Soeharto said that he could foresee no solution to this problem, which was peculiar to the northern part of South East Asia. The great power rivalry in this area affected regional harmony, Indonesia and Australia. It did not seem possible to put a stop to this rivalry.

For this reason Indonesia sought to build up its own national resilience as a counter to the threat of subversion from outside. Indonesia's efforts were directed to the socio-cultural and economic development of its people and the maintenance of defence capacity. President

¹ Paragraphs omitted refer to Christmas and Cocos Islands, Malaysian/Philippines relations, Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Indonesian economy.

Soeharto said that he wished to explain to the Prime Minister certain developments in Indonesia, in particular economic development.

[*matter omitted*]

Australian Aid and Military Cooperation

President Soeharto said that Australian economic assistance had been very helpful and was highly regarded by Indonesia. He understood that the current three year program would end in 1976. He hoped that Australia would still be prepared to give aid after that. A sign of Indonesian good faith was the diversion of funds from the Indonesian Armed Forces during Repelita I to economic development needs. This had meant that the armed forces and their equipment had been neglected. For this reason Indonesia valued Australian defence assistance. The President hoped that defence aid would also continue after the end of the current program in 1975.

Archipelagic Concept

President Soeharto drew the Prime Minister's attention to the archipelagic concept which sought to secure a safe strategic environment for Indonesia by affirming Indonesian sovereignty over all the sea territory contained within the Archipelago. President Soeharto said that he hoped that Australia would be able to support the archipelagic concept. He saw it as an important contribution to internal security in Indonesia and regional stability.

The Prime Minister indicated to President Soeharto that Australia in general terms endorsed the Indonesian concept of the archipelagic principle.

Appointment of Ambassador

Mr Whitlam then told President Soeharto that the Government intended to seek *agrément* for a member of his party for the visit and one of the Department's two Deputy Secretaries, Mr Richard Woolcott, as Australian Ambassador to Indonesia. The Prime Minister said Mr Woolcott had his full confidence. He had wide experience in South East Asia and had accompanied him on all but one of his overseas visits since assuming office. Mr Whitlam said he regarded Tokyo, Jakarta and Washington as probably Australia's most important diplomatic posts. The President said he was very pleased to hear this. Mr Furlonger was a very good and successful Ambassador and he was pleased that, if his time was up, the Government wanted to replace him with an officer of Mr Woolcott's experience. The Prime Minister said he wanted Mr Woolcott to accompany him on his visit to Europe in January so he would probably not reach Jakarta until about the end of February. The President said he would look forward to receiving Mr Woolcott when he arrived.

President Soeharto concluded by saying that the discussion could be continued later in the evening.

27 RECORD OF SECOND MEETING BETWEEN WHITLAM AND SOEHARTO

Wonosobo, 6 September 1974, 8 p.m.

SECRET

[*matter omitted*]¹

Domestic Situation in Australia

The Prime Minister said that he wished to explain something of the electoral situation in Australia. Since last April there had been a new feature in internal politics in Australia. Every six months both Houses of Parliament have to vote supply to the government enabling it to expend money and to collect taxes. For the first time since federation the Senate had, in April, refused to vote supply. This had forced an election which the Labor Party had won though it failed to win control of the Senate. Up until April it had been the rule that the House of Representatives had been elected to government for three years. It was now possible that at any time a hostile Senate could refuse to vote supply to the government and thereby force an election.

Such a challenge could come in any November or May. Such an eventuality was not likely but it could happen. No one could tell who would win a future election. In the May elections the opposition had concentrated on the problem of inflation but the Labor Party had still won. The Prime Minister expected that in any future election the Labor Party could still win. If, however, the Labor Party were to lose a future election the Foreign Minister would be Mr Peacock. His attitudes on foreign policy would be very similar to those of the Labor Party. The Prime Minister commented that since the 1972 elections the Liberal Party in opposition had changed their attitudes on foreign policy and had accepted changes made by the Labor Party. He said that Mr Peacock was one of the people in the opposition respected by his own party because of his views on foreign policy.

The Prime Minister said that some Indonesian officials might speculate that there had been a change in Labor Party attitudes because of the replacement of Mr Barnard as Deputy Prime Minister by Dr Cairns. Since the May elections there had also been reports in Australian newspapers that he, the Prime Minister, was about to be displaced or was about to resign. The Prime Minister said there was no chance at all of his being displaced. Nor did he intend to resign. Dr Cairns was a more forceful and effective figure in the public arena, in Parliament and in the Party. Mr Barnard had always been a very loyal supporter, whereas six years ago Dr Cairns had been a rival. The situation had changed since. The Prime Minister said that he believed that Dr Cairns was doing a good job and he could find no fault with him. He suggested that the President and his ministers should see him if the opportunity arose.

Australia/Indonesia Relations

The Prime Minister said that the Labor Government since coming to office had placed considerable importance on Indonesia. Previous Liberal Governments had done so too, but the Labor Government had been much more outspoken and emphatic in recognising the importance to Australia of Indonesia. The Prime Minister said that he believed there was much at stake in relations between Australia and Indonesia, but public opinion in Australia was also important. If the public in Australia did not like developments in Indonesia they tended to lay the blame on the Australian Government. The Prime Minister mentioned the case of Portuguese Timor and said that the successful incorporation of the province in Indonesia

¹ Paragraphs omitted refer to Cocos Island, Cambodia, Burma/ASEAN Relations, Indonesia/China relations, the question of Indonesian fishermen and individual political detainees.

would, from the Australian point of view, depend on whether the public was satisfied that the people of the province had joined Indonesia happily and willingly.

He noted that in the discussions earlier in the morning the President had indicated that Indonesia wished Australia to continue to extend economic and defence aid. He said that this was certainly the wish of the Australian Government. So far there had been little opposition within the Parliament or within the Labor Party to these policies, but from time to time developments within Indonesia would continue to have repercussions within Australia.

The Prime Minister said that during his meeting with President Soeharto in 1973 he had said that if the Australian Government ever had anything to say about domestic developments in Indonesia, the Government would convey its views through official channels. There might, however, be individuals in the Labor Party or in the trade unions, which in the main supported the Labor Party, who criticised the Indonesian Government. Such criticism could have an effect on Australia/Indonesia relations. The Prime Minister instanced the effect on Australia's relations with Fiji and Singapore of action taken against these countries by the Seamen's Union in Australia. The Prime Minister said he realised and believed that such action interfered in the domestic jurisdiction of Indonesia and it would be offensive to attempt to advise another government about its own internal affairs or to demand changes in domestic policy. Indeed, Indonesia had shown restraint in not commenting on domestic policies in Australia which might have been offensive to it.

The Prime Minister said that the principal problem he was referring to was political detainees. There was concern about those detained after the 1965 coup and those detained since the January rioting in Jakarta. The major problem, particularly with those detained in January, was that many of the detainees were well-known to some Australians.

[matter omitted]

President Soeharto thanked the Prime Minister for his explanation of domestic developments in Australia and of the pressures on the Australian Government in relation to detainees in Indonesia. He said that he understood that those in Australia concerned about detainees called upon the Australian Government to take up their cases. Indonesia understood that there were misgivings in other countries about developments in Indonesia and that there were those who wanted to defend the detainees. The Indonesian Government understood that some people within Indonesia were sending reports critical of the government outside the country to likeminded individuals overseas. He said that those who were doubtful about Indonesia should come and see the situation for themselves.²

[matter omitted]

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

² Records of the discussions were prepared by Forrester.

28 BACKGROUND PAPER

Canberra, 11 September 1974

UNCLASSIFIED

The Future of Portuguese Timor

Press reports have suggested that the Prime Minister and President Soeharto of Indonesia discussed the future of Portuguese Timor, at their recent meeting. This paper examines briefly the question of the future of that territory.

[matter omitted]

Indonesian Attitude

Indonesia regards itself as the successor state to the Netherlands East Indies. Consequently, it makes no legal claim to Portuguese Timor. Indonesia does regard the territory however as geographically a part of the Indonesian world, and for cultural, ethnic and historical reasons it considers that its inclusion in Indonesia would represent valid decolonisation and the most natural course to that end.

Indonesia has considerable strategic anxieties about Portuguese Timor. It is concerned that an independent Portuguese Timor might not be able to resist external influences inimical to Indonesia as a result of its inevitable economic and military weakness. In particular it is concerned that such a situation could threaten Indonesia's national unity and territorial integrity and disturb the progress being made towards the achievement of wider regional harmony and cooperation. Thus, while Indonesia is committed to the principle of self-determination by colonial peoples, it has reservations about an independent Portuguese Timor. In these circumstances, Indonesia sees the ultimate incorporation of Portuguese Timor within Indonesia as being in the best interests of the region and of Indonesia, while recognising that the people of Portuguese Timor have a right to self-determination.

Australian Position

Australia has no ambitions in Portuguese Timor, and the Australian Government is firmly committed to the principle of self-determination of all remaining colonial territories. It is essentially concerned that decolonisation should proceed on the basis of self-determination and that the ultimate disposition of Portuguese Timor should not prejudice political confidence and harmony in the region, particularly in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

In the Australian view the primary questions requiring determination are the wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor regarding the future of the territory, and how the long-term stability of the region might best be assured.

Because of the rudimentary stage of political development in the territory an act of self-determination would need to be prepared carefully, gradually and over a period of time, otherwise the decision of the people may not be based on a full and informed appreciation of the best future interests of the territory and could therefore prejudice regional stability.

At the present stage Australia has doubts whether the territory would in fact achieve real independence if its people chose completely separate status, given the relative weakness of the economy and its inevitably limited defence capability. Accordingly Australia appreciates Indonesia's concern about the future of the territory and shares its belief that the voluntary union of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia, on the basis of an internationally acceptable act of

self-determination, would seem to serve the objective of decolonisation, and at the same time the interests of stability in the region.

A close dialogue with the Portuguese Government on the matter would be in the interests of all parties. Consistent with this belief the Australian Government is in consultation with the authorities in Lisbon. The Government has also indicated to the Indonesian Government that it would see the reopening of an embassy in Lisbon as helpful in the overall process.¹

[NAA: A1838, 3034/10/11/24, iii]

29 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 12 September 1974

O.CH110619 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Prime Minister's Discussion with President Soeharto about Portuguese Timor

Ref O.CH110620¹

Our immediately succeeding telegram gives text of Departmental Background Paper on the future of Portuguese Timor. It has the Prime Minister's concurrence.

2. The paper will be used for unattributable background briefing of selected journalists, academics and opinion formers. It will also be drawn on for a political information bulletin item which will be distributed to all posts and Members of Parliament in the usual way. It could also provide basis for future public statements here of our attitude towards Portuguese Timor.

3. We should be grateful if you would pass text as soon as possible to the appropriate Indonesian authorities. We expect that the Indonesians will appreciate the need for careful public presentation in Australia of our attitude to Portuguese Timor along the lines of the paper.

4. In discussion with the Indonesians, you will appreciate too the need to avoid leaving them with impression that precipitate action on their part in Portuguese Timor would be acceptable to us. As the Prime Minister said to President Soeharto the territory needs careful and patient development before an effective act of self-determination is possible.

5. In replying to enquiries about discussions between the Prime Minister and the President on Portuguese Timor we intend to use the paper as an indication of our views on the subject.

[NAA: A1838, 3034/10/11/24, iii]

¹ The text of this paper was repeated to Jakarta as Cablegram CH110620.

¹ See note 1 to Document 28.

30 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 12 September 1974

O.JA4767 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Prime Minister's Discussions with President Soeharto*Ref O.CH110619, O.CH110620, O.CH110621*¹

I spoke to Sudharmono today about the above three telegrams.

2. Generally, Sudharmono thought that the action you contemplate, particularly on Portuguese Timor, will be helpful, and he had no disagreement with the basic approach. It is, I think, implicit in his reformulation given below of the Indonesian attitude on Portuguese Timor that the Indonesian Government appreciates the need to avoid precipitate action on the territory, to which matter you referred in your O.CH110619.

3. The texts in O.CH110620 and O.CH110621 are acceptable with the following detailed glosses:

[*matter omitted*]

(b) O.CH110620

Sudharmono appreciated the purposes of the paper on Portuguese Timor. The principal problem from his side relates to the definition of the Indonesian attitude. The Indonesians are taking the public position that it is up to the people of Portuguese Timor to make their own decision. They fear that, if Indonesia were to come out publicly and advocate union with Indonesia, this could cause a reaction which would prejudice the end preferred by our two Governments. Sudharmono would therefore be grateful if your description of the Indonesian attitude be confined to the sense of the statements he himself has made publicly on behalf of the President. These are to the effect that the Indonesian Government bases itself on the principles of Pancasila and supports the right of self-determination for all peoples. If the people of Portuguese Timor desire to associate themselves with Indonesia and, provided the form of association sought was not in conflict with Indonesia's unitary constitution, such a wish for association with Indonesia would be accepted. At the same time, Indonesia has no territorial ambitions and the wishes of the Portuguese Timor people would be decisive.

A consequential change would be needed in the references to Indonesian policy contained in the second last paragraph of the paper.

4. I did not ask Sudharmono whether he would object to any supplementary oral briefing being given to reliable contacts, since I did not wish unduly to limit your freedom of action in this field. Although it would have to be carefully done, I think you could put orally to reliable contacts some of the points contained in your draft—perhaps on the basis that they represent an Australian assessment of what Indonesia would probably prefer rather than a definitive Indonesian view. This would, however, need to be carefully done to avoid inconsistency with the public line being taken by Indonesia and to avoid attribution to the President.

FURLONGER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

¹ See Documents 28 and 29. Cablegram CH110621 instructed Jakarta on replies to enquiries regarding Whitlam-Soeharto discussion on issues other than Timor.

31 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 13 September 1974

O.CH111833 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Thanks your O.JA4767.¹

Sudharmono's views on how the Indonesian attitude towards Portuguese Timor might be described complicate matters for us. We should be grateful for your comments on the following:—

In essence, Sudharmono is saying that the Indonesian public position is that the association of the territory with Indonesia is a course acceptable to the Indonesians, rather than the course favoured by them. The position we took in the background paper, in accordance with the attitude which the Prime Minister expressed to Soeharto, is that the Australian public attitude should be that association of the territory with Indonesia on the basis on an internationally acceptable act of self-determination would be the favoured outcome for Portuguese Timor, rather than simply an acceptable one.

2. In the light of Sudharmono's advice, it will be necessary for us to consider advising ministers whether we should in public statements go beyond saying that association with Indonesia on the basis of an internationally acceptable act of self-determination is an acceptable outcome from the Australian point of view. The point which concerns us is whether, particularly in the light of the Prime Minister's remarks to Soeharto about Australian public opinion and Portuguese Timor, Australia should take a public position more favourable to the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia than the Indonesians themselves are prepared to do. We wonder whether in public expression of Australian views we should not advise Ministers to follow more or less the line of Sudharmono's reported in para 3 of your ref tel *mutatis mutandis* as follows: 'the Australian Government bases itself on the principles of the United Nations and supports the right of self-determination for all peoples. If the people of Portuguese Timor desire to associate themselves with Indonesia, Australia would accept (or perhaps welcome) their decision. Australia has no territorial ambitions in Portuguese Timor and the wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor would be decisive'.

3. It is relevant to Sudharmono's views on this question that, while he himself may have restricted his statements publicly in the way he describes, there are other public indications of Indonesia's attitudes which, it seems to us, more accurately describe them. We have in mind the *Antara*/AFP report referred to in your Telegram O.JA4739² and Michael Richardson's articles of 5 and 9 September in the *Age*,³ which were based, we believe, on Indonesian briefing. It may be that Australian and international opinion would accept these indications of Indonesian official thinking as being more accurate than statements along the lines of those Sudharmono

¹ Document 30.

² 11 September. *Antara* reported that Whitlam 'has indicated closest agreement' with Soeharto and continued: 'Australia is certain to support the Portuguese colony of Timor island becoming part of Indonesia, if the people there vote for it through an internationally accepted election . . . The Australian official view is that this would ensure stability in the area . . .'

³ On 5 September Richardson had written that Indonesia's official policy was non-interference and respect for the freely expressed wishes of the Timorese. In private 'influential government strategists believed that the interests of the Timorese, Indonesia and Australia would be best served by incorporation'. They saw independence as 'an invitation to instability' and their argument was believed to have swayed the President.

has made, which is a factor we should have ourselves to take into account in any descriptions we give of Indonesian thinking.

4. The background paper⁴ referred to in our CH110620 has already been issued but in describing Indonesian attitudes we shall take account of Sudharmono's comments in any supplementary briefing which is issued.

5. You will know that Parliament meets on Tuesday 17 September and that we shall need to clear a line of public commentary on Portuguese Timor before then.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

32 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 16 September 1974

O.JA4822 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

*Ref O.CH111833*¹

In retrospect, I think it is a pity that the President did not spell out to the Prime Minister the difference between the substance of the Indonesian position, which was conveyed frankly to the Prime Minister as a friend, and the attitude which the Indonesian Government judges that it is advisable to adopt publicly as the best course designed to achieve the desired objective of union with Indonesia.

2. The problem here is that there are divided views, below the President, as to how far Indonesia should come out openly in support of the objective of association with Indonesia. Sudharmono's caution is more than shared by the Foreign Ministry, although it is apparent from a talk with Harry Tjan this morning that he would not share their misgivings about your expressing, in an unattributable document, Indonesian objectives in terms as clear cut as those in the paper on Portuguese Timor.

3. I had not realised that you proposed to issue the paper before giving Sudharmono an opportunity to comment on it, in view of its references to Indonesian policy. I am reluctant to go back to him again since I do not expect that he will change his line. I think it best to let the matter lie unless he should raise it with me again in the future.²

4. In view of the differences within Indonesia, I suggest that caution is still required about any public references to Indonesian policy. I appreciate that this presents a problem for you in relation to your expression of Australian policy. Could we not, however, welcome (rather than accept) a possible future decision in favour of union with Indonesia and, in so doing, refer delicately to the reasons for welcoming such a decision?

⁴ Document 28.

¹ Document 31.

² Arriens discussed Canberra's response with Tjan, who thought Sudharmono had 'overreacted', but suggested 'we might let our diplomatic initiatives rest . . .' (Minute to Furlonger, 16 September).

5. Tjan this morning spoke appreciatively of your decision to raise the question of Portuguese Timor in Lisbon³ and of the prospect of a statement by Mr Whitlam in Parliament. As you will have seen from my conversation with Yoga (our JA4767),⁴ the Indonesians are still not certain as to how quickly they themselves should move; and they are unlikely to formulate a firm strategy until after they themselves have talked to the Portuguese and have assessed the outcome of the soundings that they are currently seeking.⁵

FURLONGER

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, x]

33 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 19 September 1974

O.JA4892 TOP SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

For the Minister from Furlonger (Personal for McIntyre)

Tjan (the Adviser to Ali Murtopo, to whom President Soeharto has given the main running on Portuguese Timor) passed the following information to us in strict confidence on 18 September. He asked that it be passed to you as background for your visit to New York and meeting there with Adam Malik:

- (i) The Indonesian Ambassador to Belgium, Frans Seda, and a Colonel Mohammed, a special representative of Ali Murtopo, have been on a secret mission to Portugal. They met the Deputy Foreign Minister, Professor Campinos, on 13 September.
- (ii) Campinos expressed agreement with the Indonesian view that Portuguese Timor should become part of Indonesia.
- (iii) It was agreed with Campinos that Ali Murtopo and Seda should visit Lisbon in early October for talks with Spínola, the Prime Minister, Santos, Soares and Campinos.

³ See last paragraph of Document 28. In forwarding the background paper, Canberra instructed Lisbon to continue reporting on developments in Portuguese attitudes on Timor, and to use any suitable opportunity to suggest the importance of keeping the Portuguese Ambassador in Canberra informed (Cablegram CH110965, 12 September).

⁴ Document 30 which, of course, refers not to Yoga but to Sudharmono. Alternatively the reference may be to Memorandum 1062, sent to Canberra on 11 September. It reported a series of discussions with Yoga, Malik and Tjan. Yoga had told Furlonger that Indonesian teams were visiting East and West Europe, and North and South America, to take soundings on views on Portuguese Timor. If these were favourable, Malik would emphasise Indonesia's security interests to Portugal, but would be cautious in supporting integration with Indonesia too publicly.

⁵ Woolcott noted in the margin that he had spoken to Whitlam who 'accepts he should not appear to be in front of the Indonesians and that he should avoid casting his views—which remain unchanged—in a manner which might generate domestic controversy. He still prefers to "welcome" rather than "accept" voluntary union with Indonesia, provided it is based on proper and acceptable act'. Canberra replied to Jakarta (Cablegram CH113004, 17 September) that the background paper was intended as unattributable information for press, academics and opinion formers; it was not a public document. Account had been taken of the information in this cable in drafting subsequent departmental documentation, including the Political Information Bulletin and responses to possible Parliamentary questions.

- (iv) They also agreed that:
 - (a) relations should be established as soon as possible after this meeting;
 - (b) Portugal and Indonesia should work to promote the economic development of Portuguese Timor, both internationally and bilaterally;
 - (c) they should work towards forming a joint Portuguese/Indonesian administration of Portuguese Timor;
 - (d) action in the UN should be avoided. Campinos took an anti-communist line and said that Portugal believed China had interests in Portuguese Timor as well as in Macao, whilst Seda had been told by Luns¹ that NATO considers China wishes the matter to be handled at the UN where it could if necessary exercise its veto power in the Security Council.
- (v) Colonel Mohammed has done a briefing paper which has been submitted to the President, who agrees with the points in sub-paragraph (iv). (These points are in line with earlier recommendations by Tjan to Ali Murtopo.)
- (vi) The President has told Cabinet in the last few days that Indonesia, Portugal and Australia should work towards promoting the economic development of Portuguese Timor.

2. In the light of these discussions and the advice received from Luns, Tjan appeared a little apprehensive lest we might initiate action on Portuguese Timor in the UN. With regard to your meeting with Mr Malik, it was apparent from the Prime Minister's talks here that Malik is not fully in sympathy with his Government's line. He is also not being kept fully informed of developments. Policy on Portuguese Timor is being directed by the President himself, whilst its execution is largely in the hands of Ali Murtopo. Even though we may find this an odd way to proceed, it is a typical Indonesian operation, in which the President is using trusted and efficient informal channels and bypassing the bureaucratic structure. He has often in the past used Ali Murtopo and the people like Tjan around him on important and particularly sensitive issues. I fear therefore that too much may not emerge from your talks with Malik; the person best informed in New York is Ali Murtopo's private secretary, Lim Bian Kie, who is loosely attached to Malik's delegation. There might even be benefit in arranging a strictly private meeting with him (I understand that he intended to make contact with our Deputy Representative (Campbell)). In any event it will be particularly important that our delegation in New York keep in close touch with Lim Bian Kie on tactics to be pursued there.

3. For the same reasons, if I may say so, I doubt that much would be gained from a tripartite meeting between yourself, Malik and Soares. Malik in his free-wheeling fashion might indeed only add confusion to the situation. It will of course be up to the Portuguese to decide how far they wish to take us into their confidence, but it could be helpful if you dispelled any illusions Soares may have about Malik's influence in the Government and on this issue in particular.

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 1A]

¹ J. M. A. H. Luns, Secretary-General of NATO.

34 MINUTE FROM FEAKES TO LAVETT AND McLENNAN

Canberra, 20 September 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

This week's Policy Information Report includes a statement that 'Australia has no special ambitions in Portuguese Timor . . .' I think that I cleared this text; but at this morning's meeting with the First Assistant Secretaries, Mr Border said that he had reservations about the phrase 'special ambitions' with its implication that we might have ambitions, as it were, which were not special. In addition, the word ambitions has a somewhat predatory flavour about it. While I think that there are difficulties about refining what it is that we do not have in Portuguese Timor—for instance, I do not think that we can deny having special *interests* there—I tried my hand at a reformulation of the thought expressed in the PIR. I suggested, and Mr Border agreed, that what was meant was:—

'Australia naturally has important particular interests in Portuguese Timor (for example, in oil exploration) but we have no ambition to achieve a special position there'.

Does this look all right to you? If it does, could you define what our important particular interests are in Portuguese Timor to replace 'oil exploration', the words I used, which are a bit imprecise.¹

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, x]

35 SUBMISSION TO WHITLAM

Canberra, 23 September 1974

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

The accompanying series of telegrams from our Embassy in Jakarta and our Mission to the United Nations in New York about Portuguese Timor report information which gives us cause for concern. The most important information is in Jakarta telegram O.JA4892 of 19 September¹ reporting that the Indonesians have established contact with the Portuguese Deputy Foreign Minister (Campinos) with whom they have agreed that the two countries should work towards forming a joint Portuguese–Indonesian administration of Portuguese Timor. Ali Murtopo is to visit Lisbon early next month for talks with Spínola, the Portuguese Foreign Minister and the Minister for Inter-territorial Co-ordination. Campinos is reported also to have expressed agreement with the Indonesian view that Portuguese Timor should become part of Indonesia. The Indonesians appear apprehensive lest we might initiate action on Portuguese Timor in the

¹ A handwritten note in the margin alters the words 'in oil exploration' to 'in the delineation of the continental shelf'. A general reply, handwritten by McLennan, reads: 'No *special* ambitions stemmed from our need to placate Defence who objected to our argument in the draft brief for the PM to the effect that P. Timor was of little intrinsic interest to Australia. Our commercial and trade interests are minor. Our only substantial interest in bilateral relations is in delineation of the continental shelf. Our special interests stem from the problem of P. Timor as a factor in our relations with Indonesia'.

¹ Document 33.

United Nations; and it was envisaged that Mr Malik and Ali Murtopo's private secretary, Liam Bian Kie, would be in touch with Senator Willesee and our people in New York. The first contacts have already been made.²

2. There are two main points of concern in these reports:—

- (a) They seem to ignore, or at least play down the need for an act of self-determination by the inhabitants of Portuguese Timor—and on the Indonesian part they seem not to have taken into account your own comments on this point to President Soeharto.
- (b) The reports seem to indicate some misunderstanding between the Portuguese and the Indonesians as to what their respective views are on Portuguese Timor. The Portuguese seem to be saying that the Indonesians are not interested in Portuguese Timor, while we know that they are; and the Indonesians seem to think that the Portuguese are content for Portuguese Timor to become part of Indonesia, while Portuguese public statements indicate that the Portuguese are attached to the principle of self-determination in Portuguese Timor and consider that only a minority of Timorese support integration into Indonesia.

Meanwhile there are reports indicating that political activity about the future of Portuguese Timor is picking up. The leader of the Timorese Independence Party, Horta, was to have held a public demonstration in Dili last week to oppose integration with Indonesia. Radio Australia reports that 4000 people took part and we are checking on this report. In Lisbon a demonstration was to have been held on Saturday supporting complete independence for Portuguese Timor. The United Nations Secretariat has received a telegram from what it regards as a very small Maoist group in Timor in favour of independence.³

3. For the Minister's discussions in New York with the Indonesians and in particular for his discussion with Mr Malik, he will have to hand the telegrams attached. He also is aware of your own discussions with President Soeharto and the subsequent documents which have been issued by the Department on policy towards Portuguese Timor. It seems important, however, that the Minister (and Mr Furlonger in Jakarta) as well as others who may become involved in discussions with the Portuguese and Indonesians about Portuguese Timor should have guidance from you about your reactions to these latest developments in the light of your recent conversation with President Soeharto. Attached for your consideration is a draft telegram to the Minister in New York repeated to Mr Furlonger in Jakarta.

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South Asia Division

[NAA: A11443, [1]]

² Cablegram UN961 (19 September) reported Lim's interest was 'not in whether the future of Portuguese Timor should be raised in the United Nations but rather in when and how to handle the question here'. In discussing with Campbell the possibility that the Committee of Twenty-Four might give it more consideration in 1975, 'Lim was well aware of the need to be able to produce good and convincing spokesmen from APODETI or other parties capable of establishing the interest of the Timorese in securing their independence through integration with Indonesia. He appreciated on the one hand that a false and unconvincing start should be avoided and that, on the other hand, those favouring integration could be placed at a serious disadvantage if preempted by calls for outright independence from other Timorese who might visit New York'.

³ The last fourteen words, referring to Fretilin, are a quotation from Cablegram UN961. It reported no evidence of Chinese interest in Timor, but the receipt by the Secretariat of the following telegram: 'Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor, the only legitimate representative of the people of Portuguese colony of Timor, repudiates discussions by foreign powers regarding the future of East Timor. Appeal UN in order to guarantee the respect of the right and willing (*sic*) of the people to liberate themselves and to achieve full independence. Respects. (signed) Fretilin'.

36 CABLEGRAM TO NEW YORK

Canberra, 24 September 1974

O.CH115723 SECRET ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

For the Minister for Foreign Affairs (on arrival) from the Acting Minister

Before leaving Australia you saw Telegram O.JA4892 of 19 September¹ reporting information from the Indonesians about their discussions with the Portuguese and their views on the future of the territory. You will have seen the subsequent telegrams from New York (O.UN961 of 20 September²) and Jakarta (O.JA4934 of 20 September³).

2. For your discussions with Malik and Santos you may like to have in mind my own views on the questions which these telegrams raise. I note that the Indonesians believe that they have an agreement with the Portuguese Deputy Foreign Minister (Campinos) that the two countries should work towards forming a joint Portuguese–Indonesian administration of Portuguese Timor. Against this background and the background of my conversations on Portuguese Timor with President Soeharto, I think it important that the Indonesians and Portuguese should understand that, while one major element in our policy towards Portuguese Timor is that we favour its incorporation into Indonesia, the other main element in our attitude is that the Timorese should have the opportunity for a genuine act of self-determination to decide their political future. We also think that the Timorese should be allowed to proceed deliberately towards their decision about their future. The reported agreement on joint administration raises the question in our minds whether the joint administration would preclude an act of self-determination. It would certainly be seen by many as prejudging its outcome. When would the joint administration begin and how long would it last? How would it be brought about? While the Portuguese and the Indonesians may not yet have answers to these questions, they should appreciate that questions of this kind will arise in our minds as in the minds of others (such as PNG) as their intentions become plainer.

3. It also seems to me that there is a great risk of misunderstanding between the Indonesians and the Portuguese. The Indonesians tell us that the Portuguese Deputy Foreign Minister expressed agreement with the Indonesian view that Portuguese Timor should become part of Indonesia. By contrast in their public statements, the Portuguese Foreign Minister and Minister for Interterritorial Co-ordination have recently expressed their commitment to self-determination in Portuguese Timor and are saying that the pro-Indonesian party in Timor is in the minority. It seems important that these differences should be clarified between the Portuguese and the Indonesians: and we welcome the establishment of relations between the two which is apparently to follow Ali Murtopo's meeting with the Portuguese next month.

4. We have no intention of raising the question of Portuguese Timor in the United Nations: but, as the Indonesians recognise, it is inevitable that the future of the territory should be considered by the UN at some relatively early stage. Movement towards a joint administration would be likely to precipitate that consideration and, we think, to bring it about in circumstances which would not favour Indonesia. In this context, we are checking Radio Australia reports

¹ Document 33.

² See notes 2 and 3 to Document 35. Cablegram UN961 was sent from New York 19 September, and received in Canberra on 20 September.

³ Advising that Malik had been briefed by Murtopo 'in general terms about the meetings in Lisbon and Indonesian policy'.

that 4000 people took part in a demonstration in Dili last week against incorporation of the colony into Indonesia.

5. I note the suggestion in paragraph 2 of Jakarta Telegram O.JA4892 addressed to you that the best informed person about Portuguese Timor among the Indonesians in New York will be Ali Murtopo's private secretary, Lim Bian Kie. The later telegram from Jakarta makes it clear, however, that Mr Malik has been fully informed of Indonesian policy and is now in sympathy with it. You may, therefore, consider it more appropriate for contacts with Lim Bian Kie to be pursued at the official level, where they have already started in our delegation.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

37 MINUTE FROM WOOLCOTT TO RENOUF

Canberra, 24 September 1974

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

Last night Mr Feakes and I cleared a cable from the Prime Minister and Acting Minister to the Minister in New York and Furlonger in Jakarta, seeking to ensure that his position on Portuguese Timor was clearly understood. You should see this cable in today's distribution.

2. It is worth recording—for limited distribution only—that the Prime Minister put his views on this subject frankly in the following way: 'I am in favour of incorporation but obeisance has to be made to self determination. I want it incorporated but I do not want this done in a way which will create argument in Australia which would make people more critical of Indonesia'.¹

[NAA: A11443, [1]]

38 CABLEGRAM TO NEW YORK

Canberra, 26 September 1974

O.CH117514 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: Seabed Boundary

Please pass following to Minister as additional background in case the question of the seabed boundary is raised by the Portuguese Foreign Minister.

2. An interdepartmental meeting was convened by Foreign Affairs on 25 September to consider whether the Australian Government should reply to the Portuguese note of 18 April which conveyed views of the Portuguese Government in reply to our oral protest of 25 March 1974 at Portuguese decision to grant an oil exploration concession in an area claimed by Australia to be within Australian jurisdiction.

¹ See a similar record from Feakes to Cooper. [On file NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, Annex 1A.]

3. Delay in our consideration has been occasioned by need to wait for the political situations in Portugal and Timor to stabilise sufficiently to allow us to make reasonable assessment of Portuguese and Indonesian Government attitudes towards Portuguese Timor.

4. Meeting agreed that the Australian Government should reply by note to the Portuguese note for following reasons:

- (a) From the international legal standpoint it is essential that the assertions in Portuguese Government's note should not remain unchallenged on the written record. In any future negotiations or litigation it would be vital that Portugal's assertions had been met with a clear statement that under international law the area in question forms part of Australia's Continental Shelf and has been declared to be such since 1953.
- (b) Such a note setting out Australian position would help to give needed confidence to Australian mining companies with interests in or near the disputed area to commence or continue drilling.

5. Meeting considered arguments for and against seeking negotiations for an early agreement with Portugal on a sea-bed boundary. The principal arguments against seeking early agreement are that (A) if we open negotiations with Portugal at this stage, we might appear to be favouring the option of continued association of Portuguese Timor with Portugal rather than other possible alternatives; and (B) if Portuguese Timor achieved independence and believed such a prior agreement was not in its interests, there might be strong criticism of Australia for making an agreement with Portugal over Timor's head to deprive Timor of what may be its only major asset—oil. If Australia thus became a focus of antagonism, we would almost certainly lose much of our capability to influence or assist newly independent government. On the other hand, if a boundary line negotiated now gained wide acceptance this would in turn allow petroleum exploration to proceed with more confidence than at present. Moreover, a newly independent government in Timor might not wish to upset relations with Australia by seeking to renegotiate an established boundary line albeit one negotiated by its former colonial rulers. (However, it could be unwise to rest too heavily on this assumption.) In the event of Timor's becoming associated with or part of Indonesia the Indonesians might well take the view that the Australia/Portuguese Timor boundary line should be no less advantageous to them than the existing Australia/Indonesia boundary line. A boundary line which the Indonesians felt to be too markedly in Australia's interest could sour Australian/Indonesian relations. On the other hand, a boundary line relevant to Portuguese Timor markedly in Indonesia's favour could encourage Indonesia to reopen the question of the boundary line elsewhere.

6. Meeting concluded that in light of the Government's established policy towards Portuguese Timor the Australian note should *not* propose talks at this time with the Portuguese on delimitation of a seabed boundary but should merely join issue with them on the legality of their claims and set out the basis of Australia's claim. In reaching this conclusion the meeting had in mind also recent reports from Lisbon which suggest that the Portuguese themselves do not wish at present to enter into delimitation negotiations with Australia.

7. We would wish to review the situation early next year well ahead of Geneva Law of the Sea Conference, subject of course to any developments in the meantime in Lisbon and Portuguese Timor.

39 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 26 September 1974

O.UN1034 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*For Prime Minister from Willesee*

I talked today with Malik and with Soares about Portuguese Timor, as a result of which I think all three of us have arrived at an acceptable understanding (if at this stage necessarily broad and tentative) of how events there should develop over the next several months. Soares and Malik had also discussed the matter before I talked with them.

2. Soares said that while Portugal intended to conduct referenda in all its former territories Timor was not an urgent case and no referendum would be held before Portuguese general elections in March 1975. A referendum earlier would be premature and might lead to the possibility of power in Timor being handed over to unrepresentative groups. After giving me his preliminary thoughts on how the referendum might be conducted, Soares stressed that he wanted Portugal and Australia (and Indonesia) to stay in close contact over the coming months of preparation, a wish I said I reciprocated. Soares said he had spoken in terms similar to the above to Malik, who had told him Indonesia intended not to intervene, which intervention in any case Portugal could not accept. He also told me that Portugal intended to send its Minister for Overseas Territories to Timor shortly to assess the situation for himself and I suggested he might then go on to Canberra for talks with us.

3. I told Soares I had found his presentation reassuring, since I thought the principal need from Australia's point of view was that important groups within Australia and the public generally should be sympathetic to whatever course of action was taken affecting Timor's future: in particular we needed to avoid any suggestion that a deal was being done between outside powers to hand over the former territory to Indonesia, over the heads of the local inhabitants. From our point of view, to achieve this would naturally require some form of U.N. blessing. (The matter might appropriately be raised, possibly by ourselves, in the Committee of Twenty-Four when it meets in April next year.)

4. When I described this account to Malik later, he told me that Soares had put the same points to him, emphasizing in particular Portugal's wish for close contact with both Australia and Indonesia to ensure steady progress towards an acceptable act of ascertainment. Malik discounted the possibility of outside (specifically Chinese) interference in Timor. In turn I repeated that I believed it was essential to prepare Australian opinion—already critical of Indonesia for its treatment of political prisoners—for the course which we both agreed would have least problems in the long run, that of eventual incorporation of Timor into Indonesia. If on the other hand it were handled in a precipitate and hole-in-corner fashion I said we could expect mounting domestic criticism of what would be taken to be Australian connivance with Indonesia, with obvious effects on Indonesian/Australian relations.

5. You will probably wish to have this telegram repeated to Furlonger and Cooper.

40 LETTER FROM LAVETT TO RENOUF

Canberra, 28 September 1974

SECRET PERSONAL

*[matter omitted]*¹

My main worry is that the tenor of the telegram² seems to imply that we are getting out too far in front. I believe that it would be appropriate for us at this stage to adopt a more reticent role. You will see, for example, that Soares stressed a desire to keep in close contact with Australia over the coming months in connection with the plebiscite which is to be held on the future of Portuguese Timor. It seems to me that we should be careful about playing as active a role as might be implied here. It is Portugal and Indonesia which need to get closest together; our interest is not so immediate.

You will see, too, that the Minister has mentioned the possibility that we might raise the matter in the United Nations. No doubt it will come to the United Nations, but I believe that we should ponder carefully before we take any initiative. For one thing, the Indonesians (Harry Tjan), far from welcoming such a prospect, have appeared a little apprehensive that we might do so. In his cable CH.115723 of 24 September to the Minister,³ the Prime Minister said that 'we have no intention of raising the question of Portuguese Timor in the United Nations, but, as the Indonesians recognise it is inevitable that the future of the territory should be considered by the U.N. at some relatively early stage.' I think this sums up the position.

We have been working on the basis that the Timorese should be allowed to proceed at a deliberate pace towards their decision on their future status. This seemed desirable in view of their backward political state, but it would also allow the Indonesians time to make their case: our assessment is that, if a plebiscite were held soon, the result would be in favour of some form of association with Portugal (not Indonesia). Moreover, it seems that the independence movement has made some impact (though how much is hard to say). In our discussions with the Portuguese (and Indonesians) we should be stressing the need for deliberation and we should be wary about involving ourselves in an arrangement which might come to fruition in the relatively short term which Soares seems to have in his mind.

I wish to make the same general point about the visit which it has been proposed that Santos, the Minister for Inter-territorial Co-ordination, should pay to Australia. No doubt, if he is to visit Timor, he will inevitably come to Australia for discussions as well. But we should go carefully on this, so as to avoid misapprehension about our motives, and, as Bob Furlonger has recommended,⁴ we should let the Indonesians know (so that they can extend an invitation at the same time, if they wish to do so).

There are a couple of other points arising out of comments by Malik.

Soares told the Minister that Malik had said that Indonesia did not intend to intervene in Portuguese Timor. It may be a question of what is meant by 'intervention', but it would be unwise to assume that Indonesia will not take any course open to it to further its objective of eventual control. This could be restricted to propaganda, but there is also evidence that Indonesia might be prepared to go further. There is evidence, for example, that the Indonesians have been preparing the ground for a clandestine operation in Portuguese Timor and we have learned

¹ Lavett noted here that he was writing in the absence of Feakes, who was ill. Renouf was in New York.

² Document 39.

³ Document 36.

⁴ In Cablegram JA5030, 25 September.

from Lisbon today that Ali Murtopo (who is in charge of OPSUS) has applied for a visa to enable him to visit Portuguese Timor in a 'personal' capacity. We must be careful as to how far we become involved in this kind of activity, explicitly or implicitly.

Further, in his discussions with the Minister, Malik discounted the possibility of outside (specifically Chinese) interference in Timor. This simply contradicts the whole Indonesian case, including the case put to the Prime Minister by Soeharto. The Indonesian case has been based on concern over security.

The Portuguese have been saying that Indonesia is not interested in Portuguese Timor. Malik's comments will not at all help in acquainting them with the actual situation.

I have discussed the foregoing in general terms (on the telephone) with Graham Feakes, who has asked me to say that he concurs with it. As you will see, my main concern is that we may find ourselves cast in a wrong light.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xi]

41 MINUTE FROM ARRIENS TO FURLONGER AND DAN

Jakarta, 30 September 1974

SECRET

Discussion with Harry Tjan

I saw Harry Tjan this morning. The following were the main points of interest, some of which I expect you will wish to have cabled.

Portuguese Timor

2. Tjan said that he had now developed what he called a 'grand design' on the future of Portuguese Timor, which had been submitted to the President. The first stage consists of securing legal access by Indonesia to Portuguese Timor through economic cooperation. Australia will be invited by Indonesia and Portugal to join in this cooperation. The second stage will be to invite the UN to send a team to inspect conditions in Portuguese Timor. At the earliest this would take place in 1975, but probably not until 1976. The third stage would be a referendum, the result of which would be ensured by the territory's exposure to Indonesian influence.

3. Tjan said that the President had endorsed the plan as the 'basic guidelines' for Indonesian policy. It still remained, however, for the plan to be converted into operational terms by Ali Murtopo.¹

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

¹ Tjan went on to explain that the situation in Portuguese Timor had become 'very fluid'. Mousinho appeared to be more favourably disposed to Indonesia after his visit; there was a move, not encouraged by Indonesia, to form a radical action group within Apodeti; Pires had called for unification of the island. He also asked about a report from Lim Bian Kie in New York that Willesee believed Whitlam had gone too far in endorsing Indonesian incorporation, and that Malik's suspicions of Australian motives had been heightened by information about the Defence Department's original policy in favour of independence.

42 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON

Canberra, 4 October 1974

O.CH121337 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Timor*For Ambassador*

You should take the opportunity of your call on Campinos to outline Australia's attitude towards Portuguese Timor.

2. As you know this attitude is based on the principles of the United Nations. Australia supports the right to self-determination for all colonial people. The wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor should be decisive in determining their future. Australia has important particular interests in Portuguese Timor but we do not seek any special position there. If the people of Portuguese Timor wish to associate themselves with Indonesia, Australia would welcome this provided that the decision was based on an internationally accepted act of self-determination. The Timorese people should be allowed to proceed deliberately towards a decision about their future. In our view the province needs careful and patient development before an effect[ive] act of self-determination is possible.

3. We would be interested in anything that Campinos might volunteer about developments between Portugal and Indonesia with regard to Portuguese Timor. In particular, we would be interested in an account of Portugal's understanding of Indonesia's intentions there.

4. You should avoid leaving the impression that Australia would like to intrude into contacts between Portugal and Indonesia about Portuguese Timor. But we do¹ want to encourage contacts between the two countries. In this regard we would also be interested in any comments Campinos might have on the prospects for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Indonesia.

5. As you will have seen from our O.CH117514, we do *not* intend to propose talks with the Portuguese when we reply to their note of 18 April on delineation of the Timor seabed. You should therefore not raise this issue with Campinos. If he raises it, you should say that we do not think that negotiations would be appropriate at this stage.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/1/1, iii]

¹ The word 'not' was inserted here, incorrectly, in the cable originally dispatched. Cablegram CH121607 (6 October) corrected the sentence to the version printed here.

43 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 7 October 1974

O.LB439 SECRET ROUTINE

Timor

I had a useful and fairly frank exchange of views with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Campinos) today.

2. After developing the theme of the mutuality of our interests in a number of fields I turned the conversation to decolonisation in Nepal and Timor in particular. I said I understood there had been contacts between the Portuguese and Indonesian Governments on the future of Timor and we welcomed this. We also wanted to keep in close touch with the Portuguese Government on this question. I asked Campinos for his views on Timor.

3. Campinos replied that whilst the Portuguese Government welcomed the interest and advice of friendly governments such as the Australian and Indonesian, it was important to remember that Timor was a Portuguese problem. Portugal's principal objective was to ensure that the Timorese were given the opportunity for a genuine act of free choice. The Portuguese Government would not welcome interference by Indonesia or anyone else. Although some sections of the Timorese community seemed to favour incorporation into Indonesia, there was also considerable opposition in Timor to this. There were religious and cultural differences. Ma[n]y Timorese were Christians and had absorbed Western cultural values. He cited the three options open to Timor and said that the choice was a matter for the Timorese.

4. I asked Campinos about their talks with the Indonesians and about prospects for establishing diplomatic relations. On the latter point he said that nothing was settled. A senior Indonesian official (unnamed) would visit Lisbon shortly to discuss the matter, but the visit would be kept secret. On the first point, their talks so far had provided an opportunity to explain Portuguese thinking (presumably on the lines indicated above).

5. Campinos said they had noted statements made in Jakarta after Mr Whitlam's visit and asked me for our assessment of the Indonesian position.

I said it was possible to detect differences in the views of Indonesian leaders on Timor but Indonesia did share a common concern with Australia that Timor should not become an area of political instability in the region. President Suharto also shares our view that an act of self determination in Timor would have to be internationally acceptable.

6. Campinos asked me about Australia's attitude. I said we were on common ground on the self-determination issue. Public opinion in Australia would react adversely to any suggestion of a 'deal' being arranged over the heads of the Timorese. Of the various options independence would be economically doubtful and carried political dangers. Association with Portugal meant a continued economic burden for Lisbon. We therefore considered that incorporation into Indonesia was probably in the best interests of all concerned and we would therefore welcome any such decision by the Timorese. But I stressed that the decision would have to be a genuine act of friendship.¹

[matter omitted]

Comment

You will note that there are significant difference[s] both in tone and content, between Campinos' views as outlined above and his talks with Indonesian officials as reported by

¹ Presumably the word 'friendship' should have read 'free choice'.

Furlonger. At no stage did he indicate that he saw any virtue (on the contrary) in incorporation with Indonesia. The stress was on the point that it was a Portuguese problem and equally clear that he did not want any interference by Jakarta; even on the question of diplomatic relations 'nothing was decided'.

10. Despite his initial fairly hard line, Campinos was very agreeable to me personally and I think sincere in his professions of wanting a good relationship with Australia. But he is clearly suspicious of Indonesian motives and it is equally clear that there is considerably less understanding between Lisbon and Jakarta than Harry Tjan would have us believe.

11. We should also bear in mind that as Deputy Leader of the Socialist Party and a protégé of Soares, Campinos's views are likely to carry considerable weight when framing Portuguese policy.

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

44 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON

Canberra, 8 October 1974

O.CH122140 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Visit by Ali Murtopo

For Ambassador

You will be generally aware of Lieutenant-General Ali Murtopo's background and his role within the Indonesian Government. However, the following material may be helpful when he calls on you.

2. He prefers to be known as General Ali. His style and personality are more suited to the backroom role he has played in Indonesia on President Soeharto's behalf since 1965 (and even before then). He is secretive, unorthodox and impatient with administrative detail. He places great store on personal contact as a means of solving problems and smoothing over difficulties. Among its several functions, his private organisation OPSUS (Special Operations) is called into play where unorthodox and extra-legal tactics are needed. During confrontation, OPSUS maintained army links with Malaysia and her western friends. It was also active in West Irian mobilising support for the territory's continued association with Indonesia.

3. In carrying out these functions Ali remains the personal executive of President Soeharto, to whom he is regarded as being completely loyal. He is thus a figure of considerable authority and can be relied upon to convey accurately the President's own views and to relay the views of others directly to Soeharto.

4. Ali will presumably be interested to have your assessment of recent developments in Portugal, about which he may show some concern. He might also appreciate your assessment of Portuguese views of decolonisation in Timor. We would be interested in an account from Ali of his own talks with the Portuguese, if this is possible.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

45 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 14 October 1974

O.LB462 SECRET PRIORITY

Timor

Ali Murtopo, accompanied by his Secretary (Halim) came to see me late this afternoon after having had discussions with Soares and Campinhos (separately) and other Portuguese officials.

2. I invited Ali to comment on his talks with the Portuguese. He said they had gone very well and he seemed to base this on the fact that in reply to his hypothetical question as to Portugal's position in the event that the Timorese should opt for incorporation into Indonesia, he had been told that this would be acceptable to Portugal. (However it was clear from further questioning that the Portuguese had given nothing away in regard to their own wishes or attitudes to Timor's future, although Ali does not seem to realise this.)

3. The Portuguese had however apparently indicated that they accepted the need for careful preparation of any act of self determination, but even on this point Ali does not appear to have done his homework. He had for example no idea of the illiteracy rate in Timor which is of course a crucial question in any self determination process. He mentioned that he had sent one of his own people (Colonel Sukianto) to Dili to examine the situation on the ground.

4. I asked Ali if he detected any differences between Portuguese officials in his discussions with them. He said he had not. I told him that, in my experience, Portuguese attitudes tended to vary according to whom one was speaking. Tomorrow he is seeing the Prime Minister, the President and the Minister without Portfolio (Antunes). Incidentally, notwithstanding his revelations to *Newsweek* he seemed surprised that his visit had been reported in this morning's press.

5. Ali said that until Mr Whitlam's visit to Djakarta they had been undecided about Timor. However the Prime Minister's support for the idea of incorporation into Indonesia had helped them to crystallise their own thinking and they were now firmly convinced of the wisdom of this course.

6. I observed that Malik initially seemed to favour independence for Timor. Did he now subscribe to the incorporation concept? Ali avoided a direct answer but implied that Malik was not yet fully on side with presidential thinking.

7. I asked Ali about establishing relations with Portugal. He said the Portuguese had proposed this and he had readily accepted. He thought they would send a Consul-General to Lisbon at least initially. I offered to help in any way I could. Ali expressed his thanks and hoped that I would continue to keep Furlonger informed of thinking at this end.

Comment

8. Having talked to Ali I am even more of the opinion that there has been no meeting of minds (except perhaps on the self determination question) between Lisbon and Djakarta. Ali is convinced for example that there is already a majority in Timor in favour of joining Indonesia. The Portuguese are at present equally convinced of exactly the opposite.

COOPER

46 STATEMENT BY CAMPBELL IN FOURTH COMMITTEE OF UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 14 October 1974

Portuguese Territories

[matter omitted]

When my delegation addressed itself to the question of the Portuguese-held territories last year, we found it possible to do so only in terms in which 'dismay' minimised the concern and indignation we felt. None of the pre-conditions for decolonisation was to be found in the attitude of the colonial power. The simple fact is that the political will to decolonise did not exist.

It is profoundly satisfying that the then confrontation with Portugal has given way to co-operation, and that defiance has given way to decolonisation. Many reasons have been given for this great and gratifying transformation. It will be for historians to evaluate these and to suggest to which should be given the greatest weight.

[matter omitted]

Mr Chairman, I would like to refer next to one of the smaller Portuguese territories which has hitherto received less attention here than others, and which is not in Africa. The Australian Government has been called upon to state its broad attitudes towards independence or other possible proposals for the future freedom of the people of Portuguese Timor. Its position is straight forward. Australia's attitude towards Portuguese Timor is based on the principles of the United Nations. Australia supports the right to self-determination for all colonial people. We do not seek any special position in Portuguese Timor and the wishes of the people of the territory concerning independence should be decisive. It has been suggested that the people of Portuguese Timor will wish to associate themselves with Indonesia. If this were so, Australia would welcome it, provided that the decision was based on an internationally acceptable act of self-determination. We believe that the Timorese people should be allowed to proceed deliberately towards a decision about their future.

We should perhaps place some emphasis on this question of proceeding with deliberate speed. The rate of progress will depend on what is possible and practical, and the remarkable progress which has permitted Mozambique to settle already on an independence date in the middle of next year cannot be taken as an automatic yardstick for each of the other territories. In particular cases, and Timor may be one of them, the real aspirations of the people may need time to crystallise, and they may need time in which merely to organise. To some extent, the same is of course true of the Portuguese side. With the best will in the world, and there seems no present reason to suspect that this does not exist, Portugal cannot be expected to decolonise one territory after another overnight. Our own experience suggests strongly that, if only for administrative reasons, the transfer of power takes time to accomplish.

[matter omitted]

... I would like to conclude with a reference to the colonial power in the terms used by the Australian Prime Minister to the General Assembly on 30 September. The Prime Minister referred then to the satisfying symmetry with which Portugal, the oldest and Australia, the newest of the colonial powers were acting to liquidate colonialism. 'Across the distance of 400 years', he said, 'the new world in Australia clasps hands with the old, in ending a false, demeaning, unworthy power over others'.

47 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 14 October 1974

O.UN1259 RESTRICTED PRIORITY

Fourth Committee—Portuguese Timor

Following is the text of paragraph on Portuguese Timor from the Statement by Indonesia in Fourth Committee on 14 October in the general debate on the Portuguese territories.

Begins

Finally, Mr Chairman, my delegation would like to refer to the Statement made this morning by the distinguished representative of Australia with regard to Portuguese Timor. As to the possibility of that territory to be united with Indonesia, my delegation would like to state briefly that Indonesia would like to see an orderly and peaceful development in Portuguese Timor, one which will enable the people to exercise the right of self-determination, in accordance with the declaration on the granting of independence to colonial peoples and territories, to which Indonesia consistently adheres. There is indeed a desire among the people of Portuguese Timor to be reunited with the people of Indonesia after a period of 400 years of separation imposed upon them by colonial domination. Therefore, if, as a result of the exercise of their right to self-determination, the people of Portuguese Timor wish to unite with Indonesia, we are prepared to co-operate with them in its realization. Such an association should, in the view of the Indonesian Government, be in conformity with the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia, which *inter alia* decides that Indonesia is a unitary state.

Ends

2. The Indonesians apparently had some last minute instruction from Jakarta modifying an earlier text. On the one hand the reference to Resolution 1514 was inserted thereby acknowledging the right to independence and on the other hand, the reference inserted to the Indonesian constitution and to Indonesia as a unitary state points towards a tighter rather than a looser association with Indonesia.

[*matter omitted*]¹

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

48 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN SANTOS AND WILLESEE

Canberra, 16 October 1974

SECRET

EXTRACT

7. Senator Willesee said that he thought that it would be bad if there were signs of hurry in the resolution of the situation in Portuguese Timor. The problem was Portugal's although Australia and Indonesia were naturally interested in developments there. If, however, a hurried

¹ The matter omitted is part of the Australian statement published as Document 46.

decision was made to integrate Portuguese Timor into Indonesia, it could leave a bad atmosphere, which could easily be avoided.

8. Dr Almeida Santos agreed, and said that Portugal would do nothing without close consultation with Indonesia and Australia.

9. He said he thought there was some confusion about the proposed course of events in Portuguese Timor, which he would like to clarify. March 1975 was the date set for elections in Portugal, and this date had no significance for Timor. The date for elections there had not yet been fixed, and depended on the evolution of talks and developments there. The Portuguese would be guided by advice from the Timorese themselves on a suitable date, and this might not be for a year or eighteen months. The leaders in Timor as well as all three parties agreed on the desirability of delay. There are only about 3,000 whites in Portuguese Timor, and a further 3,400 people of mixed race.

10. Dr Almeida Santos said that the Portuguese were aware that there was a difference between the stated Indonesian position on Portuguese Timor and the true one. Indonesia wanted to annex Portuguese Timor, but did not want it to appear that this was its aim. Portugal understood the rules and would play the game. Senator Willesee said he had spoken to Adam Malik in New York, and had told him of Australia's wish to see any integration cleanly done. Dr Almeida Santos said he did not believe that what Malik had told Soares in New York was the true Indonesian position, and that other members of the Government and influential Indonesians, including Ali Murtopo, had made different declarations. Dr Almeida Santos said that the population of Portuguese Timor did not like what they knew of the labour system in the Indonesian half of the island, and was not at this time prepared to accept the idea of integration with Indonesia. If integration were imposed on them now, it could cause troubles within the next few years.¹

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iv]

49 LETTER FROM FURLONGER TO FEAKES

Jakarta, 16 October 1974

SECRET AUSTEO

We have spoken with Lim Bian Kie since he returned from his trip to the United States. (Harry Tjan was present.) The following were some of the main points that emerged.

Lim said that his discussions with Duncan Campbell in New York had been very useful. He had also spoken to the Japanese, U.S. and French delegations. He said that he considers it likely that the subject of Portuguese Timor will be raised in the Committee of Twenty-four in the course of 1975, but probably not until after the elections in Portugal in March. The Indonesians expect that the Committee of Twenty-four would then invite representatives from the three political parties in Portuguese Timor to put their views to the Committee. Lim is rather concerned about the impact that Ramos Horta is likely to make on the Committee, and

¹ In a meeting with Whitlam on 15 October Santos asked for Australian economic and technical assistance in Timor. Whitlam replied that he thought other countries in the region would also want to help. Australia would be delighted to join ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, in such a scheme. He suggested Santos discuss the possibility in Jakarta.

that there will be nobody in Apodeti capable of matching him. Lim thinks it likely that the Committee of Twenty-four will decide to send a visiting mission to Portuguese Timor, quite possibly before the General Assembly meets. He said that, unlike the visit to Cocos, a trip to Portuguese Timor would be attractive to members of the Committee, as it would probably pass through Hong Kong or Singapore. As such, the Indonesians expect that the African members of the Committee will be enthusiastic about a visiting mission.

Lim has gone into the composition of the Committee of Twenty-four in some detail and is not encouraged by what he sees. In particular, he is worried by the presence of black Africans, who tend to equate self-determination with independence. In this respect, he felt that Mr Malik's remarks about independence had been most unfortunate.¹ Malik was, however, toeing the line.

Lim expects that the outcome of these UN initiatives will probably be a referendum in Portuguese Timor towards the middle of 1976. This is the timing that the Indonesians themselves favour. It is neither too long to allow the development of a strong independence movement, nor too short for the Indonesians to influence the situation. Lim feels that if the Indonesians cannot influence matters in the direction they want within 18 months, they will be unable to do so at all.

Lim said that by 1976 it should be possible for Indonesia to gauge fairly accurately what the likely outcome of a plebiscite would be. If it was clear that the territory would not vote for incorporation into Indonesia, Lim said that the use of force could not be ruled out. (Harry Tjan agreed.) He spoke of the possibility of fomenting disorder in Portuguese Timor and of the Indonesian forces stepping in to salvage the situation at the request of certain sections of the population.

I asked Lim whether, in contemplating this possibility, Indonesia had taken full account of international reaction to such a step. It would certainly put Australia in a difficult position. Lim stressed that it would be very much a last resort, but that security considerations were overriding. I also asked him whether Indonesia was not exaggerating the security difficulties it might have with an independent Portuguese Timor, and whether they had considered, as an alternative to the use of force, the prospects of gaining a preponderant influence in an independent Portuguese Timor—which might well become a kind of Indonesian satellite. Lim indicated that the latter was not a real alternative for the Indonesians.

It is evident that Indonesian plans to influence the development of political thinking in Portuguese Timor are well advanced. Lim spoke of the possibility of sending in considerable numbers of Indonesian Timorese into the Portuguese half, where they would go undetected. There were also the Catholic links, and the Indonesians would try to keep the border as open as possible to permit free movement. Lim made it clear, however, that the operation would be a considerably more difficult one than that in West Irian. He said that even if Ali Murtopo became Minister for the Interior, he would continue to have charge of the operation.

On Ali Murtopo's visit to Lisbon, Lim said that they were concerned about the possibility that Portugal's attitude towards the decolonisation of Portuguese Timor might have changed since the resignation of President Spínola. They are worried that the swing to the left in Portugal will produce a less favourable attitude towards the right-wing regime in Indonesia and consequently to the possibility of handing the territory in Timor over to the Indonesian Government. We told Lim in general terms of Cooper's conversation with Campinos on 7 October,² in which Campinos took a rather harder line on Portuguese Timor than he appeared

¹ Malik had assured Soares in New York that Indonesia had no intention to intervene in Portuguese Timor, but would seek to encourage an independent Timor to associate freely with Indonesia (see Documents 39 and 40).

² See Document 43.

to have with Frans Seda.³ Lim was not at all surprised by this, and said that it was precisely the type of change that they had feared. I must say that I am inclined to agree with Lim, and that Cooper may be mistaken in thinking that the Indonesians exaggerate the degree of agreement reached earlier with Campinos. It is more probable that Campinos is simply piping a different tune. I also feel that Cooper is rather too disparaging about Ali's judgement in his O.LB462.⁴ Ali is a very skilful operator and is not easily misled—although he does not always express himself clearly and is quite capable of misleading others.

[matter omitted]

[NAA: A11443, [10]]

POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN PORTUGAL: 1974

By August 1974 the tensions between Left and Right within Portugal, and most particularly between the conservative followers of General Spínola and the younger more radical elements within the AFM, had become critical. Spínola's position had been considerably strengthened following the appointment of the military-dominated second provisional government, allowing him to restructure the military command and publicly question the rapid pace of Portuguese decolonisation. In late September, Spínola's 'Silent Majority' attempted to assert their dominance by means of a public rally. On the night of 27 September anti-Spínola forces barricaded the streets of Lisbon to prevent the arrival of busloads of Spínola supporters from around the country. Spínola, assuming 'Special Powers', called on the military to clear the streets, but the balance of power within the AFM had shifted away from the President. At midday of 28 September Spínola cancelled the rally, and was forced to resign two days later. Although he was succeeded by the moderate, General Gomes, his departure clearly marked a victory for the more radical members of the new regime.

50 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 21 October 1974

O.JA5445 SECRET ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

We spoke to Harry Tjan this morning about Ali Murtopo's visit to Lisbon, about which Ali reported to the President today.

2. Ali spoke with Campinos, Soares, Gomes, Gonsalves and Santos.¹ From each of these Ali received assurances of understanding of Indonesia's position and indications that they

³ See Document 33.

⁴ Document 45.

¹ Cablegram JA5491 (23 October) corrected the reference to Santos, who was still away from Lisbon. Murtopo saw Santos's deputy.

regarded independence for Portuguese Timor as unviable and that Portugal did not wish to continue its rule in the territory. President Gomes told Ali Murtopo that independence was 'unrealistic' and that to continue the Portuguese umbrella over Portuguese Timor would be inconsistent with their policy of decolonisation. Each of the Ministers with whom Ali Murtopo spoke stressed the importance of closer relations between Portugal and Indonesia, particularly in Portuguese Timor itself. It was agreed in principle to re-open relations.

3. Campinos observed that Timor was itself an Indonesian word and spoke of Indonesia's 'historical rights' to the territory. He asked for Indonesian cooperation in Portugal's efforts at decolonisation, particularly in Portuguese Timor. Gonsalves assured Ali that Portugal would ensure stability and order in Portuguese Timor until its future had been decided. Santos['s deputy] spoke of the need for cooperation on the ground in Portuguese Timor and it is interesting that Major Martello, the Junta's representative in Portuguese Timor, was present at this meeting. (Tjan stressed the sensitivity of this piece of information, which the Portuguese had asked the Indonesians to ensure not be made public.)

4. As they themselves note, the Indonesians did not receive any outright assurance from the Portuguese that the latter themselves favour the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. This emerged only by implication from the fact that Portugal was not anxious to continue its administration of the territory and that they regarded independence as unrealistic. (Ali Murtopo's report, which goes into considerable detail, does not suggest the degree of misunderstanding between the Portuguese and Indonesians suggested in Lisbon's O.LB462).²

5. On Santos' visit to Jakarta last week, Tjan said that the President, Panggabean and Malik had all played down Indonesia's interests and concentrated instead on listening to what Santos had to say. The Indonesians were apparently concerned about the possibility that Portuguese thinking might have changed since the resignation of General Spínola. Cooper's conversation with Campinos (O.LB439),³ about which we told Tjan in general terms, appears to have had an important influence on Indonesia's attitude. But the talks with Santos and Ali's talks in Lisbon do not appear to bear out the suggestion that the Portuguese have changed their minds or that they were never in agreement with the Indonesians in the first place. As the Indonesians now see it, the Portuguese regard the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia as the most sensible solution, provided that this genuinely expresses the wishes of the people in Timor itself. This falls short of collusion in assuring the outcome, as at one stage appeared to be the case, but the Portuguese are anxious for Indonesian cooperation in developing Portuguese Timor economically.⁴

6. Ali returned from Lisbon only last night, having stopped over in Tehran and Bangkok. It seems that his principal purpose in Tehran was to explore the possibility that Iran might take over Japanese interests in the Asahan Project. This was discussed in general terms with the Shah during his recent visit to Indonesia.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iv]

² Document 45.

³ Document 43.

⁴ Cablegram LB471 (22 October) noted a press briefing given by Santos on his return to Lisbon, and commented: 'Santos' views suggest that Portuguese attitudes stop considerably short of the close identity of view indicated in . . . Jakarta telegram O.JA5445. Our impression is that both sides are telling each other what they want to hear without reaching any real common ground on future policy apart from a mutual recognition that the self-determination principle must be respected'.

51 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 22 October 1974

O.CH128045 SECRET ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Thank you for your reports on Santos's visit.

It is to be expected that like the Indonesians the Portuguese will describe their attitude towards Timor with emphases that differ according to their audience. There is, however, a difference going beyond a simple variation of emphasis between the account in your O.JA5445¹ and our own impression of Portuguese thinking following on Santos's visit. We gained the clear impression from Santos and his party that, while they regarded the association of Portuguese Timor in some way with Indonesia as the natural *long-term* outcome, there would be a substantial intervening period of some years even after the constituent assembly was elected when the territory would remain associated with Portugal, although the association need not necessarily be in its present form. During this intervening period there would be a program of political and economic development in the territory and together with Indonesia Australia would be welcome to help in economic development. (Nothing was said that excluded Indonesian co-operation in political development.) These impressions of Portuguese thinking contrast with the remarks reported in para 2 and elsewhere in your JA5445, particularly because they imply a more deliberate progress towards a solution of Timor's future than do the Portuguese remarks to the Indonesians. (We note, however, the last sentence of your O.JA5427.²)

2. Once before, at the time of Tjan's visit here, the Indonesians understood that the Portuguese were moving more quickly on Timor than we thought they would move. It seems to us important that misunderstandings about the timing of Portuguese plans should be removed if they exist among the Indonesians, because they risk encouraging the Indonesians themselves towards the sort of precipitate action which we wish to avoid.

[matter omitted]

3. More generally we see advantages in the Department in the Indonesians going along with Portuguese planning as we understand it. The risk is that the longer the delay in deciding on the long-term political status of Portuguese Timor the stronger the political forces favouring independence within the territory may become. But the public commitment which Indonesia, as well as Portugal and Australia, has given to self-determination in Portuguese Timor always carried the risk that independence might be the outcome for the territory, conscious though they and we are of the dangers of independence[.] On the other hand, delays give the Indonesians time to influence opinion within Timor in their own favour and the Portuguese seem ready to help them. A related point is that we think it in everyone's interest if the Indonesians do not feel that they are committed to the goal of *early* association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia willy nilly and that delay would involve some loss of self-respect. On this score, it is important to know whether some of the Indonesians really believe that opinion in Portuguese Timor now favours them and whether the opposite Portuguese assessment (which we are inclined to share) has made any dent in their thinking.

¹ Document 50.

² 21 October. It reported remarks Santos was said to have made as he left Jakarta. The last sentence referred to the decolonisation process: '... 1975 was often mentioned as the year for decolonisation, but, if necessary, realisation could be postponed beyond this'.

4. In your conversations with the Indonesians we should be glad if you would go over some of these points. We should especially like to know whether the Indonesians would be happy with the sort of gradual program for Portuguese Timor which we think the Portuguese have in mind.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

52 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 24 October 1974

O.JA5501 SECRET ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.CH128045¹

We agree that differences in emphasis according to the audience are to be expected but wonder whether these differences go beyond a simple variation of emphasis as you suggest. Your account of what Santos said in Canberra is not inconsistent with the understanding the Indonesians themselves have of the Portuguese Government's attitude except, as you note, on the matter of timing. The Indonesians have received no assurance that the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia is Portugal's first wish but, as they understand it, Portugal does not wish to continue running the colony in the long term and nor does it regard independence as a realistic proposition. The Indonesians do not, however, appear to have discussed with the Portuguese the length of time that would be required to prepare the territory for eventual incorporation into Indonesia. Tjan went through Ali's report to the President very closely with us and there was, as far as we can recall, no mention of the time frame in his discussions with the various Portuguese Ministers. It seems that their discussion stopped short at establishing agreement in principle on the most sensible outcome in the long term: possibly Ali Murtopo quite deliberately did not try out the Portuguese as to how far they were willing to cooperate with Indonesia, or how long they thought the process would take, for fear that such discussion might only expose differences.

2. As far as we can gather, the Indonesians are under no illusions about current attitudes within Portuguese Timor. Despite the spate of wishful press articles in certain authoritative Indonesian newspapers, Ali Murtopo's advisers (and it is Ali Murtopo who has the real running of practical policy) are well aware that APODETI is the weakest party, that a vote now would probably solidly favour continuing association with Portugal, and that the longer the decolonization period, the more likely it is that a strong independence movement will develop. They therefore regard timing as critical. Lim Bian Kie told us on return from New York that he considered it would be best if matters moved to a resolution within about 18 months. This would be the minimum time in which the Indonesians could expect to convince the local population in Timor of its benevolent intentions, but they are very well aware of the risks, from their point of view, of allowing political development to flower for much longer than that. It is not, therefore, a matter of the Indonesians feeling that delay would involve some loss of self-respect, but that delay would be highly unwise tactically.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

¹ Document 51.

53 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 25 October 1974

O.LB491 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Timor

I think we are now in general agreement that the essential difference between Portuguese and Indonesian thinking is that whereas the former do not see incorporation with Indonesia as necessarily a desirable objective *per se*, they will nevertheless not actively oppose it as (natural) long term option. The Indonesians, on the other hand, are thinking of a much shorter time scale and one that would preclude the independence concept from becoming too deeply rooted in Timorese thinking. In other words the Portuguese appear to envisage independence (following a period of continued association) as a necessary step on the road to possible eventual incorporation.

2. There are however one or two points of detail which call for comment:—

- a) Contrary to the suggestion in para 2 of Jakarta's O.JA5501¹ when he was in Lisbon Ali Murtopo was quite confident that there was already a majority in favour of incorporation. We can only assume that his advisers have subsequently convinced him otherwise.
- b) Ali also appears to have erred in telling us that relations with Lisbon would be established initially at the level of consul-general (Jakarta's O.JA5491² refers). At the time we saw Ali he had not of course talked to Gomes and Goncalves.

3. I have not yet spoken to Almeida Santos but propose to try to draw him further on such matters as the pace of decolonisation and the role of constituent assembly and also on his ideas about promoting the concept of an overseas Portuguese community.³

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

54 MINUTE FROM ARRIENS TO FURLONGER

Jakarta, 26 October 1974

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

I had a long talk with Harry Tjan this morning about the hard line that has emerged in Indonesia towards Portuguese Timor. He confirmed that policy had hardened and said that HANKAM now had the running and that the Centre's influence was more limited. He said that Ali Murtopo's responsibilities covered liaison with the Portuguese; briefing foreign journalists and analysis

¹ Document 52.

² 23 October. It reported Tjan's information that an Indonesian Ambassador to Portugal had been selected and that the opening of relations would be announced soon.

³ Cousins noted in a memorandum to Canberra (25 October) that press reports of Santos's conviction that the majority of Timorese wished to maintain close links with Portugal had rekindled discussion of 'some sort of future Community of Portuguese Nations'. The memorandum concluded: '... one cannot exclude the possibility of other wider Portuguese interests and aspirations also being a factor in the formulation of a final policy on Timor'.

of the situation in both Portugal and Portuguese Timor. The operation in Timor, such as it [is,] is being run by Governor El Tari, who reports direct to the President and not through Ali Murtopo. The key man in HANKAM is Benny Moerdani.

2. Tjan confirmed that there had been some initial misunderstanding between the Indonesians and the Portuguese. He said that the Indonesians had misinterpreted Portugal's willingness to work together with Indonesia. Indonesia had drawn a great deal of encouragement from the remarks consistently made by Portuguese leaders that a merger of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia was 'logical'.

3. Tjan said that Indonesia's determination to take over Portuguese Timor had now developed an almost irresistible momentum. He himself felt that there were other options open to Indonesia. We discussed further the satellite option. Tjan himself is responsive to the suggestion but said that it has absolutely no support elsewhere. Even Lim Bian Kie wouldn't discuss it. The only way Tjan feels that we could make our views known at this stage would be for the Prime Minister to write a letter to the President affirming what he said in Yogyakarta, and saying that if prospects for a merger appeared questionable, Australia would be happy to cooperate economically in harness with Indonesia and Portugal, to help achieve the desired end (as the Prime Minister had already offered to Santos in Canberra). Above all, such a letter would need to avoid any hint of disapproval and would need to be constructive in tone.

4. But even this, Tjan felt, would have little chance of influencing Indonesian policy. The Indonesians regard the Portuguese Government as a very unreliable qua[nt]ity and would regard a merger achieved by internationally acceptable means (for example through trilateral economic cooperation) as a gamble. Tjan said that the issue was too important to Indonesia to take a gamble and that he was sure the President would act decisively. He said that Australia's views 'did not matter'.

5. I said that I imagined that if Indonesia was seriously contemplating military intervention that there were ways and means of doing this. I speculated that the intention behind Benny Moerdani's three months comment¹ was that this would give Indonesia time to mount a campaign of infiltration and subversion that would make a takeover necessary if not altogether presentable. Tjan said that he did not know about such things in detail but that he thought my outline was 'very probable'.

6. Tjan said that the elections in Portugal would be critical from Indonesia's point of view. Rather ominously he said that Indonesia would not do anything *before* the elections. Indonesia clearly expects a swing to the left to be the result. Tjan went on to say that, in that case, pre-emptive action by Indonesia should not worry Australia unduly. A real threat of communist penetration, for example by Moscow or Peking, would be sufficient to dampen down public opinion in Australia, particularly if there were a Liberal Government in power by that time. He said that he was already preparing a paper on this last-resort scenario and added that we need not worry that there would be adequate evidence of communist subversion in Portuguese Timor; 'we will look after that'.²

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iii]

¹ In a similar minute written the previous day, Arriens discussed some 'disquieting signs' of a hardening Indonesian attitude, including a reported statement by Moerdani that he would be able to take over Portuguese Timor within three months of receiving instructions. Arriens thought this could not refer to 'a purely military problem', since that would occupy at most a few days.

² On 30 October, however, at a lunch attended by Furlonger with Renouf, Feakes and Joseph who were in Jakarta for Australian/Indonesian Officials talks, Lim and Tjan gave 'a much more reassuring picture regarding the question of possible precipitate military action'. Lim said that such planning was of a contingency nature only, and that Murtopo and his advisers were 'moderates' and content with the time scale envisaged by Santos, and with assurances by Gonçalves that Portugal would do nothing to prejudice Indonesian interests or stability.

55 RECORD OF AUSTRALIAN-INDONESIAN OFFICIALS' TALKS

Jakarta, 29 October 1974

SECRET

EXTRACT

11. *Mr Renouf* said that he should point out that there had been some unfavourable publicity in Australia about Portuguese Timor. The Prime Minister himself had been criticised for allegedly conniving in the surrender of Portuguese Timor to Indonesia. The shadow foreign minister, Mr Peacock, had been among the Prime Minister's critics. There was some interest in the territory from ex-servicemen's groups. The people of Portuguese Timor had helped Australian servicemen in operations against the Japanese during the war.

12. *Mr Renouf* went on to say that the intentions of outside powers needed also to be taken into account and that he expected China's intentions would be of particular concern to Indonesia. He noted that there were 10,000 Chinese in Portuguese Timor and that although they were presently oriented towards Taiwan, their allegiance might be changeable. Our Ambassador in Peking would be asked to make soundings shortly about China's interests in Portuguese Timor. *Mr Renouf* added that from our experience with China so far, however, we doubted that China would wish to make mischief in Portuguese Timor. China was trying to improve its image in South-East Asia and untoward policies in Portuguese Timor would cut across this strategy. So far there was no sign of any interest in Portuguese Timor by China. He asked whether the Indonesians had any information on Chinese intentions in Portuguese Timor.

13. *Mr Djajadiningrat* replied that Indonesia had no direct information, but that there was some evidence of movement from Macao to Portuguese Timor. The Indonesian Consul in Dili had discerned some Chinese communist influence, particularly in the pro-independence party, Fretilin. Although the Chinese were Taiwan-oriented today, this could change very easily. While Peking might conduct a normal relationship at the Government level, this did not preclude it from fostering subversion through 'party to party' and 'people to people' contacts. Moreover, the spate of communist pamphlets and flags in Malaysia showed that an indigenous Chinese-oriented communist minority could act independently without collusion on the part of the Chinese Government itself. It was evident that in Malaysia's case the presence of a PRC Embassy had contributed to the recent activism of the CPM and the Indonesians were concerned whether the Chinese in Portuguese Timor might now draw similar encouragement.

14. *Mr Renouf* said that we believed that China's interests were largely confined to bordering states. Portuguese Timor was far afield and it would be a very significant change in Chinese policy if they began to meddle there.

15. On the situation in Portugal, *Mr Renouf* said that the U.S. and Great Britain thought that the communist party was quite strong and influential. However the Americans and British might be expected to hold such views. We would have to wait and see. *Mr Djajadiningrat* remarked that Soares had stressed the advantage of Portugal maintaining close relations with NATO; *Mr Feakes* said that Dr Santos had said in Australia that the strength of the Portuguese Communist Party had been greatly exaggerated in the international press. *Mr Djajadiningrat* noted that Indonesia itself had been accused of being communist during the Revolution and wondered whether the same might apply at this time of change in Portugal. Nevertheless, he noted that the communists were the best organised and disciplined group in Portugal. *Mr Feakes* observed that the communist party in Portugal was oriented towards Moscow. Did the

Indonesians have any evidence of Soviet interest in Portuguese Timor? *Mr Djajadiningrat* and *Mr Alatas* said that there was no such evidence and that the Russians had not spoken to them about Portuguese Timor. *Mr Renouf* observed that perhaps all the major powers were deliberately laying off Portuguese Timor for fear of provoking a response by the others.

16. *Mr Feakes* said that even if the Government in Portugal did swing to the left, it would be difficult for it to give independence to Portuguese Timor quickly as opinion in the United Nations would insist on further development in order to proceed to an act of self-determination. *Mr Djajadiningrat* agreed, but noted that the Africans could prove difficult in the United Nations, as they appeared to prefer independence to the idea of forming new ties with another country. *Mr Alatas* said that Fretilin had links with the Africans and that the party had appeared to be developing its contacts internationally and to be acting in a sophisticated way; it has for example sent a telegram to the United Nations Secretariat.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ii]

56 LETTER FROM FURLONGER TO JOCKEL

Jakarta, 1 November 1974

SECRET

You will have received copies of the series of conversations with Tjan, Liam Bian Kie and Yoga, regarding the possible resort by Indonesia to military action of some sort to advance its policies in Portuguese Timor.¹

As a postscript to these conversations, it is worth adding that I have since spoken to Djajadiningrat and again to Tjan and both have confirmed that consideration of military activity still remains very much in the contingency field. Tjan seems to have gone back on some of his earlier statements and is not now saying that in effect the implementation of Indonesian policy has been handed over to the military; what he is now saying is that there is a danger that the matter might be taken out of the hands of 'the moderates' around Ali Murtopo and passed over to people like Benny Murdani.

There continue to be rumours about the question of possible cross-border military action. The British have picked up the date of 25 March next year as an alleged target date for activity of this sort. At this stage I take none of these references to military activity very seriously. I think that Tjan has been rather foolish in talking about military activity to pressmen like Hastings and Richardson. His motives in doing so are not entirely clear but I suspect he was rather worried about the possibility of [a] military option being resorted to and of OPSUS losing the leading position that it has had on this question. If his objective was to stir us into some action to reinforce his own line, I think he has been successful. The Indonesians can be in no doubt that we regard talk of military action as misplaced in current and currently foreseeable circumstances.

I assume in any event that you will be using the sources available to you to keep a close watch on military activity and deployment, just in case our judgment of likely Indonesian behaviour on this whole question should be excessively optimistic.

One way in which we may help to reinforce the position of the moderates would be if we were able to provide them with a generally reassuring picture of the prospects of the continuance

¹ See Document 54 and note 2 thereto.

of moderate control in Lisbon and of the line that Santos advocated to the Indonesians and ourselves. I think it would be worth making a special effort to get Cooper to put together whatever he can, drawing as necessary on the knowledge of some of his better informed colleagues since he himself has not been in Lisbon for long. It would also, I think, be helpful if we had a clearer view of how the Americans and the British feel about internal political prospects in Lisbon. Presumably, both are well tuned in on the score.²

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xiii]

57 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 11 November 1974

O.LB526 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Timor

A Mr Jose Celestino Da Silva Martins came to see me today. He said he was a Portuguese citizen and the nephew of a Timorese chieftain. He said the highland chiefs rejected any of the proposed three solutions for Timor and he hoped to enlist the Australian Government's support for a fourth solution—namely that Timor should become a 'protectorate' of Australia.

2. I told Martins that I would convey his views to you but that he should understand that his proposal was contrary to the Australian Government's support for the principle of decolonisation. We were seeking to divest ourselves of our colonial responsibilities not to add to them.

3. Martins pressed me to say what our attitude would be if the Timorese came out in favour of the 'fourth solution'. I said we would respect the wishes of the Timorese people but I was not prepared to prejudge the issue by speculating about the outcome at this stage. His proposal had major and far reaching implications and he should not assume that it will find any favour with Australian Government.

4. Martins indicated that he had in mind to go to Canberra next month to put his views directly. I told him that was a matter for him to decide.

Comment

5. Despite the naivete of some of his views, we have probably not heard the last of Martins and his supporters. What he is seeking is official Australian Government support before launching his 'fourth solution' publicly. He could therefore prove to be a major political embarrassment.¹

6. Full record by bag.

COOPER

[NAA: A10005, 202/1/3, iv]

² Furlonger sent copies of the relevant records of conversation to Cooper, who was in fact already preparing something of the sort. On 30 October, Cooper noted to Cousins and Mackay-Sim: 'These reports introduce an important new element into the situation & make our despatch all the more timely and *urgent*'.

¹ Cablegram CH137766 (14 November), confirmed that the 'fourth solution' suggestion 'is not one which commends itself to the Australian Government', and instructed Cooper to do what he could to discourage it.

58 MEMORANDUM TO NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW AND PEKING
Canberra, 14 November 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

The Department is currently considering the policy options it might develop in relation to Portuguese Timor. One consideration is the fear harboured by the Indonesians about possible Chinese and/or Soviet intentions. In its crudest form, the Indonesian concern amounts to a fear that the Chinese might be encouraged to meddle in Portuguese Timor with the idea of developing it as a base from which they could plot against and subvert Indonesia. The leftward drift in Lisbon which they read about in the international press adds to Indonesian apprehensions on this score, although they have also noted that the Portuguese Communist Party leans to the Soviet Union rather than to China.

We have been considering how best to get our own reading on Chinese and Soviet thinking (if any) on the future of Portuguese Timor. One way would be simply to go out and ask them in Peking and Moscow. But we still feel somewhat cautious about this and would prefer, at this stage, a more oblique approach to the Chinese and Russians. In particular, we were wondering whether our delegation in the Fourth Committee might not find an opportunity to canvass the Russians and Chinese for their views on Portuguese Timor, perhaps in the context of a discussion about other smaller non self-governing territories. Pending the results of New York's enquiries, we might then consider whether a more direct approach should be made in Moscow and Peking. Meanwhile, it would be useful if our embassies in these posts could keep their eyes peeled for any reference in the Chinese or Soviet press to developments in Portuguese Timor. Dr Fitzgerald will recall Mr Feakes' letter dated 26th September on this matter.¹ Our assumption, incidentally, has been that the Chinese would see larger fish to fry than Portuguese Timor and would not wish to risk their developing relationships with South East Asian countries by taking the uncertain gamble of meddling in Portuguese Timor. Nor have we felt that the Soviets would have any ambitions there, for the same reason that this could damage what must be assessed by Moscow as a more important relationship with Indonesia. In any event, the Soviets would have to calculate that any involvement of theirs in Portuguese Timor would encourage the Chinese in too—to neither's ultimate advantage.

LANCE JOSEPH

South-East Asia Branch

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xiii]

¹ Feakes had written to Fitzgerald, requesting an informal comment on the Indonesian allegation that China had been using Portuguese Timor as a staging post for Chinese infiltration into Indonesia and was proposing to provide arms to Timorese 'independence fighters'.

59 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 25 November 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: Visit to Australia by Mr Ramos Horta

Mr Ramos Horta of FRETILIN, the party in Portuguese Timor favouring independence, will be visiting Australia at the beginning of December at the invitation of the Association for International Co-operation and Development.

[*matter omitted*]

Background

2. When Mr Horta was here in July you agreed to the Department's recommendation not to receive him on the grounds that you should not indicate that the Australian Government supported any one of the parties in Portuguese Timor with their different views on the future of the territory.

[*matter omitted*]¹

3. In deciding whether or not you should receive Horta, the following are the factors for and against as we see them:—

For

- (a) Horta is after all a leader of some status in Portuguese Timor and for you to receive him would enable you to keep in touch with the situation there and to explain Australian policies towards Portuguese Timor. Ministerial contacts with Horta now might prove useful to Australia in the future—and Horta would no doubt resent a further rebuff.
- (b) Because of the AICD sponsorship of Horta's visit it is not unlikely that other Ministers, whether in a private capacity or not, may receive Horta. We understand that the AICD is trying to arrange an appointment with Dr Cairns.
- (c) When we earlier advised against your meeting Horta, Australian policy towards the future of Portuguese Timor had not been developed or communicated officially to the Indonesians. Now that Mr Whitlam has talked to President Soeharto about the future of Portuguese Timor, there would seem to be less disadvantages in Ministers speaking to Horta.

Against

- (a) For you to receive Horta would be to reverse previous publicly announced policy endorsed by you and the Prime Minister without any new factor arising which would serve to justify or explain the change.
- (b) It would arouse Indonesian suspicions about our policy towards Portuguese Timor, particularly after the Prime Minister's remarks to President Soeharto when he made clear that the previous decision not to receive Horta at the Ministerial level was a deliberate one. The Indonesians may feel that by cultivating Horta we intend to achieve some special Australian status in Portuguese Timor, a suspicion the Prime Minister was at pains to allay at Yogyakarta.
- (c) We are uncertain of Horta's present status and importance even within the FRETILIN party. In particular we are not sure whether his importance is such that he justifies

¹ Matter omitted reviews Whitlam's explanation to Soeharto that he had not received Horta, his reply to a Parliamentary question on 30 October, and his decision, on 13 November, not to receive members of Apodeti who were due in Australia shortly.

Ministerial notice in Australia. If he is received here by a Minister he may well use the fact to strengthen his political position in Portuguese Timor on his return.

- (d) If you do receive Horta it would be difficult to avoid receiving all leaders of political parties in Portuguese Timor who come here and seek interviews with Ministers. It would be very difficult to make distinctions between them—and you or the Acting Minister would have to see the APODETI members (the pro-Indonesian party) whom we expect shortly.
 - (e) For you to receive Horta now might leave an impression of greater Australian involvement in Portuguese Timor and of concern with developments there than we think is appropriate. We believe that, at least for the time being, we should show a certain reticence about Portuguese Timor.
4. The reasons against you agreeing to receive Horta seem stronger than those in favour and I recommend accordingly that you do not receive him.²

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, v]

60 MINUTE FROM MAYNE-WILSON TO FEAKES

Canberra, 27 November 1974

Portuguese Timor

Mr. Joseph has shown me the attached last few pages of his draft on Portuguese Timor,¹ which he had rewritten after discussions with Mr Forrester and myself.

I feel bound to point out that I do not agree with the approach outlined, as Mr Joseph knows. In essence, I believe we are already on a path that is

- (a) driving FRETILIN into the arms of the extreme left, and perhaps the Chinese
- (b) giving the Indonesians the very excuses they need to intervene in P. Timor to prevent a 'communist takeover'
- (c) and thus leading to an unpleasant period in our relations with Indonesia, with calls for suspension of aid, etc.

I do not believe we should detach ourselves and do nothing—or wait to be asked to join some Indonesian/Portuguese arrangement that may never materialise.

I believe we need to take an initiative now to offer the Indons. a way out. We must get the idea across that they *can* live with an independent P. Timor, if we and they take measures to integrate it *economically* into our region and help make it viable. Its political co-operation would automatically follow.

P.S. I can elaborate further in discussion if you wish.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xivA]

² Willesee, however, took the view that a refusal to see Horta would 'give rise to unfortunate and unfounded interpretations' of government policy, and be seen in particular as a lack of support for self-determination. On 27 November he advised Whitlam of this view, and of its corollary that the Apodeti leaders should also be received by an appropriate minister.

¹ See Document 61.

61 DRAFT SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 5 December 1974

SECRET

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor*Australia's Attitudes*

7. Australia has no axe of its own to grind in Portuguese Timor. But it is also true that what interests we have—deriving from the territory's proximity, its straddling of important shipping routes, its nearness to our seabed resources zone, and our small commercial stake—are all best served by its incorporation into Indonesia. Moreover, if not contained in this way, Portuguese Timor could become a source of tension with Indonesia, and between Indonesia and other neighbouring countries. It is for these reasons that, as one part of our policy, we have favoured association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia, recognising that Portuguese Timor is part of the Indonesian world.

8. The second part of our policy flows from our commitment to self-determination. This stems from the Government's general philosophy—in the United Nations and elsewhere—but also from an assessment that to decide the future of Portuguese Timor against the will of its inhabitants might well lead to instability and trouble later on. Moreover, some Australians, with the example of Irian Jaya in mind, would be very sensitive to any appearance that decisions on Portuguese Timor's future were being taken without proper consultations with the people there.

9. The Prime Minister explained both aspects of our policy to President Soeharto in Yogyakarta on 6 September. While he said that he shared the Indonesian reservations about an independent Portuguese Timor, and agreed that Portuguese Timor should become part of Indonesia, he also stressed the importance of self-determination, adding that the incorporation of the territory into Indonesia against the wishes of the people would adversely affect Australian domestic opinion. You made much the same points in your discussions in New York with Adam Malik on 26 September. Australian officials rehearsed our position in the annual officials' consultations with the Indonesian Foreign Ministry on 28 October.

10. While we have thus expressed ourselves clearly enough to the Indonesians, the impression has developed in some quarters, including some Australian journalists, that what in fact was agreed at Yogyakarta was an understanding whereby Portuguese Timor was to be 'handed over' to Indonesia. It has also been suggested by Australian journalists (Hastings and Richardson) that that was the clear interpretation that the Indonesians themselves had put on your remarks. Indeed, while he did not go as far as to say that the Indonesians had taken the Prime Minister's comments in Yogyakarta as in any way a green light for a takeover, Ali Murtopo told our Ambassador in Lisbon on 14 October that Australian support for the idea of incorporation had helped Indonesia crystallise its own thinking.

11. On the domestic front, there have been criticisms of our attitudes among members of Parliament. Reports of allegations that Australia is prepared to make a free gift of the territory to Indonesia have had some impact in Portuguese Timor itself. Mr Ramos Horta is said to have concluded that an understanding to this effect had been reached between Australia and

Indonesia. In reaction to reports of the Prime Minister's visit to Yogyakarta, a minor demonstration took place in Dili protesting about the alleged 'understanding'.¹

(G. B. FEAKES)

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, i]

62 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 6 December 1974

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

In your absence there have been some developments of importance relating to Portuguese Timor.¹ You will be aware that following on discussions with Ramos Horta a proposal has emerged from the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Caucus for a joint Government–Opposition party to visit Portuguese Timor in January. I shall be sending you a note later today outlining the dangers the Department sees in this proposal. In addition, there has been Michael Richardson's report in *The Age* that your comments on Mr Malik's recent remarks are the first public sign of a rift between Australia and Indonesia over the future of Portuguese Timor.² If the Department is asked to comment on this report we shall say that we believe that whatever preferences they may have for the future of the territory all parties interested in Portuguese Timor are committed to respect the outcome of an internationally acceptable act of self-determination there. You will have seen Furlonger's report of his talk to Malik on this point.

2. Woolcott and other Departmental officers saw Horta over lunch yesterday. A record is being prepared but little new emerged except news of the proposal for a Parliamentary delegation to visit Portuguese Timor, news which Briot has subsequently confirmed to us. Horta is clearly intent on getting from us an unqualified commitment to self-determination in Portuguese Timor and is as vague as ever about his own intentions and future prospects in the territory.

3. There are several aspects of the Portuguese Timor situation which require Ministerial guidance: the question of future Australian representation in Dili; what we should do about aid to Portuguese Timor; and how we should reconcile our stated preference for the association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia and our commitment to self-determination. We are finalising

¹ Feakes submitted the draft to Rowland, as Acting Secretary, on 5 December, noting Rowland had agreed to discuss it in a meeting the following Wednesday (11 December) with First Assistant Secretaries. He hoped Jockel would also attend. The full draft runs to twenty pages. Feakes added: 'I appreciate that the submission is very long for Ministerial consideration but the questions involved are complex and difficult to treat adequately in a short space'.

¹ Willesee had been at a Colombo Plan conference in Singapore. This submission was described in a note by Feakes (9 December) as summarising 'the main issues raised for comment in the larger paper' (i.e. Document 67. See also Document 61).

² Malik had been reported as saying that he did not believe independence was a practical option for Portuguese Timor. Richardson's report of 6 December was based on an impromptu press conference Willesee had given in Singapore the previous day at which the Minister had reiterated Australia's commitment to an act of self-determination and had refused to rule out the possibility of an independent Portuguese Timor.

a paper which analyses these matters in detail. In view of the importance of the subject matter we have sought to provide a comprehensive review of possible options.

4. In view of the developments described above, you may like to know now that we have concluded that Australia's interests would be best served by a policy of studied detachment from Portuguese Timor. We do not propose that the Government should ignore or turn its back on the Timorese. But we have suggested that so far as possible Australia should resist being drawn, in a policy sense, into its problems. The risk of entanglement there is in fact very substantial and we think that Australia should do well to make a conscious effort to avoid it.

5. We also come down in favour of avoiding an identification of Australian and Indonesian public stances on the Portuguese Timor issue. You are aware in this regard of reports suggesting that the Indonesians have been considering pre-emptive military action in Timor. While our latest reports provide a more reassuring picture of Indonesia's immediate intentions, we believe we must try to avoid any public impression of 'collusion' with Indonesia over Timor. Privately we should be trying to bring the Indonesians to accept that an independent Timor, if that is what it is to be, need not necessarily damage Indonesia's (or Australia's) interests, although we cannot absolutely exclude the possibility that it may do so.

6. Our paper considers the possible disadvantages of a policy of detachment. These relate primarily to the situation in Portuguese Timor itself. A number of the emerging Timorese leaders are looking to Australia to provide some kind of balance to Indonesia. Our reticence can only disappoint them. It could also deny us the opportunity of influencing the Timorese leaders away from harmful courses. Clearly we shall have to keep developments affecting Timor continuously under review. But for the present, at least, we feel that Australian interests are best served by remaining politically detached from the problems of Timor so far as we are able while keeping our options open and our policy under continuous review.

7. It is assumed throughout the paper that the Australian Government's preference for association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia remains strictly qualified by the concern that the choice must be for the Timorese themselves to make in a convincingly democratic manner. This implies that we should equally accept and support independence or continuing association with Portugal, if that is what the Timorese were to decide.

8. Our paper examines the merits and demerits of re-establishing the Australian Consulate in Dili. We conclude that for the time being at least, it would be better not to seek renewed representation. This is in line with the suggested policy of detachment. Our requirements for information on developments in Portuguese Timor can best be met at present by regular visits to Timor.

9. During Dr Almeida Santos's recent visit to Canberra it was proposed that Australia and Indonesia might join Portugal in a trilateral program of economic and technical assistance for Portuguese Timor. We see merit in this idea, although we would prefer that the initiative for pursuing it were to come from Portugal or Indonesia. Our recommendations are tailored accordingly and are subject to comment from OADAA.

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

63 DRAFT BRIEF FOR BARNARDCanberra, [December 1974]¹

SECRET AUSTEO

EXTRACTS

Portuguese Timor*The Australian Interest*

7. There is no established Defence view on the defence importance to Australia of Portuguese Timor. It has been argued in some departmental Branch working papers that our interest would be served by the territory becoming independent, when we could look for military access to it in the event of pressure or threat by Indonesia and/or by some other power sometime in the future. Against this must be argued that a weak and unstable Portuguese Timor could be exploited by an external power for strategic ends. (This is also Indonesia's anxiety.) There could be friction between Indonesia and an independent Timorese state, which could become a source of regional tension and instability. Australia would come under pressure in this respect from both Indonesia and the Timorese state, and it would be difficult to please one without antagonising the other. Essentially, the difficulty about a defence policy in support of independence for Portuguese Timor, designed to improve our military scope should Indonesia become unfriendly in the future, risks Indonesian unfriendliness now.

[matter omitted]

11. An immediate target for attack, in any circumstance of Indonesian pressure against Portuguese Timor, will be the Defence aid and co-operation programme with Indonesia; and indeed, a substantive policy question in this respect will arise should Indonesia be likely to use its military forces for threat or attack against that territory. This would go to the heart of our defence relationship with Indonesia. Conceptually this is based in both countries upon a desire to enjoy peaceful dealings and handle amicably any differences arising and upon an appreciation of certain common strategic interests. However, Australia is, and can afford to be, less concerned in this latter respect than the Indonesians, and in any case the present strategic situation is not such as to stimulate lively policy in either country for substantial defence co-operation.

[matter omitted]

12. The Indonesians have shown themselves sensitive to Australia's interest in the future of Portuguese Timor. (There is even some indication that they are taking our Embassy into their confidence to an extent that could suggest collusion.) While they are aware of our concern that Indonesian incorporation of the territory 'should appear to be a natural process arising from the wishes of the people', they are, or were, assured that incorporation is supported by Australia. If domestic agitation against this, particularly were Indonesia to use force, were to move the Australian Government to modify its declared position, there would be unfavourable reactions from at least some influential elements in the Indonesian Government. We would be seen as

¹ Barnard visited Indonesia from 9 to 19 December. The cited copy of this draft is unsigned and undated. A handwritten annotation (thought to be from Rogers to Ashwin) states that it was written by Pritchett 'before any discussion with us. Mr Feakes and I criticised it in a meeting with Pritchett and Jockel and it was, I understand, rewritten'. The brief eventually given to Barnard on Portuguese Timor was a short list of four talking points which restated Australia's commitment to an act of self-determination but welcomed a decision for association with Indonesia. [On file NAA: A1539, B74/76.]

resiling from earlier assurances, as opposing a major Indonesian policy objective and as yielding to pressure from political groups hostile to the present Indonesian regime, and linked with its major political opponents (the communists).

[matter omitted]

15. The prospects canvassed above raise questions about the tenability of a policy of open support for Indonesian objectives in Portuguese Timor. There are also questions about defence interests and policy in a situation that bears so directly on the stability of defence attitudes and relations between Indonesia and Australia. If Indonesia acquires Portuguese Timor by politically unacceptable processes, our defence relationship with Indonesia will suffer. If Indonesia is inhibited from acquiring the territory by adverse political attitudes in Australia (and elsewhere), likewise our defence relationship will suffer; and in either case the territory could be a continuing source of regional instability, taxing both political and defence policy in relations with Indonesia.

16. As the situation develops, we could well face a difficult decision whether the defence interest lies in supporting the territory's independence or its incorporation, even by force, into Indonesia. We cannot sensibly access this yet, and shall have to see how the situation shapes. At this stage, leaving aside questions of political principle involved in the consideration of free choice for the Timorese (to which defence policy cannot be insensitive), we would go no further than to say that there is no independent Australian strategic interest in the independence of Portuguese Timor that would warrant our now opposing its transfer to Indonesia and jeopardising the stability of defence relations with Indonesia; but this situation could change.

[matter omitted]

18. Whether, as the situation develops, Australian political policy will be able to contribute to the management of this difficult problem is yet uncertain. At this stage, however, we are agreed with the Department of Foreign Affairs, in recommending that in your own forthcoming discussions in Jakarta formal discussion of the subject should be avoided; but opportunity should be taken to remind the Indonesians of the unfavourable reactions to be expected to any immoderate action, and the importance Australia attaches to the free choice of the Portuguese Timorese being seen to be exercised. It will be desirable to impress upon the Indonesians, that, while we share their view that the incorporation of the territory into Indonesia would be the most satisfactory outcome if it could be arranged in a politically acceptable way, the Australian Government would experience substantial political difficulties, domestically and in its relations with Indonesia, if Indonesian activity in respect of Portuguese Timor could be represented as improper pressure or coercion.

19. It would be desirable to indicate a sympathetic understanding of Indonesia's concerns about the likely weakness and instability of an independent Timorese state, and the possibility of foreign intervention there prejudicial to both our interests (although our apprehension on this score is less acute than the Indonesians'). But it would be prudent to avoid any discussion of how the problem of the territory's future is to be handled, pointing out that this is a matter for political policy and the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

20. It will be desirable to seek the Ambassador's advice as to with whom the points above should best be made. Generally, while these points should be firmly lodged with the appropriate Indonesians, we recommend that your approach be in a low key and that you not be drawn into detailed discussion.

21. A particular problem will be how to handle discussion of a follow-on defence aid program against the background of the possible difficulties in this respect mentioned in paragraph [11] above. It would be impolitic to refer to Portuguese Timor in the formal discussions on defence aid. We recommend that these discussions proceed in a normal way, subject to it being clearly understood that they are exploratory and without commitment at this stage and will require confirmation by the Government after further consideration in Australia. We would want to avoid the Indonesians feeling, on the one hand that we were fully committed to further defence aid, and on the other, that we were now using defence aid as a leve[r] on their actions in respect of Portuguese Timor.

[NAA: A1838, 696/5, iii]

64 MINUTE FROM WILLIAMS TO JOSEPH

Canberra, 9 December 1974

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

Reference our discussion on Friday afternoon on your draft submission on Timor.¹

2. I would make two general comments:

- (a) The argument in paragraph 7 that the Australian interests (listed in the second sentence) would be 'best served' by Timor's incorporation into Indonesia would need a lot more than this paper contains to make it convincing. It implies that a reasonably responsible independent Timor would not serve our interests in these areas. In any event even if the assumptions were correct, which I doubt, they do not constitute the main reason why Australia might prefer to see Timor incorporated into Indonesia—this is the strategic/defence argument in the latter half of paragraph 7.
- (b) The formulation in paragraph 8 suggests that incorporation and self-determination are co-equal factors in our attitude towards Portuguese Timor. This is the area surely in which there is the greatest room for differences both between the Government and between us and the Indonesians. Self-determination is a common thread in all three attitudes.

3. In the light of the above I suggest you might consider the following re-draft of paragraph 7: 'Australia . . . Portuguese Timor. The main Australian interests in Portuguese [Timor] derive from its proximity to Australia and the important shipping routes between Australia and Asia, its nearness to our sea bed resources zone and our small commercial stake. None of these are likely to be significantly affected either by the emergence of a responsible independent Portuguese Timor or by Timor's incorporation into Indonesia. However, if Portuguese Timor is not incorporated into Indonesia it could become a source of tension with Indonesia and between Indonesia and other neighbouring countries (including Australia). It is for this reason that as part of our policy we have favoured continued

¹ See Document 61.

association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia, recognising that Portuguese Timor is part of the Indonesian world.²

Paragraph 8:

'The Australian Government does, however, have a firm commitment to self-determination . . .'³

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xiv]

65 LETTER FROM WILLESEE TO WHITLAM

Canberra, 10 December 1974

SECRET

There have been a number of recent developments in relation to Portuguese Timor about which I think you would wish to be acquainted before you proceed overseas.¹ In particular, I have now received the text of a resolution adopted on 13 November by the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Caucus proposing that a delegation of the Committee should visit Portuguese Timor in the near future and asking for Foreign Affairs co-operation in this matter. The resolution appears to have been adopted in anticipation of the visit to Australia of Mr Ramos Horta, one of the leaders of the pro-independence FRETILIN party. Mr Horta subsequently addressed the Committee and also had discussions with Mr Andrew Peacock. As a result the latest idea seems to be that a joint Government–Opposition group should visit Portuguese Timor, perhaps in late January.

The resolution adopted by the Caucus Committee also calls on the Government to confirm its commitment to self-determination in Portuguese Timor and expresses the belief that the Government should establish a diplomatic mission in Dili.

Each of these matters has been reviewed in a comprehensive paper just finalised in my Department and which includes a number of recommendations in regard to future policy in Timor.² I have not yet had time to study the paper in detail. But briefly it concludes that Australia's interests would best be served by a policy of non-involvement in Portuguese Timor. It is not proposed that the Government should ignore or turn its back on the Timorese. But it is suggested that so far as possible in present circumstances Australia should resist being drawn, in a policy sense, into its problems. The paper also comes down in favour of avoiding an identification of Australian and Indonesian public attitudes on the Portuguese Timor issue. You are aware in this regard of reports suggesting that the Indonesians have been considering pre-emptive military action in Timor. While the latest reports provide a more reassuring picture of Indonesia's immediate intentions, I tend to agree with the paper that we must try to avoid any public impression of 'collusion' with

² This recommendation was not followed. The draft of paragraph 7 in Document 61 remained substantially unchanged apart from the omission of the first sentence.

³ The draft of paragraph 8 was altered, so that the first sentence read: 'As one of the leading international advocates, in the United Nations and elsewhere, of self-determination for dependent territories, the Australian Government does have, however, a firm commitment to self-determination for Portuguese Timor'.

¹ Whitlam was to begin a month-long visit to Europe on 14 December.

² See Documents 61 and 67.

Indonesia over Timor. Privately we should be trying to bring the Indonesians to accept that an independent Timor, if that is what it is to be, need not necessarily damage Indonesia's (or Australia's) interests.

The paper considers the possible disadvantages of a policy of non-involvement. These relate primarily to the situation in Portuguese Timor itself. Not only Horta but some other Timorese leaders are looking to Australia to provide some kind of balance to Indonesia. Australian reticence could only disappoint them, while denying us the opportunity of influencing the Timorese leaders away from harmful courses of action. Nevertheless, the paper concludes that, on balance, Australian interests would best be served by remaining politically detached from the problems of Timor so far as we are able, while keeping our options open and our policy under continuous review.

It is clear that, against this background, a visit by a joint Parliamentary delegation would be unwelcome in focusing public attention on the issue of Portuguese Timor and involving us more intimately in it. The attached 'list of disadvantages' covers the most obvious of these. My main concern is the possibility of damage that too forward an approach on Portuguese Timor might imply for Australian-Indonesian relations. We cannot, of course, allow Jakarta any kind of veto over our foreign policy, including our policy towards Timor. But nor should we allow our relations with Indonesia to be at the mercy of Mr Ramos Horta and his FRETILIN group.

I recognise the difficulties in trying to forestall the proposal for a visit. But I also believe that the effort should be made.

I am also concerned, although perhaps less so, about the proposal for re-establishing the Consulate in Dili. I believe this too could lead to pressures on us to involve ourselves more deeply in Portuguese Timor's problems than we should risk doing. I am not against the idea of a mission in Dili for all time. Circumstances may, and possibly will, change—and there may well be pressures of strictly consular work which might lead us to change our minds. But for the moment I feel we should stay our hand.

I should imagine that the foregoing would be in line with your own thinking on Portuguese Timor following your discussions with President Soeharto in Yogyakarta last September. It would be helpful to have your endorsement of the approach I am proposing, particularly on the question of the visiting mission.³

³ Whitlam's handwritten agreement is noted, with the date 11 December. A postscript, handwritten by Willesee, reads: 'Also why give the Lib members of the delegation a field day. D'. Whitlam replied on 13 December: 'I share your concern about Australian involvement in developments relating to Portuguese Timor, particularly the possible repercussions of a visit by a joint Parliamentary delegation. I, too, should hope that this proposal could be forestalled'. [On file NAA:A1838, 3038/10/1, xv.]

Attachment

- (a) It is quite clear that Horta wants to use the group's visit for his own political ends. In local eyes the visit of an Australian Parliamentary delegation under Horta's auspices would identify Australia as supporting his political party.
- (b) Such a visit is itself likely to give an exaggerated impression of Australian interest in Portuguese Timor and will encourage those who see a 'fourth' solution for Portuguese Timor, that is to say, some form of association with Australia.
- (c) Given the present lack of public support in Portuguese Timor for incorporation with Indonesia, together with Horta's anti-Indonesian outlook, it is to be expected that the visit of the delegation will be used to heighten feeling against Indonesia in the territory and, I should think, also to promote anti-Indonesian attitudes among members of the delegation.
- (d) On the return of the delegation to Australia we could expect public statements which could reflect the anti-Indonesian impressions members might have gained in Portuguese Timor. These will make the conduct of our relations with Indonesia more difficult than the problem of Portuguese Timor in itself might otherwise make them.
- (e) It would be likely to lead to pressure for us to open a mission in Dili and to take the initiative to embark on a direct bilateral aid program in Portuguese Timor, both of which would be against our policy interests in the territory.
- (f) I think we should be concerned to avoid outside interference in Portuguese Timor. A visit by a joint Parliamentary delegation would be the most substantial external incursion into Portuguese Timor, apart from Santos's visit there, in recent years. Would it not encourage others?
- (g) Sovereignty in Portuguese Timor remains with Portugal. It is not for Horta or any other local leader to invite a Parliamentary delegation from Australia. (The Government, in my view, would only wish to consider the idea of a Parliamentary mission to Portuguese Timor if an invitation were forthcoming from the Portuguese authorities in Lisbon.)

66 RECORD OF POLICY DISCUSSION

Canberra, 11 December 1974

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

Mr Feakes introduced the paper¹ which had been circulated before the meeting. By way of background he said that there was general agreement at an earlier FAS meeting that our policy on this issue should reflect our preference:—

- (a) for the association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia; and
 - (b) that the future status of Portuguese Timor should be settled by means of an internationally acceptable act of self-determination.
2. The need for the present paper had arisen out of recent developments, the most important of which were:—
- (a) press reports following the Prime Minister's recent visit to Indonesia suggesting that 'a' (above) was our sole interest and concern.
 - (b) the difficulty of reconciling (a) and (b) above.
 - (c) the beginnings of a campaign in Australia about Portuguese Timor. This campaign involved members of the ALP Parliamentary Caucus and contained elements hostile to the present government of Indonesia.
3. *Mr Feakes* added that he had already received some very valuable comments on the paper and, as a result, it would be amended to include more fully the following points:—
- (a) The situation on the ground in Portuguese Timor. This caused some concern, particularly the volatile nature of the situation, the relative[ly] large number of people with some military training, and the openness of Portuguese Timor to outside arms supplies; all this pointed to a fluid situation with the potential for rapid change.
 - (b) Independence in Australian terms was five or so years off; it was not an immediate prospect.
 - (c) The importance of Portugal's views and the appreciation that developments in Portugal could affect Portuguese Timor.

[4]. On other matters *Mr Feakes* said that the references to aid were of course subject to the views of OADAA; the phrase 'studied detachment' would be revised as it may not appeal to the Minister; there were now pressures for a Parliamentary delegation to visit Portuguese Timor, but we were trying to get the Prime Minister to put an end to this. *Mr Woolcott* remarked that he thought *Mr Whitlam* would be well disposed towards our view, but it was a difficult issue for him. *Mr Feakes* said that a visit by a Parliamentary delegation would be regarded as anti-Indonesian and could be seen as an indication that we were behind Ramos Horta. *Mr Woolcott* said that if such a visit eventuated, the delegation should be encouraged to go to Jakarta also.

[5]. *Mr Woolcott* invited comments on the conclusions and recommendations of the paper.

[6]. *Mr Jockel* said that what concerned him was the appreciation of the situation on the ground; there was a risk that Portuguese Timor could turn out to be a 'running sore' for Indonesia. The situation was very different from West Irian; many of the inhabitants had military training (1,000 in the army, 15,000 formerly in the army and therefore with some military experience and 3,000 in the reserves who received regular training); given the nature

¹ See Document 61 and note 1 thereto.

of the terrain it would be easy to mount and sustain a liberation movement with outside support. If a liberation movement did in fact develop, it would gradually attract international attention and Portuguese Timor would become more of an international issue; PNG, for instance, would soon become conscious and aware of what was happening.

[7]. *Mr Jockel* added that he had sympathy for the Indonesians in the present situation, i.e. wanting to take control of Portuguese Timor now in order to prevent the realisation of their worst fears. The real danger, however, was that the Indonesians would alienate those not in favour of integration and so push them to some form of extreme action. There were signs of a strong stiffening of Portuguese resistance to recent Indonesian activity; the situation was therefore becoming more difficult.

[8]. *Mr Cook* said he agreed with *Mr Jockel*. At the first FAS discussions on this matter no one knew much about Portuguese Timor. There seemed to have been a basic assumption that Portuguese Timor would be like West Irian; the people would accept integration, and from this assumption followed our commitment to an internationally acceptable act of self-determination. However, what was now clear was that the people of Portuguese Timor were not malleable; integration was not a winnable goal; the situation itself had changed as people were becoming more active as integration became more of a real possibility. *Mr Cook* said he thought that in the long run independence may be better than integration. What was our own view of the dangers of independence? *Mr Feakes* said that the situation was very difficult to be sure of the pros and cons of independence: we could not, of course, foresee the future. Also, there was still no Defence appreciation of the strategic situation. All that could be said to the Indonesians at present was what was in the paper; we could not come down absolutely in favour of independence although the dangers of absorption by Indonesia were apparent.

[9]. *Mr Fernandez* said that in terms of our own self-interest we should avoid getting involved in another West Irian type situation, with all the implications that would have for our relations with Indonesia. He supported the idea of 'studied detachment' and agreed with the recommendations in the paper, but felt they were too complex and made too fine a point; the policy required simpler principles. He doubted also whether we needed an aid program. *Mr Jockel* commented that President Soeharto's views rested a great deal on the argument that Portuguese Timor would not be economically viable. If independent, it would be a country which relied on outside aid, aid which would come from communist countries with interests in the area.

[10]. Referring to visits to Portuguese Timor, *Mr Laurie* said that, within the context of our policy, they would be best limited to visits by officers in Canberra. Alternatively, a post apart from Jakarta could have responsibility for Portuguese Timor. *Mr Feakes* said that staffing problems would result from limiting visits to Canberra-based officers; it would be best to have a blend of visits from Jakarta and Canberra. *Mr Woolcott* said that he was inclined to agree with *Mr Laurie*; i.e. the balance of visits should be from Canberra.

[11]. On the question of Australian representation in Dili, *Mr Robertson* said that he would prefer not to re-open the post. He added, however, that the paper had overlooked the consular and immigration angle in its consideration of this question. *Mr Feakes* explained that it was already planned to add these points. It was, however, difficult to say, on the one hand, that we were not re-opening in Dili, but, on the other, that we were opening in Darwin. *Mr Robertson* said that the two were quite separate cases; Dili would involve opening a new post, whereas in Darwin we would be merely putting an officer in, to take over an existing office. *Mr Woolcott* said that he wondered whether, in all the circumstances, we should not go into Dili. In reply,

Mr Feakes said that that conclusion may in fact be reached when policy was next reviewed, but what was needed now was to take a couple of steps back from involvement in Portuguese Timor.

[12]. *Mr Gilchrist* reminded the meeting that in the not too distant future, perhaps twelve months, we would have to discuss with someone the delineation of the seabed boundary between Australia and Portuguese Timor.

[13]. *Mr Rogers* said that the paper was a clear and skilful presentation. He had, however, some queries and doubts. In respect of paragraph 7, too much emphasis was placed on Australia's interests all being 'best served by its incorporation into Indonesia'. He said that States often ran into difficulties after incorporating additional territory, and this depended in large part on the method of incorporation. By way of example he mentioned the Eritrean problem in Ethiopia. In paragraph 13, he said that the incompatibility of the two policy objectives should be explained more fully. *Mr Feakes* replied that this was something which would be done in the covering submission when a revised paper was sent to the Minister.²

[14]. *Mr Rogers* said that what we had done elsewhere, particularly in the United Nations on South African issues and on Guinea Bissau, had made it difficult for us to operate in our own area in a different way. This problem would have to be faced at some time, perhaps when the Committee of 24 considered Portuguese Timor in June (?) of next year. Touching on another matter, *Mr Rogers* said that Defence had been asked for a strategic appreciation of Portuguese Timor when the issue was first raised, but it had still not been produced. Regarding reopening a post in Dili, he said that such action could invite problems with future political refugees.

[15]. Referring back to the question of aid, *Mr Feakes* said he agreed with *Mr Fernandez* that an aid program was not necessary. *Mr Cook* said he felt that something could be said for an aid program. If independence came, as he assumed it would, aid would inevitably follow; we would be that much further behind by not starting a program now. *Mr Fernandez* said he doubted if Indonesia would accept an independent Portuguese Timor, therefore it would be better not to give aid now. *Mr Jockel* remarked that President Soeharto was very conscious of his international standing as he wanted to be seen as the opposite of Sukarno. Soeharto had also said Portuguese Timor should not be an emotional issue. *Mr Jockel* therefore felt that incorporation into Indonesia should not be regarded as a foregone conclusion.

[16]. *Mr Rogers* again raised the possibility of the Committee of 24 shortly considering Portuguese Timor. He suggested that when discussion in the Committee of 24 did eventuate, there would be the inevitable petitions from interested parties and individuals, perhaps even from some Australian groups such as the Australian Union of Students. In line with past practice on African issues, he thought the Committee would listen to all petitioners. *Dr Cumes* said that he agreed with some of *Mr Rogers*' points, but there was a difference between Southern Africa and Portugal/Guinea Bissau, and the question of preventing the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. He added that it was necessary to separate the African approach to European colonialism from their approach to other 'colonialisms'. *Mr Rogers* referred to UN resolution 1541,³ which recognised that independence was not always the

² Paragraph 13 of the draft is identical to paragraph 14 of the revised paper (Document 67).

³ Resolution 1541 (15 December 1960) recognised that self-government could be achieved (a) by emergence as a sovereign independent State, (b) by free association with an independent State, or (c) by integration with an independent State. Both (b) and (c) should be the result of free choice based on informed and democratic processes. An integrating territory 'should have attained an advanced stage of self-government with free political institutions . . .' and integration should be on the basis of complete equality of rights and status between the peoples of the territory and the country with which it is integrated.

answer for small territories, and resolution 15142,⁴ which maintained independence to be the answer to everything. He said that we could always fall back to 1541.

[17]. *Mr Woolcott* said he was not sure that the situation was as bad as some seemed to think; the Prime Minister thought it would be better if Portuguese Timor was incorporated into Indonesia, but he had escape clauses if necessary. *Mr Feakes* said the paper he had had prepared was in part designed to invite the Prime Minister to take the escape route; if he did then we of course had a problem with Indonesia.

[NAA: A1838, 696/5, iii]

67 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 13 December 1974

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

[*matter omitted*]¹

Future Policy

14. The Government's stated preference for association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia remains qualified by the concern that the choice must be for the people of Portuguese Timor themselves to make in an internationally acceptable manner, that is, in a demonstrably and convincingly democratic manner. The developments in Portuguese Timor described at the beginning of this submission suggest, however, that these two policy objectives are incompatible. It might be possible to consider with Indonesia whether together we should try to promote a climate of international opinion favourable to the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. But we think that these efforts would not succeed and might do more harm than good. Nor do we think that the Government would wish to be so closely identified with Indonesian attitudes.

15. On the contrary, as there is a possibility of Indonesian military intervention at some stage, we think that the Australian Government should be careful not to appear to be embracing Indonesian policy on Portuguese Timor too closely. There are dangers in becoming too involved in discussions with Indonesia over Portuguese Timor; our attitudes are different and we risk

⁴ The reference may be to UN Resolution 1542 (15 December 1960) which defined Portuguese colonies, including Timor, as non-self-governing territories within the meaning of the Charter and recognised that independence 'is the rightful aspiration of peoples under colonial subjugation . . .' Alternatively, or even additionally, it may refer to Resolution 1514 (20 December 1960) which broadly condemned colonialism and declared the right of dependent peoples to complete independence and integrity of their national territory. 1514 called for immediate transfer of power to the peoples of non-self-governing territories to enable them 'to enjoy complete independence and freedom', and for all states to respect the sovereign rights of all peoples and their territorial integrity.

¹ Sections omitted cover Portuguese intentions to allow a genuine act of self-determination, with the proviso that the political situation in Portugal 'may well have abrupt and unforeseeable effects' on developments in Timor; and Indonesian fears of destabilisation, together with reports of preparations to foment internal troubles which might serve as a pretext for military intervention. A section on Australian attitudes is substantially that published as Document 61, with alterations described in notes to Document 64. A general background section deals with the state of the parties in Portuguese Timor, its rugged terrain, political backwardness, social fragmentation and vulnerability to 'radical ideas and proselytising from abroad'.

aggravating these differences by discussion. But we also believe that we need to continue to keep before the Indonesians the second aspect of our attitude to Portuguese Timor, namely our concern that there should be, in due course, a deliberate act of self-determination. We should leave them in no doubt that any Indonesian intervention designed to forestall an act of free choice would inevitably have an impact on Australian public opinion and, through that, on Australian–Indonesian relations. We should indicate that we would expect a similar damaging effect in Papua New Guinea (although so far, it has to be admitted, PNG has shown an almost complete lack of interest in Portuguese Timor). Publicly, we should try to avoid the impression of ‘collusion’ with Indonesia over Timor. Privately, we should be trying to bring home to the Indonesians the following points: (a) there is no need for hasty action; (b) if an act of self-determination results in an independent Portuguese Timor, that would not necessarily damage Indonesia’s or Australia’s interests; (c) whoever has control of Portuguese Timor is likely to face conditions of uncertainty, disorder and violence, so that the Indonesians may prefer to avoid the responsibility; (d) in the long run the Timorese themselves are bound to have to adjust to Indonesian (and Australian) preoccupations whatever the constitutional status of the government which finally emerged in Dili; and (e) it would be better to adopt a sympathetic or at least neutral attitude towards the fledgling independence movement, rather than risk pushing it into an intransigent position.

16. Our main objective should be to try to prevent Portuguese Timor from becoming an obstacle to good relations between Australia and Indonesia and to prevent disappointments over Portuguese Timor from turning the Indonesians away from the highly responsible regional policies they have followed since Sukarno’s downfall. We have to recognise that, even if Indonesia were to force Portuguese Timor into an association with her, we should have to go on living with the Indonesians. There would inevitably be a cooling of relations, and we should have to face the sorts of policy questions which arose during Confrontation, with the same results: realistically, no Australian Government could allow distant relations with an Indonesian Government to endure. While recognising that there would be a sharp public reaction here to Indonesia’s gaining control of Portuguese Timor against the will of the people there, we should take care not to exaggerate how deeply it would run and how long it would last; especially if the situation in Portuguese Timor had become unstable or if extreme Left-wing forces were to predominate there.

17. The Indonesians themselves are well aware of these realities. They already recognise that among other countries, Australia, and perhaps in the future Papua New Guinea, are likely to be the most sensitive about Indonesian actions in Timor. But they also approach the matter with a certain *sang froid*. In a confidential Indonesian document dealing with the Goa precedent, for example, it has been noted that ‘in today’s world such an event would attract little attention and, even if it did, it would not be later recalled with any emotion’.

18. Although we shall have to keep developments continually under review, our best tactics would seem to be to try, so far as possible, to effect a measure of public detachment from Indonesian policy and also, we think, from the Portuguese Timor problem itself. The risk of entanglement there is very real. Paragraph 4 above gives some idea of the quagmire that Portuguese Timor could become.² Beyond that, the Timorese themselves would like nothing

² Paragraph 4, part of the general background section, read in part: ‘There are grounds for regarding the outlook in Portuguese Timor as ominous’. The territory had ‘obvious potential for guerrilla warfare. Some thousands of men receive military training and it would be easy for outsiders to introduce arms . . . An armed revolt in Timor could be very hard to put down and drag on for years . . . It would be prudent to expect disturbances and periodic bouts of violence as the various political groups increase their activities and try to extend their influence into the up-country villages and isolated mountain areas’.

better than to counter the threat they perceive from Indonesia by involving Australia in Portuguese Timor. But clearly, we cannot allow our relations with Indonesia to be at the mercy of Mr Ramos Horta and his FRETILIN group. Thus, on the one hand, we need to avoid being identified with, or appearing to connive at, Indonesian expansionism in Timor. On the other hand, the less we become involved in developments in Portuguese Timor itself, and the less we are called upon to explain publicly our views about self-determination, the freer we are in our choice of future policies and tactics in dealing with the Timorese and with the Indonesians over Timor. We should, that is, for the time being at least, follow a policy of non-involvement in relation to Portuguese Timor.

19. There are risks in such a policy of non-involvement which we do not underrate. They are, in brief, that a policy of non-involvement which would entail, for instance, not responding to Portuguese Timorese overtures, would risk driving some of its emerging leaders into the arms of the extreme Left. The gestures which Horta is already making towards China and the Communist movements in Australia³ (which have presumably been matched by similar contacts elsewhere) could be interpreted as a reaction to the official caution with which he has been greeted in Australia, as in Indonesia, and to the public expression of Australian policy since the Prime Minister's visit to Indonesia. This may not matter much except for the danger that Horta's associations and statements may be providing the Indonesians with the very evidence (or excuse) they need to intervene in Portuguese Timor to prevent what they would represent as the danger of a Communist takeover. Clearly, in parallel with expressing our concern to the Indonesians that there should be a deliberate act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor, we should also be warning the Timorese privately about the dangers of their present course and of the associations they now seem to be forming. In our private discussions with the Timorese, we also need to correct their misinterpretations by assuring them that, while Australia would welcome the association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia, we should be prepared to respect and support independence or continued association with Portugal if that were their choice.

20. These considerations suggest that we cannot simply ignore the Timorese even in the short term. We have indeed to recognise that we may have a new independent State on our northern doorstep in the next few years. Its emergence may, or may not, make much difference to the strategic picture, but it would be a State with which we should have to have dealings and diplomatic representation, and with which our views and policies would inevitably have some considerable influence. Care must thus be exercised now in dealing with the Timorese and their leaders, tiresome and importunate as the latter are likely to become. There is also public opinion in Australia to consider: while it may suit us to stay silent as long as we can, the Government must also expect to come under pressure to declare its attitude from time to time. Nevertheless, as a general principle, and at this stage, the less deeply Australia is drawn into the problems of Timor, and the more options we can keep open, the better.

Representation in Timor

21. It is with the foregoing considerations in mind that we approach the question of re-establishing our Consulate in Dili (closed in 1971 mainly because the reduced workload did not justify the expense of maintaining it). The value of a post would be mainly in information-gathering: we should be able to formulate policy on the basis of a better understanding of the

³ Wendy Holland, Horta's former fiancée, had described Horta's attempts to request assistance from the Chinese Government and the Australian Communist Party (records of conversation W. Holland/ J. Dunn, J. Dunn/ G. Forrester, 17 October). [On file NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iv.]

situation on the ground in Timor. We should also be able to influence and to build up relations with Timorese leaders on the spot. A post would facilitate the supervision of any aid projects we might undertake in Portuguese Timor. The Portuguese would like us there—the new Governor of Portuguese Timor has told our Ambassador in Lisbon as much—and so would the pro-independence and pro-Portuguese groupings both of which are said to have made representations in Lisbon in this sense. However, their interest highlights the main disadvantages of re-establishing the Consulate. Inevitably, given the closed and inward-looking character of society in Portuguese Timor, to reopen the Consulate would encourage those who look to Australia as a counter-poise to Indonesia as well as those who would like to gain our underpinning for an independent Timor. It might even encourage those in Timor who are said to favour a ‘fourth solution’—that the territory should become a protectorate of Australia.

22. We might, in short, soon find ourselves under pressures which draw us more deeply into the affairs of Portuguese Timor than we think is desirable for the moment. Despite attempts to reassure the Indonesians, we might also find that they too would suspect our motives of re-establishing the Consulate. On the whole therefore the Department recommends *against* the re-establishment of the Consulate at this time. Like other associated questions, the matter might be kept under review. We should in particular keep in mind that the pressure of consular business might itself force us to open a mission in Dili in due course. But at least until we have a better idea of where the territory is heading, caution would probably best suit our interests.

23. In addition to information now available from Lisbon and Jakarta,⁴ we should expect to be able to supplement our knowledge of what is happening in Timor by more regular visits to Dili. The last visit took place in June, two months after the revolution in Lisbon. Similar visits—perhaps at two- or three-monthly intervals—might be arranged in future both by officers from the Department dealing with Portuguese Timor and by members of our Embassy in Jakarta.

Australian Aid

24. During his call on the Prime Minister on 15 October, Dr Santos asked whether Australia would provide Portuguese Timor with economic and technical help. The Prime Minister replied positively but noted that other countries in the region might also want to help. In particular, the Prime Minister mentioned the possibility of help from the ASEAN countries, including Indonesia. He said that Australia would be glad to join the ASEAN countries in such a scheme. Dr Santos did not respond directly to this idea, but in his later discussions with you and the Special Minister of State,⁵ he spoke of the possibility of a trilateral aid program involving Portugal, Indonesia and Australia. There have also been suggestions from the Indonesians for a possible trilateral scheme. Mr Harry Tjan, a special adviser to General Ali Murtopo on Portuguese Timor, referred to the possibility some weeks ago. He saw it as part of a possible wider arrangement that would provide Indonesia with legal access to Portuguese Timor through economic co-operation.

25. We have since considered both proposals in some detail. While the concept of an ASEAN consortium is attractive, there are significant practical disadvantages attaching to it. We doubt whether the other ASEAN countries would be interested, and in any event we believe that such a consortium would be a cumbersome channel for provision of aid. It could also be criticised in Australia as a cover for connivance in Indonesian efforts to absorb the territory.

26. We see less difficulties with the proposal for trilateral assistance, although even here it would imply some co-ordination in the three countries’ overall policy towards Portuguese Timor which could prove of later embarrassment, and reduce our room for manoeuvre, should

⁴ One line has been expunged here.

⁵ Lionel Bowen.

the Indonesians' patience run out and they decide to move unilaterally to incorporate Portuguese Timor. Nevertheless, if Australia is to provide aid, the balance of advantage would seem to lie in providing it under some tripartite umbrella rather than bilaterally. For the moment we see no reason for Australia to take the initiative, this could rather be left to the Portuguese (as a follow-up to the Santos visit) or to the Indonesians or to both. At this stage our requirements would be met with a Ministerial decision that Australia should stand ready, in principle, to consider any approach by Portuguese or Indonesians for a trilateral aid scheme for Timor. If nothing gets under way in the next few months we should consider raising the matter ourselves, firstly in Jakarta, and then, depending on Indonesian reactions, in Lisbon. We should need to be sure that our interests would be served by involvement in an aid program in Portuguese Timor. All this of course is subject to the views of OADAA—and we should also recognise that our participation in an aid scheme for Portuguese Timor would lead us to reconsider the question of our representation there.

Conclusions and Recommendations

27. The policy conclusions which flow from the analysis in this submission are based on the present situation we face in relation to Portuguese Timor. But we shall need of course to adjust our policy to changing circumstances and unfolding events. The immediate outlook in Timor is for a continuation of the Portuguese link. This is no bad interim solution from our point of view and may well provide us with several years of breathing space. It certainly means that decisions about the long-term future of the territory should not be rushed. But in 12–18 months (or even before), if it has become apparent that developments are moving more rapidly than we now expect and particularly if the Timorese themselves are clearly moving rapidly towards independence, we should have to reconsider the position. The merits of a more forward approach might then become more prominent.

28. We should need, for example, to examine again the question of Australian representation in Dili, as well as that of economic assistance to and co-operation with Timor. The latter might then become important less as a means of discharging a commitment to help the Timorese improve their living standards, and more as a deliberate policy designed to tie Portuguese Timor into its regional environment. If the Indonesians could be involved in such a policy review so much the better. In any event, like us, they would need to consider whether the best way of 'containing' an independent Timor might not be to integrate it into the region and, by assisting it to emerge from its isolation and colonial strait-jacket, make it unnecessary for Timor to look beyond Indonesia and Australia for support.

29. Meanwhile, *it is recommended* that:—

- (a) You should endorse the view that, for the time being, Australia should follow a policy of non-involvement in relation to Portuguese Timor. This policy implies caution in the frequency and wording of public statements as well as maintaining a discreet distance from Indonesia's public pronouncements. It also implies that we should be regarding the association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia as only one of several acceptable results of an act of self-determination.
- (b) We should aim at maintaining a constructive dialogue with the Indonesians about the problem that Portuguese Timor represents, in order to try to divert them from too forward a policy and to ensure that developments there do not become an obstacle to good relations between Australia and Indonesia.
- (c) You agree that in this dialogue we should try to bring the Indonesians to recognise that, if the Timorese are clearly intent on independence, it should be possible to live

with that, and that many of their fears about an independent Timor appear groundless or exaggerated.

- (d) You agree that we should take suitable opportunities to explain to Timorese leaders that Australia would respect the wishes of the people of the territory whether in a genuine act of self-determination they decided in favour of independence, a continued association with Portugal, or an association with Indonesia.
- (e) You agree that we should also do what we can to try to influence Timorese leaders like Ramos Horta away from courses of action and associations which risk playing into Indonesian hands—and indeed alienating those in Australia who otherwise might sympathise with them.
- (f) You agree that, for the present, we not re-open the Consulate in Dili but meet our requirements for information through regular visits from our Embassy in Jakarta and from Australia.
- (g) You endorse the view that if we are to become involved in an aid program in Portuguese Timor, our preferred means of providing aid should be through a trilateral arrangement involving Portugal and Indonesia as well.
- (h) You agree that we should therefore respond positively to a Portuguese–Indonesian approach for a trilateral economic and technical assistance program in Portuguese Timor, the details of which would, of course, need to be considered in consultation between the three governments.
- (i) You agree that, if no such approach is received in the next two or three months, we ourselves should consider taking the initiative first in Jakarta and then, depending on Indonesian reactions, in Lisbon.

It is recognised that recommendation (e) would need to be handled with some sensitivity. It may be that the point would be better made by officials during visits to Dili. The recommendations relating to aid are subject to the views of OADAA, which we have yet to obtain. With these provisos, the guidelines are recommended for your consideration.⁶

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, iv]

⁶ A handwritten note by Forrester on the attached summary submission reads: 'Minister commented "Agree" and, with reference to para 29(g), "I suppose so!"' [On file NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxiii.]

68 MEMORANDUM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 13 December 1974

RESTRICTED

Portuguese Timor: Visit by Ramos Horta

Please refer to Canberra telegram CH148927.¹

2. We will be despatching separately the record of discussion between the Minister and Horta on 11 December. Again little new emerged. You might, however, wish to convey the following to the Indonesians. It draws on both the discussions with the Minister and those Horta had with Departmental officers on 5 December:—

- (a) The main purpose of Horta's visit seems to have been to try to promote a political climate in Australia in favour of an act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor and—because FRETILIN (he claimed) had the greatest support within the territory—its probable outcome, independence. To this end Horta has engaged in a series of public addresses to sympathetic groups. He has combined this with lobbying of Australian members of Parliament and other political figures. He called on the Indonesian Embassy, on the Canadian and New Zealand High Commissions, and, on the Swedish and United States Embassies.
- (b) In discussions with the Minister and Departmental officers Horta was anxious to seek some clarification of the reports that an 'understanding' had been reached between the Prime Minister and President Soeharto whereby Portuguese Timor should be incorporated into Indonesia over the heads of the Timorese. Horta was told that the Australian Labor Government stood firmly by self-determination and that we acknowledged that incorporation into Indonesia, which we should welcome, was nevertheless one of only several solutions that an act of self-determination might yield. Australia would be prepared to accept and support the outcome of an act of self-determination whether this led to independence, a decision to continue in association with Portugal, or to incorporation into Indonesia.
- (c) Horta professed fears about Indonesian intentions and referred to reports of Indonesian military deployments etc. He wanted Australia to come out firmly and publicly against Indonesian 'interference'. We responded that Indonesian leaders had stated on a number of occasions that, while they saw incorporation of Portuguese Timor as the best solution, they would scrupulously respect the outcome of an act of self-determination. The Minister pointed out that Mr Malik had now clarified an earlier statement in which he had appeared to have ruled out independence as a possible option. As the Minister understood it, Indonesia accepted that there were three possible options for Portuguese Timor, although Indonesia also felt that on economic grounds Portuguese Timor might prefer a solution other than independence.
- (d) We told Horta that Australia had very close and friendly relations with Indonesia. Indonesia would be aware that Australian public opinion would react adversely to any move aimed at forestalling or pre-empting an act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor. They would also know that it would have an adverse impact on official Australian/Indonesian relations. There was thus no need for Australia to make any public statements about the matter. In any event we would not favour an

¹ 11 December. It explained the reasons for Willesee's receiving Horta (see note 2 to Document 59) and instructed the Embassy to convey them to the Indonesians.

antagonistic and pugnacious public statement of Australian opposition to what, after all, was a hypothesis (i.e. an Indonesian takeover). This was not how good neighbours like Australia and Indonesia treated each other.

- (e) We added that we believed Horta's fears were exaggerated. We had no reason to believe that Indonesia was thinking of any precipitate military move in relation to Portuguese Timor. Indonesia nevertheless had a legitimate worry that an independent Portuguese Timor would constitute a destabilizing influence in the region. We completely understood why Indonesia should wish to assure itself that external forces inimical to its interests should not be allowed to penetrate Indonesia via an independent Portuguese Timor. It seemed to us that Horta and his FRETILIN group should be doing more to allay Indonesia's fears, and to reassure the Indonesians about his intentions. In this connexion, we invited Horta to ponder the possible disadvantages of the associations he appeared to be developing with groups in Australia (albeit minority groups) and perhaps elsewhere which had evinced some hostility to President Soeharto's Government and might well be hoping to exploit Timor simply as a means of 'getting at Indonesia'.
- (f) Horta responded to all this with a vigorous denial that his movement was Communist inspired, or indeed, that it shared any of the Communists' aspirations. He stressed that FRETILIN was a nationalist organisation which had received no financial or other support outside the country. He added that FRETILIN realised that an independent Timor would need to pursue a good neighbour policy which took full account of the interests of both Indonesia and Australia. An independent Timor, Horta added, would want to join ASEAN.
- (g) Horta also pointed to the restraint he had exercised in his references to Indonesia during his several press conferences in Australia. (This is true.) He agreed with us that he should visit Jakarta again and spoke of doing so in January when he would hope to see among others, Lt. General Ali Mortopo. The Jakarta visit, however, would be one of a series of visits which he apparently intends to make and which might include visits to New Zealand, PNG and possibly the United Nations.
- (h) We never succeeded in getting a wholly coherent picture from Horta of the way he sees developments unfolding in Portuguese Timor over the next few months. However, in his discussions with the Minister, he seemed to foreshadow a long gestation period (five years or so) during which Timor would continue under Portuguese sovereignty. To Departmental officers, he mentioned the possibility of 'local elections' early in 1975 to be followed by territory wide elections in 1976. He also mentioned to the Minister the Governor's idea for a consultative council to be established fairly soon and to be composed of representatives nominated by the various political groups in Portuguese Timor. This body, which would apparently have an advisory function, would presumably function in the period pending the 1976 elections. FRETILIN, however, as well as the other groups, apparently has difficulties with the formula proposed by the Governor for sharing seats in this interim Council.
- (i) At one point in his discussions with Departmental officers, Horta seemed to be suggesting a 'Mozambique solution' by which he meant that Portugal would come to accept that it should eventually hand over power to FRETILIN as the (self-appointed) major nationalist political force in Timor, and dispense with the need for

a separate act of self-determination by way of elections or some form of popular consultation. We responded that such a procedure was hardly likely to be regarded as a convincing act of self-determination in Australia, or indeed in Indonesia. Whether or not Horta got the message, in his discussions with the Minister he dropped all reference to this 'Mozambique formula' but reiterated that a plebiscite would not be appropriate in Portuguese Timor. He indicated that this view was shared by the other political groupings. He went on to speculate about the possibility of a U.N. visiting mission substituting for a plebiscite.

- (j) The Minister was cautious in responding to Horta's overtures about Australian aid. He said we could not give money or budgetary support but would be willing to consider some technical training. Departmental officers had earlier indicated to Horta on 5 December that Australia would prefer to provide aid on a trilateral basis with Indonesia and Portugal rather than to undertake a direct bilateral program.
 - (k) Horta asked officials whether Australia intended to re-open its Consulate in Timor. He was told that the matter was under consideration but that we could not hold out any prospect of an early move to re-establish the Consulate. (For your own information we have reservations about such a move at this time, although we recognise that the pressure particularly of consular work could force our early re-consideration of the matter.)
 - (l) Horta has also invited a group of Australian MPs to make a private visit to Portuguese Timor. He envisages a joint Government–Opposition group. This matter is still being considered within the Government. We are concerned that, should a parliamentary group go to Portuguese Timor, it not be manoeuvred into positions which might be interpreted as anti-Indonesian or anti-Portuguese. If a group does visit Portuguese Timor, we should wish it to be strictly a fact-finding exercise.
3. As you will appreciate the foregoing is a very frank account of our discussions with Horta, and we should be grateful if the Indonesians could be asked to protect the information accordingly.²

LANCE JOSEPH

South-East Asia Branch

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, v]

69 DISPATCH FROM FURLONGER TO WILLESEE

Jakarta, 13 December 1974

3/74 CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACTS

The Indonesian Armed Forces and the Future

Part I: The Present Role

Indonesia is commonly regarded as a military regime. Its defenders maintain that it is not; while its detractors find evidence that it is. Neither are quite right. In this despatch, I have sought to set out the subtle nature of the influence exercised by the military in Indonesia.

² On 16 December Feakes briefed Her Tasning in similar terms.

[*matter omitted*]¹

The Formulation of Policy

Policy formulation tends to be invisible and dominated by the military. Policy is not decided by Parliament and only rarely by Cabinet. As a collective body, Cabinet has little say. Cabinet acts mainly as a committee of review that endorses decisions already taken in principle elsewhere. (This is, of course, not unusual in a presidential system of government: the United States Cabinet is hardly any more important.) Important decisions in whatever field, will certainly have been referred first to the President. Only then will the subject be presented to Cabinet. Partly, but not entirely, there is little discussion and even less debate because of the custom of arriving at a consensus beforehand. But the system goes beyond consensus-building alone: major decisions are taken in principle beforehand because they must have the endorsement of the military.

[*matter omitted*]²

The Formulation of Foreign Policy

In the foreign policy field, the military allows Foreign Minister Malik and his Ministry to decide without interference external questions that do not affect national security policy, that is, minor and routine questions. Most major issues affecting the Asian-Pacific region are seen as having national security implications, and the military plays a major role in advising the President, although the Foreign Ministry participates fully in the process.

When General Soemitro was head of KOPKAMTIB—the security command which was almost a shadow government—an informal system was built around him and which he dominated. Since Soemitro went, a more formal hierarchy of committees to frame national security policy has been established. At the bottom is a committee at the Secretary-General level, consisting of representatives of the Foreign Ministry, the Defence Department, the Department of Internal Affairs and the State Intelligence Organisation, BAKIN. It is chaired by Lt. General Daryatmo, the principal military officer responsible for overseeing the dual function role of the Armed Forces.

Above this committee of officials, there is a ministerial committee consisting of General Panggabean (Defence Minister), Mr Malik (Foreign Minister), the Minister for Internal Affairs (Lt. General Amir Machmud) and the national intelligence agency BAKIN (sometimes represented by Lt. General Yoga, the BAKIN Head, sometimes by his nominal deputy, Lt. General Ali Murtopo; but not apparently by both together). Before the January riots, a comparable committee was always chaired by General Soemitro. Now the chairmanship rotates between the three Ministers; although the military voice is normally the decisive one, this is not invariably so. To take one important recent example—that of Portuguese Timor—an alliance of moderate views between the Foreign Ministry and Ali Murtopo has checked the wilder ideas of some of the military ‘hawks’ led by the G1 in the Defence Department (Major General Benny Moerdani) and El Tari (the Governor in Indonesian Timor). President Soeharto resolved a dispute between the doves and the hawks by coming down in favour of the former—representing largely civilian views.

At the peak of the national security committee structure is the Political and Security Stabilisation Council. This body is chaired by the President, who also receives independent

¹ Sections omitted deal with the nature of the political influence of the military, and the military at regional and national level. Furlonger argues that Indonesian spending on its military is comparatively small, and that military influence is subtle and not readily apparent to the outsider.

² A section on the Institutional Structure deals with formal councils other than Cabinet.

advice through informal channels such as from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. The CSIS is Ali Murtopo's civilian 'think-tank', and its importance derives from Ali's close and characteristically Indonesian personal bond with the President. The Embassy has found that its quickest and most effective channel to the President is through this free-wheeling and predominantly civilian group. Ali Murtopo himself is a civilian in all but name.

The Key Political Personalities

On important policy matters, the President, whose dominance of the whole system has increased since the departure of General Soemitro, may often rely primarily on these informal sources of advice. Most of these trusted private advisers are military people: his former Private Assistants (ASPRI), Lt. General Ali Murtopo and Major-General Sudjono Humardani; the Head of the State Intelligence Agency (BAKIN), Lt. General Yoga Soegama; the State Secretary (akin to the Head of the White House staff in Washington), Lt. General Sudharmono; and other selected ABRI individuals, such as Admiral Sudomo (Chief of Staff of KOPKAMTIB), Lt. General Tjokropranolo (the President's Military Secretary) and Major General Benny Moerdani (G1 HANKAM), a young and rising Catholic general. Moerdani's links with Ali Murtopo's Catholic advisers are notable and important.

An important civilian adviser, who works closely with the Palace group, is Mashuri, the Minister for Information. Mashuri is a Javanese intellectual and lawyer, who had been a political adviser to the late General Yani till 1965 and was the man who, in the early morning of 1 October 1965, broke the news of the attempted coup to General Soeharto. When the President feared possible assassination after the January riots this year, it was to Mashuri that he spoke in nominating General Surono as his heir in such an event.

Surono is the senior soldier from Central Java and currently Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces. Surono is a rather enigmatic personality. Pleasant, approachable, popular among the rank and file though he is, there are some who doubt his capacity and leadership quality. But others say that his blandness, personal modesty and self-possession are qualities very acceptable to the Javanese. We shall probably never know: Surono is of much the same era [as] Soeharto, and his succession would only come about if Soeharto were to die or be displaced by his military contemporaries in the early future. This is unlikely.

The key military officers around Soeharto are drawn largely from the small group of Javanese officers—increasingly from Central Java, and the Diponegoro Division—who have been closely associated with the President professionally, and often personally, for many years. They should not be regarded as constituting a tight and recognizable group; there are various individuals and groups around the President, who are consulted on different matters, loosely connected with one another by tradition, similarity of outlook and identity of purpose. Above all, they are people the President trusts. They form his court.

[*matter omitted*]³

Concluding Observations

What, then, may one conclude about the nature of military influence in Indonesia? Contrary to early hopes of the regime, and indeed of trends before the disaster of the January riots, the influence of the military, both political and economic, is dominant and in some ways becoming more pervasive with time. It is, however, informal, unstructured, highly personalised, often invisible, not constitutionally accountable—and its hold is not absolute, as military influence is often shared with civilians in important respects. The armed forces are regarded as an

³ A section examining the increasing influence of military networks in the Indonesian economy. It notes that such activities are considered sources of funding for individual officers and for the armed forces as a whole.

indispensable backdrop for the maintenance of internal security, which gives them an important but not automatic or concerted say over policy, and they form a vital part of the country's administration.

By general standards, this must be considered as falling something short of a military regime in the strict understanding of the term. More accurately, the regime may be considered as paternalistic and authoritarian, with enormous powers vested in and assumed by the President, and with a heavy bias towards internal order and stability. Until the January riots, it was more liberal than most South East Asian countries, although it has taken a large step backward since then.

President Soeharto relies on close advisers, most of whom are military, but in general from a limited section of the armed forces; and he uses ABRI to stiffen the administration of the country. He has, however, some important sources of civilian advice and does not invariably side with the military when they are at issue with civilians. Generally, the whole structure depends on a delicate balance being maintained between the courtiers—whether military or civilian, competing for influence at Soeharto's court. He himself is the *Iraja*, and a beneficiary of the submissiveness and the mystique that the Javanese court has traditionally attracted among Javanese. Any change of leadership in the early future would be bound to throw up another soldier; but the system would be likely to retain its essential Javanese characteristics: a generally benign paternalism centred around the President, and a loosely structured hierarchy largely military but dependent more on personalities than institutions.

[NAA: A1838, 3034/10/6/9, i]

70 RECORD OF CONVERSATION WITH HABIB AND MOERDANI

Canberra, 6 January 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACT

Notes on Discussions held by Sir Arthur Tange in Indonesia, December 1974¹

Indonesian Intentions Towards Portuguese Timor

In separate discussions with Hasnan Habib and Moerdani I worked around to the future possibilities in Portuguese Timor in order to make the point that, in the event that force were used as a solution, Australian public opinion would make it very difficult for the Minister for Defence to sustain the Defence co-operation programme (including Defence aid) with Indonesia that has developed so well.

I opened the discussion by enquiring what estimate they made of the sort of government that would be in office in Lisbon and at the same time made the point used by Mr Whitlam with President Suharto—no Australian objective in the Territory, we see its destiny as lying in Indonesia's world, the process is important to us and there must be evidence of acquiescence by the citizens.

³ Tange accompanied Barnard, who was in Indonesia from 9 to 19 December.

General Hasnan Habib listened attentively enough but made no particular comment on my remarks.

General Moerdani did not comment on what I had said but spoke of the difficulties in the situation for Indonesia and said quite plainly that Indonesia intended to acquire control. The tone was tough and unqualified.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, v]

71 LETTER FROM WILLESEE TO WHITLAM

Canberra, 14 January 1975¹

SECRET

In my letter to you of 10 December, 1974 regarding a proposed visit to Portuguese Timor by a joint parliamentary delegation,² I mentioned that a comprehensive paper had been prepared for my consideration which proposed several recommendations for future Australian policy towards the territory.³ This earlier letter foreshadowed some of the paper's conclusions and policy recommendations. I have now considered the paper in detail and have endorsed all its recommendations.

In view of your own interest in Portuguese Timor, and your discussions on the matter with President Soeharto last September, I thought that you should wish to see the paper yourself. A copy is enclosed. I should add that the paper was the result of very careful consideration and consultation among the senior officers of my Department.

In the months since the April 1974 coup in Portugal, two main elements have emerged in our policy towards Portuguese Timor: first, an appreciation that the association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia would best suit our national interests; and second, our commitment to the right of the people of Portuguese Timor to decide their own political future by means of an internationally acceptable act of self-determination. When those two main elements in our policy towards Portuguese Timor were emerging, we knew little of developments in the territory. We now know more of the evolving situation there. It points to the incompatibility of the two objectives: self-determination is likely to yield a result other than the association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia.

The underlying thrust of my Department's paper is to place more emphasis in our future policy on our commitment to the right of the people of the territory to decide their own political future. At the same time we believe that we should take a step backwards from involvement in the problem of Portuguese Timor in order to avoid becoming any more enmeshed in it than we need be. There can be no doubt that the Timorese would like to involve us, if only to act as a countervailing force to Indonesia. But clearly we cannot allow our relations with Indonesia to be at the mercy of Mr Ramos Horta and his FRETILIN group. I understand that this is very much your own view as reflected in your letter to me of 13 December,⁴ responding to mine of 10 December.

¹ There is some confusion regarding the date of this letter. The cited copy, bearing Willesee's signature, is dated 14 January, but other copies are dated 13 January. Barnard's letter in response (Document 81) refers to the earlier date.

² Document 65.

³ See Document 67.

⁴ See note 3 to Document 65.

The other main recommendations of the paper are that:

- (a) we should maintain a dialogue with the Indonesians about the problem of Portuguese Timor in order to try to divert them from too forward a policy and to ensure that developments there do not become an obstacle to good relations between Australia and Indonesia;
- (b) we should take suitable opportunities to explain to Timorese leaders that Australia would respect the wishes of the people of the territory expressed in a genuine act of self-determination, and that they should beware, of course, of action which would risk playing into Indonesian hands;
- (c) we do not for the present open a Consulate in Dili;
- (d) if we provide aid it should preferably be under a joint Portuguese–Indonesian–Australian umbrella and that for the time being anyway we should leave the initiative to the Portuguese or Indonesians.

I should emphasise that steering clear of political entanglements in Portuguese Timor would not imply simply turning our backs on the territory. Indeed, developments relating to Portuguese Timor will have to be kept under close, continuous review and I should expect that our policies will have to be adjusted at fairly frequent intervals to take account of those developments.

My own feeling is that the conclusions reached in the paper are sound and, as I say, I have endorsed them. You may wish to consider whether you would wish to signify your endorsement of them as well.

I have also felt that this is a subject in which our colleague, the Minister for Defence, would have a keen interest. Accordingly, I am sending him a copy of this letter together with a copy of the paper on Portuguese Timor.

[NAA: A1209, 74/7573]

72 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

New York, 15 January 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACT

29 UNGA: Fourth Committee: Question of Territories Under Portuguese Domination (Item 66)

9. The Portuguese territories were also dealt with in the Plenary debate on decolonisation which commenced later than usual this year on 3 December 1974. The Portuguese Minister for Inter-Territorial Co-ordination, Dr Almeida Santos, participated at the opening of the debate, using it to make a special plea for financial assistance for Mozambique and for the other territories as they reached independence.

[matter omitted]

10. He finally referred to *Timor* as being an exceptional example of a freely accepted Portuguese presence whose continuity was still sincerely desired by a majority of the population.

He forecast that there would 'in all likelihood' be a referendum towards the middle of 1975 to determine the actual will, freely expressed, of the people of Timor, and promised that Portugal would scrupulously respect the results. Three currents of opinion could be discerned favouring respectively the continuity of the Portuguese presence, integration into Indonesia, and total and immediate independence. But Timor was far from economic and financial self-sufficiency, and considering its underdeveloped conditions, 'it will be realised that total and immediate independence is a dream'. In 1974 Portugal had contributed nearly \$12 million to the Territory's economy, and believed it would have to increase that contribution. In seeking a political emancipation of the Territory that did not threaten the stability of that geographic region (a factor of express importance to Australia and Indonesia), it would be necessary to think in terms of a collective effort to promote the development of the Territory to economic self-sufficiency. Instead of mere subsidies what was required were sound investments to produce wealth. 'This is a task', Almeida Santos concluded, 'which my country, limited by its means and by distance, cannot undertake alone'.

11. In our view this statement on Timor (reported by cable) was a most significant one—indicating publicly Portugal's willingness to close the door on independence and to stay on in the Territory keeping open the option of integration with Indonesia provided the Timorese did not object, and Indonesia and Australia were prepared to help foot the bill.

P. C. REID

Second Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, i]

73 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON

Canberra, 29 January 1975

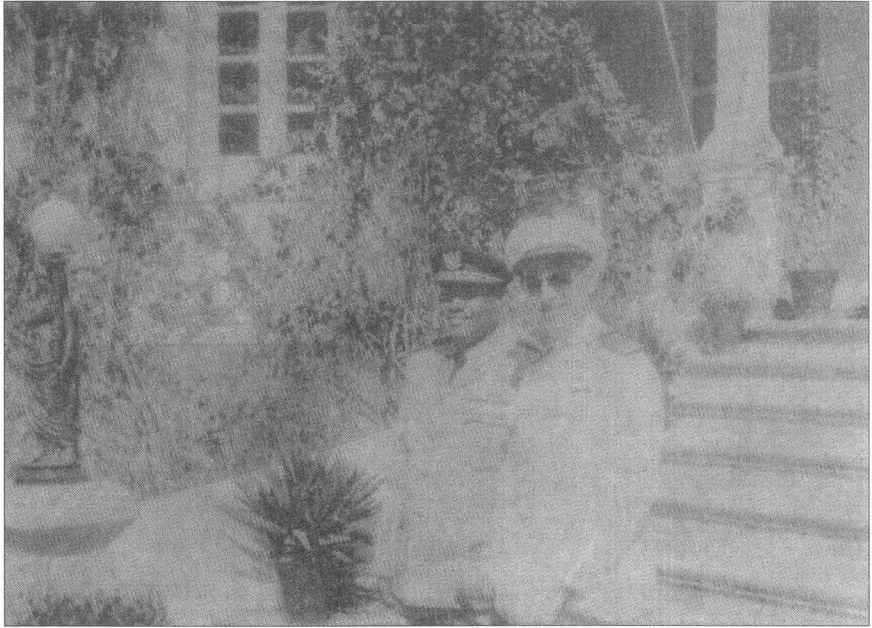
O.CH166709 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

The Joint Communiqué published on 22 January by UDT and FRETILIN could foreshadow important and possibly rapid developments in Portuguese Timor. It does not of course indicate when FRETILIN and UDT might hope to achieve their now common aim of independence, we imagine that FRETILIN continues to look to early independence, with UDT still favouring some continuing Portuguese presence for as long as possible. But there has clearly been a narrowing of the gap between the two groups.¹

2. The references in the Communiqué to the establishment of a transitional government, comprising FRETILIN and UDT, suggest that these two parties may have in mind a solution

¹ A communiqué signed on 22 January by Xavier do Amaral and Lopes da Cruz announced an alliance between UDT and Fretilin. The communique called for total independence, proposed good relations with all countries including Indonesia, but recognised only Portugal, with the assistance of a UN supervisory committee, as having the right to oversee the decolonisation process. The UN supervisory committee was not to include 'the great powers of Asia, and other countries under the influence of Indonesia, including Australia'. A minute written on 28 January by Susan Boyd, of West Europe Section, commented that the evident hostility to Australia was both new and disturbing.



El Tari, Governor of Indonesian Timor (left), with Colonel José Alberty Correia, Governor of Portuguese Timor, in Dili, 1967



General Antonio Sebastião Ribeiro de Spínola, President of Portugal, May–September 1974



The Supreme Revolutionary Council of Portugal, with President Costa Gomes at its head, March 1975



'Death to Fascism': protest street art in Lisbon, 1974



*E. G. Whitlam, Prime Minister of Australia (left), and
Lance Barnard, Deputy Prime Minister*



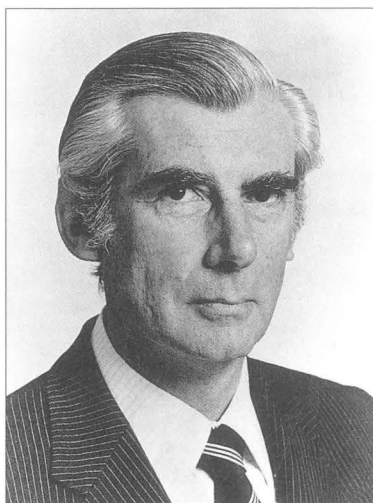
*Senator Don Willesee,
Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs,
1973-1975*



*Alan Renouf, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, addressing the
United Nations General Assembly, New York, April 1974*



*R. W. Furlonger,
Australian Ambassador to Indonesia,
1972-1974*



*F. B. Cooper,
Australian Ambassador to Portugal,
1974-1977*



*G. B. Feakes,
First Assistant Secretary, South-East Asia
and Papua New Guinea Division,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
1974–1976*



*L. L. E. Joseph,
Assistant Secretary, South-East Asia Branch,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
1974–1976*

for the territory that would obviate the need for a plebiscite. Instead they could be thinking of the direct transfer of authority to a government (initially transitional) composed of their two parties as the self-proclaimed representatives of the majority of the people of the territory. You will recall that Ramos Horta in his recent discussions with officials in Canberra, hinted at such a Mozambique-type solution.

3. We would not wish to intrude into a matter that is properly the domain of Portugal and the people of Portuguese Timor. Nor should we wish to appear to question the good faith of Portugal and its ability to effect decolonization in Timor. Nevertheless, important considerations of regional stability (and indeed of the welfare of the people of Portuguese Timor) are involved, and could turn on the question of how the process of decolonization is carried out. Specifically, the Indonesians who now seem to have subscribed to the need for an act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor, could easily revert to a more forward position should it appear that a FRETILIN stratagem were likely to succeed which would bypass an act of self-determination altogether. Such a course could be regarded by Indonesia as a direct challenge to Indonesia's interests, providing a pretext for Indonesia's direct intervention.

4. For these reasons, we remain strongly in favour of a genuine act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor as an essential step in the resolution of the territory's future. This point has been made to the Portuguese and the Indonesians by both the Minister and the Prime Minister. It was also made to Ramos Horta during his most recent visit to Canberra.

5. In our memorandum 53 (repeated 15 to Jakarta)² we asked that you take an early opportunity to explore latest Portuguese thinking on Portuguese Timor. This was against the background of indications which had come to hand that Portugal might be thinking of a more compressed timetable for constitutional advance than we had earlier been led to believe. The establishment of a common front between UDT and FRETILIN gives added point to the approach to the Portuguese. We need an assessment of the significance of the alliance between UDT and FRETILIN, and whether it is likely to hang together. Was the agreement between the two parties worked up in collaboration with the Portuguese authorities? Do the Portuguese still see the need for political progress in Timor to proceed at a careful and deliberate pace? Or do they now envisage more accelerated development? A discussion with the Portuguese at this time should also provide an opportunity for you to re-iterate our strong concern that there be a genuine act of self-determination in Timor. In doing so, you should reiterate the points in paragraph 3 above.³

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, iv]

² The reference is presumably to Memorandum 3 sent to Lisbon on 3 January. It covered a report by the US Consul in Surabaya of a visit to both parts of Timor. In his view Pires was under pressure from Lisbon to move faster towards decolonisation. This indication of what Joseph called 'a headlong rush towards a solution' seemed contrary to Canberra's earlier understanding of Portuguese policy and the Lisbon Embassy was instructed to investigate.

³ The cablegram was repeated to Jakarta. In response the Embassy reported Indonesian concern that Portugal might hand over power to the independence party, and that the Indonesian Consul had reported formation of a Constituent Assembly in Dili, in which Apodeti was not participating (Cablegram JA7344, 31 January). The cablegram reiterated the Embassy's assessment that although the Indonesians hoped integration could be achieved through self-determination, direct intervention could not be ruled out. The Embassy had no hard evidence that precipitate action was being contemplated, but did sense a 'toughening of attitude'.

74 LETTER FROM JOSEPH TO COOPER

Canberra, 29 January 1975

RESTRICTED

In Graham Feakes' absence, I thought I should drop you a line on the question of Portuguese Timor.

It seems that developments there could be picking up in pace, although one cannot help wondering whether the latest alliance between Fretilin and UDT will hang together. We have also now received your telegram LB 667, which suggests that Governor Pires, at least, remains firm on the need for an eventual plebiscite or election in Portuguese Timor. You will know—our CH 166709¹—that this is something preoccupying us in Canberra.

The purpose of this note is to underline our continuing need for readings from Lisbon on the Portuguese Timor situation. Apart from what your contacts might be able to tell us about the position in Timor itself, we have always had a nagging concern that the outcome there could be effectively pre-empted by developments in Portugal. The burden of empire is clearly closing in on the Portuguese; as you have noted on earlier occasions, whatever their present intentions, pressures could quickly build up in Lisbon to divest itself of its remaining colonial responsibilities, come what may. Apart from this, one cannot but be disturbed by the recent communist successes inside Portugal—the new trade union law and, now, the left wing demonstrations which forced the Popular Democrats to abandon their party convention in Oporto. You can bet your shirt on it that all this has registered in Jakarta with Ali Murtopo and his group from the Centre for Strategic Studies.

At today's FAS meeting, the Secretary expressed concern about Portuguese Timor. It was he who was keen that we should accelerate plans for Mr Taylor's forthcoming visit to Portuguese Timor. He also felt that we should be trying to tap Portuguese sources of information on a more regular basis, including not only the Foreign Ministry in Lisbon, but, if this were possible, members of the AFM as well. I pointed out the possible difficulties of engaging the Portuguese on a matter which inevitably must fall lower in their priorities than the still monumental problems of extricating themselves from Africa. Gordon Jockel, however, demurred. He felt that the Indonesian aspect of the Timor situation would weigh very heavily in Lisbon.

In any event, you clearly have a keen readership audience in Canberra for reporting on Portuguese Timor. This is background to our requests in memorandum 53² and telegram CH166709.

I should not conclude without adding this Division's appreciation for a number of your recent despatches. Those entitled 'Who Governs Portugal' and 'The Decolonisation of Portugal's Empire' were particularly helpful to us in improving our comprehension of developments in Portugal. Under arrangements agreed with the Indonesians during the official discussions in Jakarta last October, our Embassy in Jakarta has passed copies of these two despatches on a personal basis to Harry Tjan of the Centre for Strategic Studies.

[NAA: A10005, 202/1/3, v]

¹ Document 73.

² See paragraph 5 of Document 73.

75 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TJAN AND TAYLOR

Jakarta, 30 January 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Coalition Between UDT and FRETILIN

As Harry [Tjan] had not seen a copy of the Joint Communiqué between UDT and FRETILIN¹ I gave him one, stressing that I could not guarantee its correctness and noted that there were several words missing. After a quick reading Harry said that the Communiqué appeared to be provocatively anti-Indonesian. It looked as though the coalition parties wanted independence handed to them without an act of self determination as had been the case in Mozambique and Angola.

2. Referring to our conversation on 21 January, I asked what he thought the reaction of Indonesian policy makers would be. Harry thought the Communiqué would not help the moderate opinion and again launched into a description of what he said was the prevailing attitude of most members of the high level Special Committee established to deal with Portuguese Timor. Representatives from Foreign Affairs, Interior, BAKIN and HANKAM sat in this Committee. Ali Murtopo was a member. On this committee, he said, the HANKAM view tended to prevail. The popular arguments were those dealing with the security and stability of the region and the need to combat communism. Apparently the Committee has looked at the experience of Malta and seen how Russian influence has been introduced through Malta into NATO and the Mediterranean. If this would happen in Malta, why couldn't similar developments occur in an independent Portuguese Timor? Generally the Committee was very anti-communist and tended to see problems in black and white terms, i.e. if there were any chance of communist influence being exerted in Portuguese Timor then all efforts should be taken to prevent it. Harry said the President's approach was as far as possible to prevent problems developing rather than curing them when they arose. (*Note: It is interesting to note that the Information Minister reporting to the press on the Cabinet Meeting on 28 January, which considered the security situation in 1975/76, said the President had told the meeting, 'we had better prevent rather than surmount security disturbances even though we are able to do so.'*)

3. Harry said that the President's main concern in his approach to any problem was the development of Indonesia. Anything which detracted from that development was to be avoided. The President did not want to increase expenditure on defence to meet any continuing security threat that might be posed by a weak, independent Portuguese Timor. Therefore, it would be better to prevent such a threat from developing. (*Note: The cost to Indonesia of integrating Portuguese Timor did not seem to have been taken into account.*)

4. Harry again mentioned the disillusionment of the President with his treatment from the Americans in particular, but Harry implied, also from other western countries. According to Harry, the President said to the Information Minister, Mashuri, several weeks ago, 'I have placed myself in the orbit of the west, and what have I got in return?' In this connection Harry reiterated that the main issues in the President's mind were the lumping of Indonesia with other OPEC countries by the US Congress in restricting trade preferences and by the US Government in its attitude to soft loans by the ADB and IBRD. Harry also said that the President and members of the Special Committee on Portuguese Timor had difficulty in understanding

¹ See note 1 to Document 73.

why Australia placed so much emphasis on the need for an act of self determination, apparently without concern to the possible threat to the stability of the region of an independent Portuguese Timor. It was because of his concern for the stability of the region that the President had told Mr Whitlam Australia should retain Christmas and Cocos Islands. In the view of some, Australia's position on Portuguese Timor was hypocritical. I said that the present Australian Government had always espoused the need for acts of self determination in the decolonisation process. As he would know feeling in Australia about the need for such an act in Portuguese Timor seemed to be growing. Apart from its own principles it was necessary for the Government to take account of this feeling. Harry repeated that he was only expressing views which he understood were held by some in senior positions in Indonesia.

5. The President considered that Australia, as much as Indonesia, should be concerned with the stability of the region. That is why he had been, and remained, anxious to involve Australia in a military assistance program in Indonesia. It was not the size of that program that was so important, but the fact that through the program the President thought Australia had indicated its interest in and was participating in, maintaining the stability and security of the region.

6. Harry said that since the establishment of the Special Committee, the Centre was not as involved in the day to day policy on Portuguese Timor as it had been earlier. He characterised the Centre's earlier involvement in terms of being a 'think tank', that is it suggested policy options and so on. The Centre was, however, occasionally required to produce papers for the Committee and, of course, Ali Murtopo was a member of the Committee.²

[matter omitted]

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, vi]

76 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 4 February 1975

O.LB689 SECRET PRIORITY

Timor

I called on Santos this morning as arranged. The Minister said he welcomed my call as he thought the time had come for his government to consult with us and Indonesia about the future of Timor.

2. Santos said that following his visit to Timor he had concluded that the two main political groups were essentially wanting the same thing. FRETILIN wanted immediate *de jure* independence but with continued practical links with Portugal for some years at least until Timor was economically viable. UDT wanted continued links with Portugal with eventual independence as the long term solution. In both cases the ultimate objective was the same. Consequently he had suggested to the two parties that they should join together. Thus the recent merger was his idea. Santos observed somewhat ruefully that he had not fully appreciated

² In Cablegram JA7445 (5 February) Dan reported this conversation and reports from BAKIN of left-wing activity in the army in Portuguese Timor. Girao had confirmed the latter but claimed the Indonesian Consul in Dili was sending 'alarmist' reports to Jakarta. Dan concluded with an assessment that while precipitate action was not inevitable, 'the Indonesians are getting increasingly into a frame of mind which would favour direct intervention in Portuguese Timor'.

the problems that merger would bring. Now the accent was on independence with APODETI being regarded [as] 'the enemy'. Portugal did not want the Indonesians to feel that Lisbon was necessarily hostile to their interests. Indeed they recognised the need for close cooperation between Lisbon, Canberra and Jakarta on the Timor question.

3. This led Santos to outline his proposed 'solution' on Timor. He envisages a period of some years during which Lisbon would retain ultimate responsibility for Timor but would co-operate closely with UDT and FRETILIN. (He dismissed APODETI as being without any local support and thought it would 'disappear'.) At the same time, Australia and Indonesia would through a joint economic aid programme maintain Timor's viability. 'Portugal could not afford to do this alone.' Eventually when circumstances permitted there would have to be an act of self-determination. Santos' own preference was for an election to a constituent assembly because in that way they could exert more influence on the delegates about the outcome than if the question were to be decided by a referendum.

4. As a first step however, Santos saw a need for a secret tripartite meeting between representatives of the Portuguese, Australian and Indonesian Governments to discuss the proposal further. He thought it unwise for such a meeting to be held in the Timor area as it would be impossible to keep it secret and suggested Lisbon or Paris as possible alternatives. Following a tripartite meeting, Santos envisaged bringing representatives of UDT/FRETILIN to Lisbon and canvassing the proposal with them.

5. Santos said that he would be discussing his ideas with his colleagues in the Decolonisation Commission within the next few days. Meanwhile he asked me to convey his views to you and seek your comments. He said he would like to see me again in a few days time.

Comment

6. It was not clear from what Santos said whether he envisages that we should approach the Indonesians, but I would imagine that you would want to think very carefully about our own position before broaching the subject in Jakarta. In any event, in my view it is up to the Portuguese to explore their ideas directly with the Indonesians lest we be regarded in Jakarta as to some extent promoting them. Furthermore, Santos' ideas envisage a much greater degree of Australian involvement in Timor's future than you may consider desirable at this stage. I therefore made no comment on the substance of Santos' proposal at all. Also I am not at all sure that Santos' ideas will find much favour with the AFM who may want a much more speedy process.

7. I did however stress to Santos the importance we attached to a genuine act of self-determination and the possibility that a Mozambique type solution could offer a pretext for Indonesian intervention. Santos accepted this readily enough and recognised that an act of self-determination would be essential at some stage. Incidentally he 'rubbished' Pires by describing him as 'not very intelligent' and implied that he (Pires) had rather made a mess of things. Santos indicated that Pires would be returning to Lisbon in about a week's time.

8. Other decolonisation topics discussed are reported by separate telegram.

COOPER

77 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 5 February 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

Our memorandum No. 20 of 21 January, 1975 refers.¹

2. Lieutenant Colonel Alfredo Carneiro suggested recently that I also establish contact with the 2nd Division of the General Staff of the Armed Forces and on 5 February I had a discussion with Commandant Jorge Gamito, Head of the Overseas Territories Branch. Commandant Gamito displayed the more forward position on Timor that I have met in discussions with other military figures in Lisbon. The discussion tended to confirm our view that the military generally see a more rapid pace for decolonisation in Timor and place less significance on economic viability before independence than civilian figures in Lisbon.

3. Gamito's assessment was that the majority of the Timorese accepted the UDT/Fretilin position of independence sooner or later. Apodeti was simply an Indonesian front and had very little support. Indonesia, through the activities of the Indonesian Consul in Dili and Radio Kupang, was trying to create conditions favourable to the integration of Timor into Indonesia.

4. In effect, therefore, there were now only two options being considered in Timor— independence or integration. The third option for continuing links with Portugal had, as in Cape Verde, disappeared and this was natural. Gamito thought that, as in the other colonial territories, an act of self-determination would be held this year. He was unspecific about its form. If independence was chosen, then, as in Africa, Portugal would agree with the independence parties on a preparatory period after which independence would be granted. He had no specific comment on the length of such a preparatory period. He said Portugal would not impose any pressure for a short period but thought that the Timorese were watching closely developments in Africa and would not want to be too far behind. At the same time however, he said Portugal could offer little aid to Timor. I raised the question of economic viability and how important he thought that was before independence. São Tomé, for example, seemed less economically viable than Timor. He agreed that this was possibly so; certainly Timor seemed

¹ A full report by Cousins on the Portuguese military force in Timor. Its strength was largely unchanged at one infantry battalion, 'poorly equipped and poorly trained', and a small naval force. Morale was said to be low and there seemed to be no possibility of a military response to an Indonesian invasion. Pires was a competent, moderate AFM supporter; Major Mota, head of the political affairs cabinet was the leading AFM figure whose role as a leftist 'Progressista' was to balance Pires' moderation. Little thought had been given in Lisbon to Timor, apart from the appointment of Pires, who had been asked to submit a report on the political and military situation. It had been suggested that, given the lack of guerrilla or external threat, a police force might replace the military. Cousins noted some difference between civilian and military views on decolonisation, the former in line with statements made by Santos, while decolonisation was of much greater interest to the AFM. Military ministers outnumbered Santos and Soares on the decolonisation commission, and it was possible that the military would not accept a long term solution, so that 'a military inspired negotiated settlement with Indonesia cannot be entirely ruled out'. Colonel Alfredo Carneiro, Head of the President's military household, had been interested to learn of Australia's policy. Joseph wrote appreciatively to Cooper of this memorandum on 30 January. It had been read with keen interest in Canberra, and Carneiro was, he thought, the kind of contact Renouf had been hoping for when he made the comments reported in Document 74.

to have greater long term economic viability. He then described Portugal's difficult economic situation which prevented her from offering a great deal of assistance to any of her former colonies. The colonies had been a cancerous growth on Portugal. He thought that if they wanted independence, they should have it but at that point Portugal's responsibility should cease and the new nations become the responsibility of the world community as a whole.

5. A copy of this memorandum has been sent to Jakarta.

I. H. COUSINS

First Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, v]

78 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 6 February 1975

O.LB671 SECRET PRIORITY

Timor

Santos called me in this afternoon to say that the Decolonisation Commission (consisting of the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Melo Antunes and himself) had considered and approved his proposals. His preference would be for a secret meeting in London on either 12, 13, or 14 February but he was of course flexible as to timing.

2. I said that I had not yet received your comments on his proposals but expected to do so shortly. Santos said he would be out of town over the weekend but would get in touch with me on his return next week. I said I hoped that I would have had an indication of your views by then.

3. As a purely personal comment I referred to the publicly expressed opposition by UDT/Fretilin to the inclusion of either Indonesia or Australia in any UN supervisory role in Timor. This suggested that the two parties might be less than enthusiastic about the Minister's plan to associate both countries with Timor's economic development. Santos took the point but said he did not anticipate any difficulty in convincing both groups that independence without the willing co-operation of Indonesia would be illusory. It would also be important to associate Australia with the plan.

4. I said I was sure that an essential element for both governments would be an internationally acceptable act of self determination. When did Santos envisage this taking place? The Minister said the important thing would be to get the two parties to participate in a transitional government to be followed in due course by an election to a constituent assembly. This could take place towards the end of this year or next depending on developments. He repeated his earlier assertion that Apodeti would 'disappear'.

5. I referred to the difficulty of keeping the proposed tripartite meeting secret and to the embarrassment to all three governments if it became public knowledge. Santos said there was no difficulty as far as he was concerned. He would simply go to London and book himself into an hotel without making any contact with his own embassy. He had done this on previous occasions without any difficulty.

6. I asked about Pires' movements. (We had heard from an American source that he was already en route to Lisbon). Santos said he would not allow Pires to go to Jakarta but had in mind to summon him to Lisbon later this month but not before the proposed tripartite meeting had taken place.

7. I undertook to contact Santos when I had heard from you.

COOPER

[NAA: A10005, 202/1/3, v]

79 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 10 February 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

There has been a number of recent developments since we last addressed you on the subject of Portuguese Timor. We require guidance on some new proposals advanced in Lisbon by Dr Almeida Santos, the Portuguese Minister for Inter-territorial Co-ordination. We also seek your approval for a course of action proposed in connexion with a development which has arisen in the United Nations.

2. On 20 December you approved recommendations relating to our future policy towards the territory. In brief the two key points of the submission¹ (with which you concurred) were that we should henceforth place more emphasis in our future policy on self-determination, but that we should also take a step backwards from involvement in the problem of P. Timor lest we become more enmeshed in it than need be. On 14 January you wrote to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence enclosing copies of our submission and in effect seeking their endorsement of it as well.² There have been earlier indications that the thrust of our submission accorded with the Prime Minister's own thinking on P. Timor.

Recent Developments

3. It was noted in the earlier submission that the positions of the pro-independence FRETILIN Party and the more conservative UDT were in reality not far apart. FRETILIN wanted independence 'soon'; UDT looked forward to a period of preparation before 'eventual independence'. In the event, a dialogue between the two groups culminated on 22 January in the publication of a joint communique setting out 'common policies' between the two parties. These are: total independence; rejection of integration with Indonesia; establishment of a 'transitional government' comprising solely FRETILIN and UDT; and a call for a United Nations supervisory committee to oversee the decolonisation process. The communique states that the 'great powers of Asia and others under the influence of Indonesia, including Australia' should be automatically disqualified from participation in the UN Committee.

4. No indication is given as to when FRETILIN and UDT might hope to achieve their now common aim of independence. More disturbing is the suggestion which emerges from the communique that FRETILIN and UDT may have in mind a solution for P. Timor that would

¹ See Document 67.

² See Document 71 and note 1 thereto.

bypass the need for an act of self-determination. There are shades of a 'Mozambique solution' in the references to the establishment of a transitional government composed solely of persons appointed by FRETILIN and UDT. You will also recall that Ramos Horta told officials in Canberra in December that he saw no need for an election or plebiscite: FRETILIN's goal of independence was supported by the people and that was that.

5. We have already been told by the Indonesians that they regard the terms of the alliance between UDT and FRETILIN as 'provocatively anti-Indonesian'. Like us, they seem to have concluded that Portugal might follow the pattern of decolonisation established in Africa, handing over, without recourse to self-determination, to the pro-independence groups. They have said this would be a 'worrying development', and indeed implied that it would be unacceptable. Our Chargé d'Affaires in Jakarta senses a toughening of Indonesia's attitude towards P. Timor, the development of a frame of mind 'which could favour direct intervention in P. Timor'.³

6. The idea that an independent P. Timor would create an intolerable threat to Indonesia's security is deeply engraved on the Indonesian psyche and will not be easily shaken. We have received more evidence in this connexion that contingency planning for a possible Indonesian military operation against P. Timor continues. Your attention is invited to the attached item extracted from the JIO Daily Bulletin dated 6 February. While it cannot be concluded from this that an actual military operation is imminent—putatively the stress continues to be on the defensive character of much of the contingency planning—the Indonesians are clearly keeping the military option open.

7. The Australian Government's commitment to a separate act of self-determination was emphasised in discussions with Dr Almeida Santos last October; the point was repeated to Ramos Horta in December in the context of his own suggestion that a Mozambique formula would suffice. In view of recent developments, however, we have felt that the point should be underscored again with the Portuguese. This was done in a call our Ambassador paid on Dr Santos on 4 February.⁴ On instructions, Mr Cooper invited Dr Santos' attention to the risk involved in any strategy of decolonisation that effectively handed over power to UDT/FRETILIN without an act of self-determination. He suggested that such a course could be regarded as a direct challenge to Indonesia, providing a pretext for Indonesian intervention.

8. Santos indicated that he was alive to the dangers vis-à-vis the Indonesians. But he also maintained that Lisbon's role was to co-operate with UDT and FRETILIN (and not to worry too much about the pro-Indonesian APODETI which Santos dismissed as being without any local support and as likely to 'disappear'). Moreover, while Santos continues to speak of a 'period of some years' before independence, and although he confirmed that an act of self-determination would be essential at some stage, we have to recognise that recent developments in Timor have probably generated a momentum of their own in favour of earlier, rather than later, independence.

9. More to the point, our Embassy in Lisbon has gained the impression that Santos, and the other civilian ministers, may be lagging behind the thinking of the Armed Forces Movement in Portugal, which our Embassy believes would like to speed up the decolonisation process. Our Embassy has come to this view on the basis of discussions with its own military contacts in Lisbon.⁵ Any drift to the extreme left there could well accelerate pressures on the Lisbon Government to divest itself of its remaining colonial responsibilities.

³ See note 2 to Document 75.

⁴ See Document 76.

⁵ See Document 77 and note 1 thereto.

10. Internal Portuguese political developments are also clearly at the forefront of Indonesian concern.

Proposals Advanced by Dr Santos

11. During our Ambassador's call on Santos, the Portuguese Minister told Mr Cooper that he recognised the need for close co-operation between Lisbon, Canberra and Jakarta on the Timor question. He outlined his 'proposed solution' for Portuguese Timor. He envisages a period of some years during which Lisbon would retain ultimate responsibility for P. Timor, but would co-operate closely with UDT and FRETILIN (but not APODETI). At the same time, Australia and Indonesia would be invited to participate in a joint economic aid program to ensure P. Timor's viability. ('Portugal could not afford to do this alone'.) Eventually when circumstances permitted—he referred to later this year or next—there would be an act of self-determination. Santos' own preference was for the election of a constituent assembly, rather than a referendum.

12. As a first step, Santos saw a need for a 'secret tripartite meeting' between representatives of the Portuguese, Indonesian and Australian Governments to discuss his proposals. He said that such a meeting should take place in Europe; a meeting in the Timor area would be 'impossible to keep secret'. Following the tripartite meeting the proposals would be canvassed with UDT/FRETILIN (but again not with APODETI).

13. Santos was not put off by our Ambassador's observation that UDT/FRETILIN opposition to the inclusion of Indonesia and Australia in any UN supervisory role in P. Timor could suggest that they would equally oppose our participation in Santos' plan. Santos responded that he did not anticipate any difficulty in convincing both groups that independence without the willing co-operation of Indonesia would be illusory. But it was 'also important to associate Australia with the plan'.

14. Santos has since discussed his ideas within the Portuguese Decolonisation Commission (consisting of the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and himself) which has apparently approved them. On 6 February he called in Mr Cooper to suggest that the proposed 'secret meeting' should take place in London on either 12, 13 or 14 February, while adding that 'he was, of course, flexible as to time and place'.⁶ Mr Cooper was asked to let him have our reactions in the next few days. Santos did not say whether he had also advanced the proposal to the Indonesians, but we suspect that he is awaiting the Australian reaction first.

The Australian Interest

15. We, of course, must welcome Santos' willingness to consult us and invite our views. But we are unattracted by the idea of a three-party conclave, secret or otherwise. What Santos proposes would risk drawing us more deeply into the problems of P. Timor than we should like. His proposal runs counter to the theme of non-involvement which you endorsed in our earlier submission. It is for Portugal itself to bring about acceptable decolonisation in Timor in association with the Timorese themselves. This is not a responsibility which the Portuguese can shrug off or ask others to share.

16. For the same reasons we are concerned at the notion that has apparently caught hold in Lisbon that we and the Indonesians might be willing to share the burden with Portugal for Timor's economic viability. It is true that during the visit of Dr Santos last October he raised the question of Australian economic and technical help, and was encouraged by the Prime Minister to think of a possible trilateral aid program involving Portugal, Australia and Indonesia (and perhaps some other ASEAN countries).⁷ But no commitments were made and the Prime

⁶ See Document 78.

⁷ See note 1 to Document 48.

Minister was probably thinking of something much more modest than evidently Dr Santos now has in mind.

17. You, yourself, were cautious in responding to Ramos Horta's overtures about Australian aid when you received him on 11 December. You said that we could not give money or budgetary support, but would be willing to consider some technical training. You later commented, 'I suppose so', on the proposal in our submission of 13 December that we should provide aid to P. Timor under a trilateral umbrella.⁸ The Aid Agency is unenthusiastic about a substantial aid program for P. Timor.

18. As against all this, there is, as already noted, no guarantee that Portugal will not simply give up in P. Timor, the more so because Australia offers it no encouragement to stay on. This possibility confronts us with a policy dilemma—a need to trade off the advantages, immediate as well as long-term, of maintaining a discreet distance from the P. Timor conundrum, against the risk that we may thereby be missing an opportunity to influence events in P. Timor in a way that might help forestall problems later on. This ground was covered in detail in our earlier submission. We have examined the new situation and conclude, on balance, and again subject to continuing review, that we should still be best advised to avoid entanglement.

19. The one caveat we would enter relates to aid. The financial burden of P. Timor apparently weighs heavily in Lisbon, and the extent to which we and the Indonesians may be willing to help could be a significant factor in influencing Portuguese policy. The political potential provided by economic aid for building for the future in a probably independent P. Timor should also not be overlooked. While there could be no question of our taking on a substantial proportion of present Portuguese expenditure, we may need to contemplate something more than token aid and indeed we should not regard an annual Australian contribution of \$1 to \$2 million as excessive in the circumstances. We would of course need to explore the modalities and practicalities with the Aid Agency.

20. As noted, we are uncertain whether the Portuguese have canvassed their secret meeting proposal with Indonesia. On 31 January the Indonesians were expressing concern to our Embassy in Jakarta that Portugal seemed to be proceeding with the decolonisation of P. Timor without keeping Indonesia informed as Santos had promised when he visited Jakarta in 1974. The Indonesians do not share our own caution about 'involvement' and indeed would more than welcome any opportunity to shoulder some of the responsibility for determining with the Portuguese the nature and rate of change in the territory. Accordingly, we believe that the Portuguese should be encouraged to expose their thinking to the Indonesians and even to accept Indonesia as a party principal, so to speak, to the problems posed by P. Timor. While we should also wish to maintain contact, the Australian role might be better understood as that of an observer. By keeping in touch with both the Indonesians and Portuguese, but separately, we should be able to help iron out misunderstandings, to keep before all the parties our view on the need for an act of self-determination, and also, since this is still the most likely possibility, continue to try to bring the Indonesians to recognise that an independent P. Timor need not be the end of the world. At the same time, by remaining on the sidelines, we minimise the risk of entangling Australia.

21. As stated, Santos has asked for our reactions to his proposal. We have prepared the attached draft reply to Lisbon.

United Nations' Interest

22. There is one further matter on which we should appreciate guidance. UDT/FRETILIN have now cabled the UN, canvassing their idea for the establishment of a UN Supervisory

⁸ See Document 67 and note 6 thereto.

Committee for P. Timor, and repeating their view that the great powers, Australia, Indonesia and also, now, the other ASEAN countries, have disqualified themselves from membership. The Secretary of the Committee of Twenty-Four has sought our Mission's views and those of [the] Indonesia[n]s on whether the text should be circulated. In response, the Indonesian Permanent Representative has sought to discourage the Secretariat and we understand that the Secretariat is inclined to accept Indonesia's advice. Our Mission in New York has also gone along with the Indonesians. However, the question arises whether we should allow ourselves to get into a position where we could be accused—by domestic critics as well as others—of trying to block the circulation in New York of an appeal lodged by legitimate petitioners. We believe it would accord more with Government policy for our Mission to inform the Secretariat that, so far as Australia is concerned, we should have 'no objection' to the circulation of the text.

Recommendations

23. *It is recommended that:*

- (a) you approve the text of the proposed outward telegram to Lisbon;
- (b) you endorse the course of action in the United Nations proposed in paragraph 22 above.

LANCE JOSEPH

Acting First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A11443, [14]]

80 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON

Canberra, 11 February 1975

O.CH172733 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

*Ref O.LB689, O.LB671*¹

We have examined carefully the proposals made to you by Dr Santos on 4 February. As you surmise, his idea do[es] indeed envisage a much greater degree of Australian involvement in P. Timor's future than we would consider desirable at this stage. We hold the view strongly that Portugal itself should bear the prime carriage for decolonisation in P. Timor. We, of course, welcome the willingness of Santos to consult and to invite our views, and we should like to continue the dialogue that you have begun with him. As you also know, it is intended that a senior officer from our Embassy in Jakarta should proceed shortly to P. Timor for discussions, inter alia, with the Governor of the Territory. But it is a long way from this point to accepting any responsibility, as a party principal so to speak, in the decolonisation of P. Timor.

2. It follows that we are unattracted by the proposal for a 'secret tripartite meeting' to resolve the future of P. Timor. This could risk drawing us much more deeply into the P. Timor problem

¹ Documents 76 and 78 (4 and 6 February). There is an unexplained discrepancy in the sequential numbering of these cablegrams, in that the earlier cablegram bears a higher number. The discrepancy is not reflected in the post serial numbers which are, respectively: 681 and 692 to Canberra; 62 and 64 to Jakarta.

than our interests dictate. As you noted to Dr Santos, it could also lead to embarrassment, international as well as domestic, should, as would be likely, reports of our participation in such a conclave leak out. We see no need for such a meeting and should like you to discourage Dr Santos from any notion that we might be willing to take on the sort of shared responsibility for P. Timor implied in Santos' proposal.

3. For similar reasons, we are uneasy about his ideas for a joint economic aid program. This is not the first occasion that he has suggested such an approach. The suggestion arose during Dr Santos' discussions in Canberra and, in addition, he referred to the need for Portugal to share the financial burden in Timor with Australia and Indonesia in his address to UNGA on 3 December last.²

4. The Australian position as approved by the Minister is that we are willing to consider the provision of aid, together with Portugal and Indonesia. We envisage, however, a more modest contribution than Dr Santos appears to have in mind. Earlier indications were that Ministers would probably wish to limit Australian assistance, initially at least, to the provision of technical aid. But Ministers would certainly be prepared to consider something more substantial (amounting, say, to dollars 1 or 2 million yearly) in the light of changing circumstances. Nevertheless we believe that financial support for Portuguese Timor must primarily be a Portuguese responsibility just as, for many years, we have accepted virtually complete responsibility for external aid to PNG.

[5]. We should like you to convey the gist of these remarks on economic aid to Dr Santos, while affirming that, within these general limitations, we would be prepared to consider any specific proposals for assistance that the administration in Timor might wish to make. You could suggest that the Portuguese in Dili might take up the matter with Australian officials who we now expect will be visiting P. Timor at fairly frequent intervals.

6. Your assumption that we would not wish to approach the Indonesians with Santos' proposals are correct. But we should also have to say that Australian reservations about being drawn too deeply into the Timor problem may not be, and are probably not, shared by the Indonesians. We would raise no objections were Portugal and Indonesia to get together to sort out a common approach to the Timor problem, and indeed we should welcome it. Please make this point too to Dr Santos and propose that, in the light of indications of Indonesian uneasiness about recent developments, he might see value in making an early approach to the Indonesians.

7. On the more general question of timing of constitutional advance, we again recognise this to be mainly a matter for Portugal to resolve with the Timorese, hopefully in consultation with the Indonesians. We would also hope that all parties would recognise the value of a measured and deliberate approach in P. Timor, this implies some period of preparation before the final act of self-determination. We continue, of course, to stand firmly behind the need for a genuine act of self-determination, whether this be a plebiscite or, as Dr Santos seems to prefer, an election for some kind of constituent assembly. We should like you to underscore this yet again with Dr Santos.

8. We take your points about the attitudes of the Armed Forces Movement and the possibility that the military may see the need for more rapid decolonisation in Timor than is currently favoured by Dr Santos. The risk that Portugal will simply give up in Timor is very real, and we recognise that such trends could be encouraged by Australian reticence to share Portugal's burden. But, for reasons previously conveyed to you, we also have to weigh up the risks of embroilment and entanglement that a more forward Australian policy would imply.

² See note 1 to Document 48 and Document 72.

9. For the present, and in full recognition of the risks, we should prefer to try to keep Portugal's shoulder to the wheel through counselling and persuasion. We still hope that the Government and Armed Forces in Portugal might be brought to accept that, in the short term anyway,

P. Timor should be regarded as analogous to the Macao enclave, where, because of the attitude of a large and influential neighbouring country, Portugal has decided for the present to soldier on.

10. The Minister has endorsed this telegram.

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, iv]

81 LETTER FROM BARNARD TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 11 February 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 13th January to the Prime Minister about Portuguese Timor.¹ This subject bears very directly on our defence and strategic interests. I think it has serious implications not only for our policy but for the Government's domestic political position in these respects. Rather than commenting directly on the conclusions that you have put to the Prime Minister, may I therefore invite your attention to considerations that are giving me anxiety. I much appreciate your thought that a co-ordinated approach should be developed between our two Departments and to this end I suggest in this letter a line of policy to protect the interests with which I am more directly concerned. I believe developments now require that a clear statement of Australian views again be put to the Indonesian Government.

I do not consider that military-strategic considerations of themselves require us to express a preference whether Portuguese Timor should be independent or be part of the Indonesian state. Moreover, even were there a clear military preference, this would have to be weighed, on the one hand, against our national interest in the preservation of a co-operative relationship with Indonesia and, on the other, against political policy supporting the rights of the Portuguese Timorese to self-determination. Future military potentialities—such as strategic tension in Australian relations with Indonesia, or with some third power—are not such as to override our present policies as described above. While on balance there are possible stronger arguments for Indonesian control of the territory, if this were acceptably and securely achieved, the establishment there of an independent state would also be acceptable to Australia from the military-strategic point of view. In either case what will be important to Australia from the strategic point of view will be that the final settlement not develop into a 'running sore' in our neighbourhood that could complicate our relations with Indonesia and that could attract unwelcome attention from other powers.

What is of central concern to the defence interests, and I believe to our political interests as a Government, is, therefore, the manner in which Portuguese Timor moves either to independence or to Indonesian control. I attach for your information the latest JIO assessment of Indonesian attitudes. There are indications of significant development since you wrote to the Prime Minister. I am deeply disturbed by the present indications that the Indonesian Government is considering military action to seize Portuguese Timor, that influential elements

¹ Document 71.

in Jakarta favour this course and that, while a decision has not yet been reached, there are military preparations that would allow action at short notice.²

May I put to you some of the consequences as I see them for our Government position and policies if the Indonesians take immoderate action.

We could expect unfavourable reaction from a wide and influential range of Australian opinion, which would much limit our ability to maintain our present relationship with Indonesia. This reaction would come from those who are already, on various political grounds, critical of the present Indonesian regime; it would also come from those who saw, or presented, Indonesia's action as containing military threat to Australia. Years of effort to induce a sober and responsible approach for the development of a constructive relationship with Indonesia could be undone. There would be those very ready to declare that the strategic assessment and defence policy that we have put to the nation, of relative stability in our immediate strategic environment and a relative reduction in the resources allocated to our Defence effort, were discredited. There would be demands for a different posture to Indonesia and for an increase in our defence effort and defence expenditures.

A particular area of policy that would come under attack from all the critics would be our Indonesian program of defence aid and co-operation. This, as you know, is the only tangible activity supporting our relationship with Indonesia in the defence and strategic field: if we reduced it, the overall relationship would be damaged and reduced. We have important projects now in mid-course in Indonesia, and only two months ago I was in Jakarta discussing our next program, to which we are publicly committed, with General Panggabean.

Developments in Australia in the foregoing respects would produce reactions in Indonesia. I cannot share the view reported last year from Indonesia that, like India's seizure of Goa, Indonesian seizure of Portuguese Timor 'would attract little attention, even if it did, it would not be recalled with any emotion'. I fear that our relationship with Indonesia would be difficult to restore, the more so if we were forced by domestic opinion to make adjustments to our defence attitudes and defence co-operation program—and the latter would be particularly hard to sustain. In this situation, the difficulties and frictions that are bound to arise with Indonesia from time to time, as for example currently in respect of Indonesian fishermen in our north-western waters, and that are manageable within our present friendly relationship could become more difficult to manage, with further unfavourable effect on the relationship.

A further aspect concerns Papua New Guinea. At present there seems little awareness there of Portuguese Timor; but we cannot be confident that this would continue were Indonesia to take immoderate action in Timor. I would expect people in Papua New Guinea to think about the implications for their own relations with Indonesia and in this respect to look again at their defence relationship with Australia. This could well be at the very time that we are finalising a defence relationship with PNG that, at the wish of both parties, will now contain no Australian commitment to the security of PNG after independence. Such a commitment would, of course, have direct implications for the structure of the Defence Force and for the size of our defence expenditure.

These are some of the immediate matters that appear to me to arise directly from any Indonesian policy towards Portuguese Timor involving military action. As I say, they impact forcibly on the defence interest, both domestically and internationally. I do not believe that we could easily contain reactions such as I have indicated and that they would blow over after a time.

² The assessment, dated 11 February, referred to Embassy reports that the Indonesians were increasingly leaning towards direct intervention.

There is, moreover, a more fundamental consideration, affecting our perception of our strategic circumstances and our status as a regional power. Since our intervention on behalf of the Indonesians against the Dutch effort to regain control of the former Netherlands East Indies by military force,³ Australia has asserted an interest and status in the affairs of the neighbouring region. The abiding strategic importance for us of the archipelago to the north, extending from Aceh in Sumatra to the islands of the South West Pacific, requires this. We cannot be, or be perceived to be, indifferent to developments affecting the nature and distribution of political power there and, in my view, we cannot accept that any other nation has the right unilaterally to change things by military force.

This, however, is a prospect with which we are now faced in respect of Indonesia and Portuguese Timor. This territory lies only some 300 miles from our coast, and half that from our potential maritime resources zone, and commands important lines of our sea communications. However, it is not the strategic significance of these facts that I am arguing but the significance of unilateral action there by Indonesia for our future relations with Indonesia, and for the maintenance of our interests in the security of Papua New Guinea and the easterly territories of our northern archipelago from military pressure, attack or occupation by an external power. If Indonesia moved militarily against Portuguese Timor despite Australian representations against this, we would have to assess very closely whether we had to deal with a neighbouring state in which dominant elements were disposed to deal with neighbourhood problems by use of military force. The implications of such an assessment for our strategic outlook and for our defence posture and expenditures are obvious. In addition, we have to consider our credibility in the neighbourhood and the region at large as a power concerned with stability and security and able and ready to exercise worthwhile influence in these respects.

I do not believe that we have yet reached this point. But I am concerned that we could be moved towards it, and for no good reason. When all our assessment and policy point to a co-operative relationship with Indonesia, to a loose, uncommitted defence relationship with Papua New Guinea, and to the maintenance of the present modest rate of defence expenditure, we are in danger of finding ourselves in a deteriorating relationship with Indonesia, and under pressure to accept greater responsibility for PNG and a heightened rate of defence development and expenditure.

There appear to me two primary reasons for this. First, as I understand the Indonesian position, their consideration of military action is based on quite unrealistic assessments of the dangers to their interests from political developments in Portuguese Timor. As I understand it, the Indonesians are concerned with dangers of communist subversion, of stimulus to separatism in their eastern territories and of intervention and eventual lodgement in Timor by an unfriendly external power. Such prospects would be of direct concern to Australia also. However, as I see the situation, while all of these factors may be present or inherent in the situation, their strength and potential are far from justifying the Indonesians' present anxieties. Indeed, it seems to me that the principal factors stimulating the developments feared by Indonesia are the attitude and behaviour of Indonesia itself.

This must be of concern to us; for by opposing independence the Indonesians are attracting the opposition of the dominant forces in the developing political life of Portuguese Timor, possibly in Portugal itself, and there is the clear risk that the more extreme the position Indonesia takes the more extreme will be its opposition. This does indeed open up a prospect of instability in the territory, even after an Indonesian seizure, sufficient at any rate to interest Australian

³ See *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949*, Volumes XI, XIII and XV, *Australia and Indonesia's Independence*, for an extensive selection of documents on this issue.

public opinion. It promises friction and instability between Indonesia and any independent state that may emerge. It adds to the risk of external attention and possibly involvement in some degree or other. These are not prospects we can accept with equanimity.

A second reason for the difficult situation in which we now find ourselves seems to be a misunderstanding by the Indonesians of Australia's position. Unless their present military preparations are being undertaken in conscious disregard of our representations, they seem to have heard only so much of what we have said to them as they wanted to hear, namely our acceptance of their interest in the future of Portuguese Timor and of its eventual absorption into the Indonesian state. The Indonesians do not appear to have a clear understanding of our opposition to the use of military force and the dangers of this for our relationship, or of our emphasis on the importance of an act of free choice by the people of Portuguese Timor.

If you agree with these comments, I suggest that, in the light of the latest intelligence, it is a matter of some urgency that we ensure that the Indonesians clearly understand our views in the two foregoing respects. I suggest further that, as well as trying to moderate the anxieties that now seem to motivate them, we might try to broaden the perspective of their thinking and promote a change of direction in their policy. To this end, while leaving them in no doubt that we could accept an eventual transfer of Portuguese Timor to Indonesia, we should emphasise again our view that our common interests require that this be by a process acceptable to the Timorese themselves. To this end we could suggest to them that it could be more rewarding for them to try to build relations with the political forces in Timor that are now attracting local support.

As part of our approach I suggest that we also might try to moderate Indonesian fears of an independent state in Timor. While my own view is that, could it be acceptably and securely achieved, the territory's ultimate absorption into Indonesia would appear the preferred outcome from our own point of view, I am not unduly disturbed by the prospect of a genuinely independent Timorese state. It would be poor and weak, but no more so than some of our South Pacific neighbours, and possibly with better prospects. If, as we might urge them to attempt, the Indonesians had managed to build friendly and influential relations with the Timorese during the years leading to determination of the issue, and had been at pains to avoid stimulating the developments they fear, there would seem to be a good enough prospect of reasonable stability in the territory and its relations with Indonesia. We could say that we should be ready to provide political and economic support to our important common interests with Indonesia in this situation.

The handling of these matters is, of course, very much your concern. I put them forward for your consideration, and for the discussion you invite between our two Departments, because of the fundamental significance of the Portuguese Timorese question for our strategic and defence interests that I have indicated earlier in this letter, and because I believe it most important that we make an early approach to the Indonesians. We must, I consider, make a determined effort to deflect them from any immoderate action; we must also ensure that they clearly understand the unfavourable response such action would arouse here and the pressures to which our Government policies for co-operation with them would be exposed. We cannot afford to have them take action and then be surprised and angered by our response.

As to our response should the Indonesians nevertheless move against Portuguese Timor, I might say finally that I do not envisage any immediate and drastic steps, such as physical

opposition or sanctions or an international political campaign to restrain Indonesia. However, as I have mentioned, I am not sanguine that I could hold to our defence co-operation program and for the longer term, far from treating a strong Indonesian intervention in Timor as a passing incident, I would require that our assessments of Indonesia and the defence policies dependent on them be closely reviewed. There would also be the question of the Government's political handling of the likely public reactions that I have indicated.

I am passing a copy of this letter also to our colleague the Prime Minister.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, vii]

82 MINUTE FROM FORRESTER TO FEAKES

Canberra, 12 February 1975

RESTRICTED

Portuguese Timor

I refer to paragraph 2 of the attached record of conversation with the Portuguese Ambassador and the Ambassador's reference to a 'special ingredient' in Macao.

2. In our most recent cable to Lisbon we suggested that Portugal should come to regard Portuguese Timor in the same light as Macao, i.e. Portugal took account of Indonesia as a large and influential neighbour just as it takes account of China's view.

3. Paragraph 2 of the record suggests that the Portuguese, on the contrary, have a deprecatory view of the Indonesians. It is perhaps time that they were put right, in the interests principally of an orderly outcome in Timor. It could be put to them that Indonesia is the world's fifth most populous country; Indonesia is a country of some influence in the region; Indonesian civilization has a long and illustrious past; and that Indonesians could suggest that earlier 'Indonesian' dynasties had suzerainty over islands like Timor in the same sense that the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties 'ruled' what is now China. Such an approach could at least induce the Portuguese to take more account of Indonesian attitudes given that they already, in the Ambassador's own words, 'kow-tow' to Chinese attitudes.

4. An introductory call by the Ambassador could provide the opportunity to make these points.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xvii]

83 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN WILLESEE, FEAKES AND JOSEPH Canberra, 13 February 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

On 11 February the Minister discussed the attached submission on Timor¹ with Messrs Feakes and Joseph. Several points emerged:—

- (a) The Minister expressed concern about the risks of embroilment in Timor. He agreed that so far as possible we should not allow ourselves to be ensnared in the problems of Timor. We could not take over Portugal's colonial burden. The responsibility for decolonisation was Portugal's alone.
- (b) On the other hand, the Minister was aware of the risk that Portugal might simply throw in its hand in Timor. Portugal might well require some encouragement to stay. For us to encourage the Portuguese not to leave precipitately might require of us a more generous response on the matter of aid than we might otherwise wish to make. The amount of \$1–\$2 million mentioned in the submission did not seem excessive. Nor were these amounts necessarily to be regarded as a ceiling. We had to respond to a 'political need'; if necessary, the Minister would be prepared to argue in Cabinet for additional aid funding for Portuguese Timor. The Minister directed that paragraph 4 of the draft telegram to Lisbon² be adjusted to reflect these views and he agreed to the suggestion that the terms of the redrafted paragraph should be cleared with the Aid Agency.
- (c) The Minister considered that, although Portugal might be persuaded to soldier on in Timor, the drift of its present policy was disquieting. Dr Santos, for example, had evidently encouraged the UDT–FRETILIN merger; and he now appeared frightened by the consequences of his action. Present trends in Portuguese policy reinforced the Minister's concern that Australia should be careful about involvement. He wished that we were better informed about the development of opinion in Portuguese Timor but he agreed that we should not move to reopen the Consulate in Dili, although the situation might change, necessitating reconsideration of the question. For the present, however, the disadvantages of re-establishing the Consulate outweighed the advantages. The Minister speculated about the possibility of establishing some 'intelligence presence' in Timor as a means of providing us with independent information on what was happening on the ground there.
- (d) The Minister was worried by the recent information suggesting military preparations by Indonesia. He also referred to the drift to greater authoritarianism in Indonesia exemplified by the recent arrest of Mochtar Lubis.³ He speculated that a point could be reached where Australia might need to place some public distance between itself and Indonesia. In this connexion he expressed reservations about the concept of providing aid under a 'trilateral umbrella'. What was meant by 'trilateral'? The Minister saw no objections to Australia's providing aid *together with* Indonesia and

¹ Document 79.

² Document 80.

³ Mochtar Lubis was editor of the *Indonesia Raya* and an outspoken critic of the corruption of both the Sukarno and Soeharto regimes. He was arrested following the banning of the newspaper in February 1975.

- Portugal, or to consultations with the Portuguese and the Indonesians about aid, but he was opposed to joint Australian–Indonesian participation in projects involving, for instance, Australians and Indonesians working side by side on the same project in Timor. In general, he wished to guard against the danger that an Australian aid program in Portuguese Timor might leave the public impression that Australia's and Indonesia's overall policies towards Portuguese Timor were closely co-ordinated. If this notion were to gain credence, it would reduce our room for manoeuvre, should the Indonesians decide to move militarily to incorporate Portuguese Timor.
- (e) The Minister felt we should be actively trying to deflect the Indonesians from an immoderate policy in Timor. We should be trying to allay their fears about an independent Timor, to encourage them to accept that independence was the most likely eventuality, and to bring them to recognise that, like us, Indonesia would have to learn to live with it. Mr Feakes noted that this aspect of our policy had been covered in the earlier submission.⁴ We had in fact already spoken in this vein to the Indonesians, taking the opportunity, among others, of the annual official consultations between the Australian and Indonesian Foreign Ministries last October.⁵ Nevertheless it would be timely to repeat our advice to the Indonesians. It was intended that Mr Woolcott should take the opportunity of his introductory calls in Jakarta next month to reiterate our views. Further opportunities would be presented by the forthcoming visit to Australia of General Surono, Deputy Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces, and by the⁶ talks scheduled to take place in the next month or two. There was also the possibility that President Soeharto might be coming to Australia in the next few months.
 - (f) Mr Joseph noted that, if our views were to influence the Indonesians, we should need to be able to point to some effective alternative strategy for them. We should need, for example, to put it to them that the best way of 'containing' an independent Timor might be to adopt positive political and economic policies designed to tie the territory to its regional environment, and by helping rather than hindering the fledgling independence movement, make it unnecessary for the latter to look beyond the region for support. But this implied a willingness of Australia to work alongside Indonesia in a number of fields, including the provision of economic aid. The Minister acknowledged this. The practical point that he wanted to make as recorded in (d) above was that Australian aid should be provided bilaterally, but that there would otherwise be no objections to consultations and co-ordination with Indonesia, or with Indonesia and Portugal, on a common approach to aid.
 - (g) The Minister agreed with the approach we were recommending in relation to the UDT–FRETILIN message to the United Nations. He wondered whether there might not be advantages in United Nations involvement. Mr Joseph demurred. He invited attention to the experience in Portugal's African territories where power had been, or was being, effectively handed over to a self-proclaimed nationalist group without an act of self-determination. If the Committee of Twenty-Four were to recommend or accept a similar approach in Portuguese Timor—an approach which had already been advocated by FRETILIN—this could be very awkward, and Indonesia might be provided with a pretext to act. Mr Feakes pointed out that we were already doing

⁴ Document 67.

⁵ See Document 55.

⁶ Less than half a line has been expunged here.

what we could do to discourage the Portuguese from any thoughts of doing without an act of self-determination. Our Ambassador in Lisbon had stressed the point in his calls on Dr Santos on 4 and 6 February and would be asked to do so again in the further call that it is proposed he should make on Dr Santos this week.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, vii]

84 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 13 February 1975

O.JA7640 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.CH172733,¹ O.LB711

I had a discussion today on Portuguese Timor with Harry Tjan of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. There were two matters of particular significance arising from this discussion.

2. Tjan began by reviewing developments over the past few months. I purposely led him into the subject of aid. He said that originally Indonesia had thought it would be a sensible policy for it to offer to make aid available to Portuguese Timor. They thought there would be a number of advantages for Indonesia in doing this. Adam Malik had told a number of people, including visitors from Portuguese Timor, that Indonesia would be prepared to offer some aid. But the circumstances had now changed. A decision had been taken recently by the high-level committee on Portuguese Timor that Indonesia would not provide economic assistance for Portuguese Timor, at least until the political situation was crystal clear both in Portuguese Timor and Portugal.

3. I asked Tjan whether any decision had been taken in relation to Indonesia's attitude to other countries that may decide to provide assistance for Portuguese Timor. Tjan said that no such decision had been taken, but I could rest assured that the Indonesian Government would regard it as an 'unfriendly act' for any country at this stage to offer economic assistance to Portuguese Timor. Such assistance could benefit only one party in Portuguese Timor—the Fretilin/UDT. It would strengthen the independence party enormously because they could then confidently argue that an independent Portuguese Timor would be economically viable with the guarantee of a flow of aid from outside. Such assistance would literally pull the rug from under the Apodeti party. In a real sense the offer of aid by another country to Portuguese Timor at this stage would be regarded by Indonesia as interference in the uncertain internal political situation there.

4. I did not tell Tjan of the way we ourselves are moving in this matter (paragraphs 4 and 5 of your CH172733) nor did I tell him that we had already conveyed our intentions to the Portuguese Government. But since Santos has now said that he would go ahead and approach the Indonesians I assume that he will at the same time tell them of what we ourselves are prepared to do with regard to economic assistance for Portuguese Timor.

¹ Document 80.

5. It seems to me that the timing is the key. It may be better for us to say that we would consider the provision of aid for Portuguese Timor after the political situation there was settled and the future of the territory finally decided. An offer by Australia of aid at this stage could be exploited by Fretilin/UDT to their advantage. If Tjan is correct, the Indonesian Government would regard it as an unfriendly act. In those circumstances, we should certainly become deeply involved.

6. The other matter mentioned by Tjan was th[at] the policy committee on Portuguese Timor was chaired by the Minister for Defence, General Panggabean. In the majority of cases, however, Panggabean himself did not attend and General Yoga Sugama, Head of BAKIN, sat in the chair. The Minister for Information, Mashuri, in addition to the others already known to you, also attends. Ali Murtopo was a leading participant. Tjan receives regular reports of these messages from Ali Murtopo and from his close friend, Mashuri. He asked me to guess who I thought was the most extreme of the hard-liners in the group. (I would have said Benny Moerdani of HANKAM, but I made no reply.) Tjan said 'you will not believe this. It is Adam Malik'. He said that Malik was [the] cleverest politician in Indonesia. Malik, to preserve his own position as Foreign Minister, had gone from one extreme position to the other on Portuguese Timor. Malik sensed how the wind was blowing and at the last two meetings had taken a harder line on Portuguese Timor than anyone had done up to now. He had informed the last meeting that if Indonesia had to take Portuguese Timor by force he could guarantee that he personally could cope with the international repercussions that would flow from it. Malik said he was quite confident that within 12 months or, at the outside, two years, the whole matter would have blown over and everyone would have forgotten it.

7. Tjan added, somewhat ruefully, that while the outside world saw Adam Malik as the moderate, many regarded Ali Murtopo as a sinister influence. In fact, Ali was calling for caution and restraint. But if a decision to use force were to be made, Ali would be called upon to 'do the dirty work'.

(Comment: one can deduce from this that OPSUS is very much alive.)

DAN

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, iv]

85 MINUTE FROM JOSEPH TO FEAKES

Canberra, 14 February 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor—Defence's Letter

The following comments are submitted in connexion with the letter from the Minister for Defence to Senator Willesee dated 11 February.¹

2. With much of the letter we can have no disagreement. In particular, we must share the concern about the implications domestically of military action by Indonesia in Portuguese Timor. However, we would not be as adamant as Defence that Indonesia could not get away

¹ Document 81.

with it. An arctic frost would no doubt descend on Australian relations with Indonesia with some of the consequences Defence has sketched for the links between us, including the important defence cooperation link. But I have a hankering [*sic*] suspicion that the reaction in the world at large, and even elsewhere in South-East Asia, would amount to no more than a flutter, soon to be forgotten in the deeper preoccupations about energy, food, the Mid-East and so on. Even in Australia, the Government, whatever its political persuasion, should have to consider how long it could afford to maintain frigid relations. The thaw could come much sooner than Defence seems to think.

3. I think also that this Department would have to err still on the cautious side in regard to the imminence of any Indonesian military intervention. While recent developments and other evidence shows that the Indonesians are keeping their military options open, the stress in most of the reports we continue to receive is on the defensive character of the contingency planning.

4. These observations apart, we really have no quarrel with the main thrust of Defence's argument, and I agree that a renewed effort has to be made to bring the Indonesians to recognise that an immoderate policy towards P. Timor cannot but provoke a sharp reaction in Australia. I also agree that we must try to bring Indonesia to recognise that many of its fears about an independent Portuguese Timor are unrealistic or irrational; and that we have to try to convince them that it would be better to adopt a pragmatic and cooperative attitude towards the emerging independence movement in Timor rather than risk driving it into an intransigent position. In this connexion, the point made at the bottom of page 5 of Defence's letter seems a very valid one. It does indeed appear that one of the principal factors behind the hostility of Horta and his FRETILIN group is the attitude and behaviour of Indonesia itself. It was probably shared concern about Indonesian intentions also, that brought FRETILIN and UDT together, now on a common platform of independence, rather than continuing links with Portugal as favoured by UDT earlier, and which from the Indonesian viewpoint probably represented no bad interim solution.

5. These considerations, of course, have already been brought to the Indonesians' attention, including during the last round of official discussions. We might speculate, furthermore, that the force of our arguments, as stated at that time, had some impact in strengthening the hand of those in Jakarta advocating a moderate line. Nevertheless, as Defence says, there have been a number of subsequent developments, including recent military preparations that would allow Indonesia to take action at short notice.

6. There should be two aspects to any further approach to the Indonesians: the stick and the carrot. To take the stick first, we have to ensure that the Indonesians have a clear understanding of the importance we attach to an act of self determination by the people of Portuguese Timor, and of the damage to our relationship should they resort to force. These points have already been made to the Indonesians, and I should certainly hope that 'they have chosen simply not to hear them'. In fact we have evidence in Mr Taylor's discussion with Mr Harry Tjan on 30 January² that the message has not only penetrated to the highest levels of the Indonesian Government, but is not much liked.

7. The second aspect of any new approach to the Indonesians must be a more positive one. We need to consider whether we cannot point to some constructive alternative to the present path of sterile hostility which the Indonesians seem bent on following towards the dominant political forces in Timor. The last paragraph on page 6 and the first on page 7 of Defence's letter are relevant. Indeed the same sort of thoughts were canvassed in our earlier submission.

² See Document 75.

8. Defence propose—page 7 first paragraph—that Australia might say to the Indonesians that we should be ready to join with them in a program of political and economic support for Portuguese Timor to serve our common interests. We have to look carefully at the implications of this. If Indonesia would ‘buy it’—and telegram JA7640³ is relevant—the investment in effort and money might be worthwhile. But there is the other important element of our policy, namely that of non-involvement—of not allowing ourselves to be entrapped into a situation where we assume or are inveigled into assuming greater responsibility for Timor than we should wish and for Indonesia’s relations with Timor which could nevertheless still turn sour. I see nothing in Defence’s letter which should lead us to vary our preference for maintaining a cautious approach.

9. Mind you it is probably all a matter of degree. The Minister has now given us the green light to mount a not insignificant (in Timor terms) aid program, with the broad hint that he would not be opposed to an even larger program should this serve Australia’s political purposes. There would seem to be little disadvantage, and some merit, in elaborating the details of such a program in consultation with the Indonesians. We would, of course, have to play by ear, especially in the light of JA7640. Initially our consultations with the Indonesians might be merely pro forma. But an aid program should enable us to speak with some credibility when we suggest to the Indonesians that there is a different way to ‘contain’ Portuguese Timor, namely extending a helping hand to its emerging leaders, and making it unnecessary for Timor to look beyond our two countries (and presumably Portugal) for support.

10. I am not sure how we can work into a presentation to the Indonesians the point you made to me yesterday. As I understand it, you believe Defence has overlooked the possibility that a radical, Marxist, regime could emerge in Portuguese Timor that did indeed evince a compulsion to meddle, not only in Indonesia, but perhaps among the aboriginal population in Northern Australia. Would we then view with the same apprehension an Indonesian takeover? The public reaction at large would surely be more muted, public opinion having rationalised that Indonesia had been sorely provoked. The policy implication, as we discussed, is that in any presentation to the Indonesians we might need to allow that, while their assessment of the potential threat seems unfounded, there is even a greater reason why they should exercise restraint—namely that they could take out Portuguese Timor at any time. There is therefore no need for them to think in pre-emptive terms; rather their policy should be to await developments in the knowledge that, if necessary, they could always bring an end to provocative behaviour by the Timorese.

11. All this seems to make eminent good sense. But can we conjure up the words that would allow us to write such realpolitik into a ministerially-approved directive?

Conclusion

12. We must welcome the prospect of developing a coordinated approach with Defence on Portuguese Timor. Defence’s letter has been valuable in this respect, and I think we should offer to keep in close touch in the evolution of our future policy. As a start, we could indicate on Monday next that we can live with most of the arguments identified by Defence, and that our intention would be to include them in the ‘talking points’ to be prepared for our new Ambassador.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xvii]

³ Document 84.

86 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 14 February 1975

O.LB718 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

In the light of Jakarta's advice (O.JA7640),¹ I think there is a very real danger of Santos exaggerating the nature and extent of the aid we are contemplating for Timor when he speaks to the Indonesians. In order to make his case more persuasive Santos is almost bound to give the impression that Australia has already offered to provide aid and to blur the very modest nature of our offer.

2. You might therefore consider it desirable to let the Indonesians know what we have said to Santos on the question of aid with appropriate stress on the technical assistance aspect and a firm denial that it would involve any direct budgetary support. This should at least remove any suspicion in Jakarta that (as a result of what Santos might say) we are seeking to bolster the Portuguese position.

3. In speaking to Santos I adhered strictly to the terms of para 3. of your telegram 525² but even this could be misrepresented by Santos as amounting to an offer of millions of dollars.

COOPER

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, v]

87 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 17 February 1975

O.CH175724 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor*Ref O.JA7640*¹

You will have seen Lisbon's LB718.² We agree that you should let the Indonesians know what we have said to the Portuguese on the question of aid. Indeed there is probably value now in informing the Indonesians of the full exchange with Santos including: (a) his proposal for a secret meeting; (b) our understanding that a similar approach is to be made to Indonesia; (c) our response.

2. You should take the Indonesians carefully through the points in paragraphs 1-7 (as well as 9) of our CH172733³ stressing that our offer to consider a modest aid program was made

¹ Document 84.

² The reference is probably to Document 80, for which the Lisbon Post Serial Number is 522. The cablegram numbered 525 to Lisbon has no relevance to this issue. A reference to paragraph 4, rather than 3, may also be intended.

¹ Document 84.

² Document 86.

³ Document 80.

very much with the view to encouraging the Portuguese to resist pressures for rapid disengagement from P. Timor.

3. In regard to the points made in your JA7640, while not discounting the potential problems with the Indonesians, we do not see that it would be practicable, or wise, to back-track from what our Ambassador in Lisbon has told Dr Santos. To do so could merely lay the dynamite for future Portuguese disillusion. You should say to the Indonesians, however, that it would certainly not be in our thinking that Australian aid should help or give encouragement to UDT/Fretilin. It follows that the nature, procedures, channels and ultimate timing for implementing an Australian aid program would require careful consideration. We would hope this consideration would be enlightened by further consultations with Indonesia.

4. As will emerge from separate advice shortly to be sent in regard to the Ambassador's forthcoming introductory calls, we have in mind developing a generally more positive approach to the Indonesians on P. Timor, one element of which will be that willingness of Australia and Indonesia to extend a helping hand to the territory might be the best way of 'containing' any problems which it might pose to the region.⁴

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, v]

88 LETTER FROM WILLESEE TO BARNARD

Canberra, 19 February 1975

SECRET

Thank you for your letter dated 11 February on the subject of Portuguese Timor.¹

I am very glad to have the comprehensive analysis you have provided of the defence implications of the problem of Portuguese Timor. The problem, I agree, is of utmost importance to both of us. While there are several points on which I should probably take a different approach, the main thrust of your letter is very much in line with my own thinking. I agree that we need to renew our efforts to bring home to the Indonesians the emphasis placed in our own policy on an internationally acceptable act of self-determination in the territory, as well as on Australia's opposition to the use of military force. I also agree that these efforts need to be complemented by an attempt to promote changes in Indonesia's own policy which would help both Indonesia and Portuguese Timor by making it unnecessary for Portuguese Timor to look beyond its own region for support.

I could elaborate further on my own thinking. But perhaps a better way to proceed would be for officials from our two Departments to consult on the guidelines of what might be said to the Indonesians. The need for an early approach to them is of course obvious. Our new Ambassador to Indonesia will be arriving in Jakarta early next month. It has been my intention that the opportunity should be taken of his introductory calls to give a clear statement to the

⁴ The Embassy informed Akosah, Tjan and Abbas as instructed. Abbas and Tjan warned again against large scale aid, although Tjan modified his words 'unfriendly act' to 'unwise act'. Both thought modest technical aid would be acceptable; Tjan adding the proviso that Indonesia be consulted and Abbas noting this suggestion. Neither Akosah nor Tjan had heard of any Portuguese approach to Indonesia on the matter (Cablegrams JA7763, JA7790, 19 and 20 February respectively).

¹ Document 81.

Indonesians of Australia's views on Portuguese Timor. Further opportunities to do so will also be provided by the forthcoming visit to Australia of General Surono, Deputy Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces, as well as by the² talks scheduled to take place later in the year. In addition, President Soeharto himself may be visiting Australia before the middle of the year and the visit will provide the occasion for intensive discussions like those he and the Prime Minister had in Yogyakarta in September 1974.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister.

[NAA: A11443, [14]]

89 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 21 February 1975

O.CH177826 RESTRICTED PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Peter Hastings in an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 21 February writes that 'there are mounting and unwelcome indications . . . that the Indonesian Government is seriously considering taking out Portuguese Timor in a military operation in the not-too-distant future. There have been KKO (Marine Corps) exercises in Java: increased border activity in Timor and a general upgrading of military preparedness. Rumours point to an amphibious operation against Dili and the all-important 707 jet strip at Baucau'.

2. The article suggests that it is 'Jakarta's fears of an extreme left Portuguese Government granting Timor premature independence, and the incalculable effects of that, which is responsible for today's Marine Corps exercises'. Hastings also repeats an earlier assertion that the Prime Minister encouraged Indonesian designs on Portuguese Timor during his talks in September last year with President Soeharto.

3. Hastings reviews the likely international and regional reactions to an invasion and its effects on Australia's relations with Indonesia. He states that an invasion cannot escape critical international attention, particularly in the United Nations. It would become an issue in Australian domestic politics. Most seriously, Indonesian military action would 'undo the growing sense of trust and stability in the region (e.g. ASEAN, and the border agreements with Papua New Guinea) to which, as the biggest and most important power in the area, Indonesia has contributed so much'.

4. Hastings suggests that other means of controlling an independent Timor are open to Indonesia, including 'a formalised special relationship'.

5. Hastings concludes that 'one can only hope that these arguments are being thoroughly thrashed out in Jakarta, and that in the end President Soeharto will not come down on the side of the interventionists who have always argued that a military action would only make Indonesia unpopular in the world for five years at most'.

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, v]

² Less than half a line has been expunged here.

90 LETTER FROM PRITCHETT TO FEAKES

Canberra, 21 February 1975

SECRET

Thank you for the talking points about Portuguese Timor that you passed to me yesterday evening. I set out some comment below; perhaps, after you have read this, we could meet later in the day.

I take it that the points are intended to cover a variety of occasions, such as your Minister forecast in his letter this week to my Minister.¹ I agree that it will be desirable to have such a basic brief, on which Australian spokesmen can draw as appropriate to the particular occasion. However, my first comment is that I doubt that the oral representations envisaged by the production of talking points will meet our purpose. As we discussed yesterday, what appears necessary, if we are to make the impact we seek, is a letter from the Prime Minister to President Suharto, referring back to their September talks, expressing afresh Australian attitudes and stating what new views we have developed. Unless there be greater urgency, and I have not this impression from DJIO, whom I have asked, incidentally, to produce an assessment on timings to-day or by Monday, General Surono's visit the week after next appears quite adequate for the handing over of a letter. Even so, this still leaves us little time to produce a draft and have a final text agreed by Ministers.

In considering what the contents of a letter should be, I have reservations about some of the talking points you have given to me, and I indicate these later on. My primary reaction is that the points do not go far enough. Over here we feel that to represent our concern to the Indonesians, to urge them to change their tack, accept the concept of an independent Timorese state and work for influence on it, and to offer to support this approach by some economic aid, while all important points for our policy, may not make sufficient impact on the Indonesians. We feel that they are likely to need some more substantial encouragement.

I should like to have your reaction to the following suggestion. In trying to persuade the Indonesians that the Timorese will not choose transfer into the Indonesian state, that Indonesian seizure by force would be most undesirable and that our common interests would best be served by a Timorese state closely associated with Indonesia, I feel that there are considerable attractions in encouraging the Indonesians, and the Portuguese and the Timorese, to arrange that at independence the Timorese enter into a basic treaty relationship with Indonesia. This Treaty, which would be without time limit, could refer to common interests, amity, co-operation and so on, but would contain a key article whereby the parties would agree to consult together about developments affecting their common interests in the security and stability of the region.

I develop this line of thought a little below, but at this point I suggest that it provides a basis on which Indonesia could with some confidence switch from opposition to Timorese political aspirations to support, and to reconciliation with and winning over the Timorese politicians who are now causing them such disquiet. It provides the Indonesians with a way out from the dilemma in which the local Timorese situation on the one hand and our concern about the use of force on the other, will (at least so I hope) place them. It will also offer the Portuguese opportunity to satisfy both the Timorese and the Indonesians. They themselves have pointed out that Timorese independence without Indonesian support would

¹ See Document 88.

be illusory. As for the Timorese, all interested parties, Portugal, Indonesia and Australia, would be strongly placed to press them to accept an arrangement that satisfied their own aspirations while accommodating the interests of their immediate neighbours. I believe that these points can be developed quite persuasively.

As to the treaty arrangement itself, obviously it would require careful thought and political handling. It could be lost were the Indonesians too greedy and impatient or the Timorese too ambitious or given to haggle. It seems to me, however, that both sides would see tangible advantage in an arrangement under the treaty that, for example, provided for [a]n Indonesian subvention to the Timorese security forces. This would provide the Indonesians with access and influence in an area of prime concern to them and the cash should be welcome to the infant state (and, I imagine, its statesmen!). Whether the treaty should provide for action, as well as consultation, in the common interest, or the establishment of Indonesian defence facilities, are matters for later consideration; and I am sure that other ideas will readily suggest themselves to you.

An arrangement of this nature would be one that we could support, not only in its achievement but afterwards, by political policy, economic aid and some defence aid, all in consultation with both the other parties. Indeed, we could well consider that our interests would be served by some form of association with the treaty—but that thought would perhaps be for later. We should ensure, however, that our status was secured in some manner.

If you see the possibilities in this thinking that we do over here, I suggest that it would be desirable to develop a presentation for inclusion in the Prime Minister's letter that we have discussed.

Turning now to your talking points, it might be best if I attached some detailed comments and kept my comment here to some general aspects. (I know the notes are a first draft, which it is easier to comment on than to write!)

I have already commented that the points could lack persuasive impact. Apart from this, I find them rather too long and too extensive in their coverage; and I wonder is the tone always what we want.

I think it useful to start with a short memorandum of the Australian interest and agree that this be followed by a short review of recent developments and the present situation. Perhaps the thrust of this section might best be the clear Timorese opposition to Indonesian rule and the uncertainty about Portuguese intentions. This would lead naturally into reference to Indonesia's fears and to possible military action. However, you might care to consider whether the flow of the presentation might be better if these sections, B and C in the draft, were kept quite short and followed immediately by a statement of Australia's concern—concern at *all* lines of development inherent in the situation, the Timorese resistance to Indonesia, Portuguese unpredictability and Indonesia's contemplation of a military solution. This approach would, as they say, set the stage.

I suggest that that statement of Australian concern, which will need careful drafting, be short, but clear and firm. I would drop, I think altogether, the material on other aspects of concern, such as military risks for Indonesia, regional and world reactions, reactions in PNG. I feel it impolitic to speak to the Indonesians in such respects, with any weight anyway; and we would be merely giving our opinion, with which they could well disagree, even if they did not say so. The Australian reaction is the only one on which we can speak with authority, and require them to take into account.

Having stated the problem, I very much hope that you will find attraction in the thinking that I outlined earlier, about a treaty, and that we could then move straight on to presenting that. (I may say that our Minister was attracted when I tried to articulate the notion to him yesterday; but, of course, he has not endorsed it and its status is still that of a proposal to you.)

I mentioned tone. I find the draft not sympathetic enough, even rather nagging here and there. I suggest it will be important that what we say convey an impression of genuine friendship and shared concern, of respect for Indonesia's interests and status and of an Australian perspective of partnership with Indonesia in managing regional problems. I think this will be helped if we keep our line simple and the presentation fairly short.

We discussed procedure. I agree that a short covering submission should suffice and attached would be the draft Prime Minister's letter (via Surono?), the talking points, the recent Ministerial correspondence and, perhaps, a short intelligence note from Foreign Affairs and JIO.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/7, i]

91 MINUTE FROM PIPER TO FEAKES

Canberra, 21 February 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor—UN Action

An Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor would be contrary to Article 2(3) and (4) of the Charter which provides that international disputes shall be settled by peaceful means and obliges members to refrain from the threat or use of force, against the territorial integrity or political independence of another State.

Portugal could be expected to call for an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the action required on the basis that the invasion would constitute a threat to international peace and security. We could expect a generally favourable reaction to [a] call for an early meeting.

Initially we would expect the members of the Security Council . . . to call for and seek to implement a ceasefire and the withdrawal of all foreign troops. Whether or not a ceasefire would be successful would depend largely on the military situation on the ground (whether or not the Indonesians had achieved a military position from which to bargain politically) and on the disposition of one or more of the major powers to become involved, either militarily or as a political sponsor of either side in the Security Council.

We doubt that any of the Great Powers will be inclined to get directly involved although the United States will be sensitive about Congressional criticism of Indonesia and can be expected to act accordingly. It may be that China, as well as being critical of Indonesia, may seek to exploit Russian and United States discomfiture arising from their inability to find a solution to the problem.

If Indonesia does not succeed in securing a complete military take-over the Security Council may seek to interpose a peace-keeping/observer force, with the task of facilitating a cease-fire negotiation, military withdrawal, and an act of self-determination based on a

plebiscite. The example of West Irian has certain similarities but also illustrates that UN action resulted in what could be scarcely called a satisfactory international act of self-determination which, in the end, left the Territory with Indonesia. The Indonesians may seek the same result but may find the Timorese and the Portuguese less accommodating than were the West Irianese and Dutch. Perhaps a better parallel might be that of Goa, which India took over by force in 1961. Apart from expressions of regret the international community took no action.

Australia, in view of its strong and frequently expressed support for the principles of the UN Charter, in particular of non-use of force, and in view of its consistent support in the UN for the principle of self-determination, would need to strongly support UN action and condemn Indonesian military action directed to a forcible takeover.

Having regard to the situation in Portuguese Timor and with West Irian and Cyprus as a guide it would seem to us likely that Indonesia would achieve its objectives in the short term of establishing a presence and probably, having regard to the military factors, a quick take-over of the capital and main communications points. In the long term the response of the local populace (and to a lesser extent international reactions) would determine the extent and ease with which Indonesian control was maintained. Even though Indonesian action would fall into the category of outright aggression we would doubt whether the Security Council would achieve any practical effect in the face of a determined Indonesia. That is not to say that the Security Council would not pass, without opposition, resolutions condemning Indonesia's action in strong terms and calling for military cease-fire and withdrawal of forces. However it would seem to us unlikely that the Security Council would launch any Congo-type operation because the Communist countries would oppose any such direct intervention on principle and the USA (and others such as Australia) would be inhibited because of its support for the Suharto regime.

In the longer term the Security Council might seek to put greater pressure on the Indonesians by, for example, imposing economic sanctions (under Article 7 of the UN Charter) but again we think it unlikely that these would meet with much success. Such a call would put the Australian Government in an awkward position, and would highlight the impotence of the UN in a serious situation of this nature. We doubt that there would be much strong opposition to Indonesian action from the rest of the region although Japan which is a member of the Security Council might exert some pressure on Indonesia, at least to adopt face-saving devices. It is, however, unlikely to try any stronger tactics in the face of a determined and nationalist mood in Indonesia. Afro/Asian opinion in the UN is likely to be divided and irresolute.

92 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON AND JAKARTA

Canberra, 21 February 1975

O.CH178170 RESTRICTED PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

An AAP report of 20 February from Jakarta states that Fretilin and UDT have called for 'an immediate proclamation' of the territory's independence. The report states that 'the call was made through Timor Governor Lemos Pires'. This suggests that Pires might have conveyed the UDT-Fretilin case to the Portuguese authorities in Lisbon during his recent visit.

For Lisbon (Cooper)

The clear implication of this report is that UDT and Fretilin are pressing for a handover of power without recourse to self-determination. We should like Cooper to call as soon as possible on the Portuguese (preferably at Ministerial level) and stress the importance Australia attaches to a measured and deliberate process of decolonisation in Timor through arrangements leading to an internationally acceptable act of self-determination. You might also invite the attention of the Portuguese to the harmful effects the reported statement by Fretilin and UDT might have on Indonesian attitudes. (Reference O.CH177826.)¹

For Jakarta

Taylor should refer to this report in the course of his discussions with the Governor, also making the point that we strongly support a measured and deliberate approach to decolonisation, which should culminate in an internationally acceptable act of self-determination.²

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, vi]

93 SUBMISSION TO WHITLAM

Canberra, 22 February 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

In discussion on 21 February with Mr Renouf you decided that you should send a letter to President Soeharto about the danger of Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor. You also decided that Mr Woolcott should leave for Jakarta on Wednesday, 26 February, to deliver the letter.¹

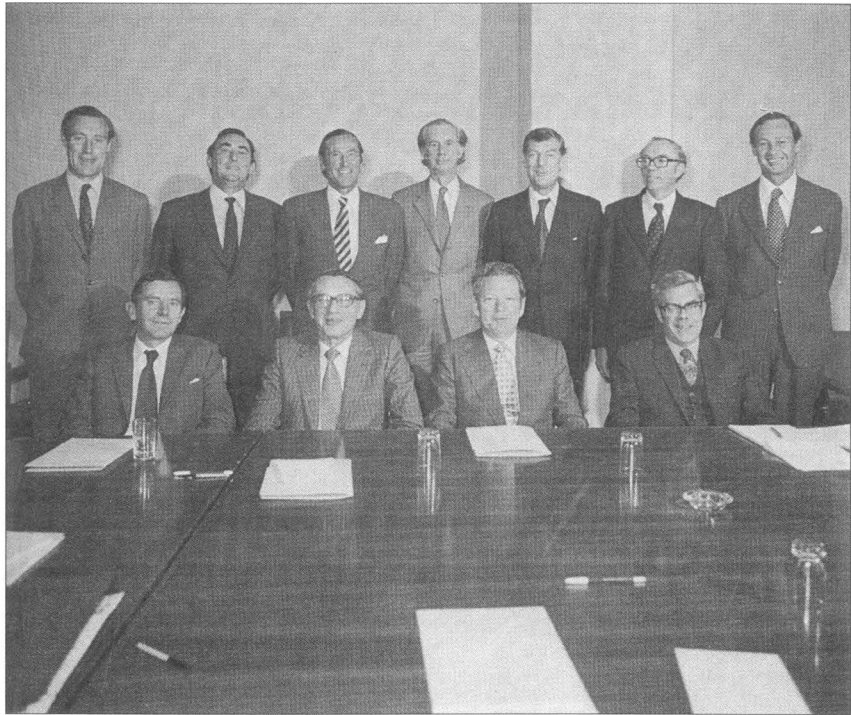
2. A draft letter to President Soeharto is attached for your consideration. In the letter we have aimed at:

¹ Document 89.

² Taylor left Jakarta en route to Portuguese Timor on 23 February.

¹ On 26 February J. D. Anderson noted that the urgency of the situation had resulted in Woolcott's departure for Jakarta being brought forward 'a week or so' from the date otherwise set. In the event Woolcott did not reach Jakarta until 3 March.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA HEADS OF MISSION, JULY 1975



*Back row from left: R. S. Laurie (Burma); D. G. Nutter (the Philippines);
R. A. Woolcott (Indonesia); A. R. Parsons (Malaysia); R. N. Birch (Singapore);
M. L. Johnston (Thailand); D. G. Wilson (Democratic Republic of Vietnam);
front, from left: J. R. Rowland, Deputy Secretary; A. P. Renouf, Secretary;
Senator Willesee, Minister for Foreign Affairs; and
N. F. Parkinson, Deputy Secretary*

THE WONOSOBO TALKS, SEPTEMBER 1974

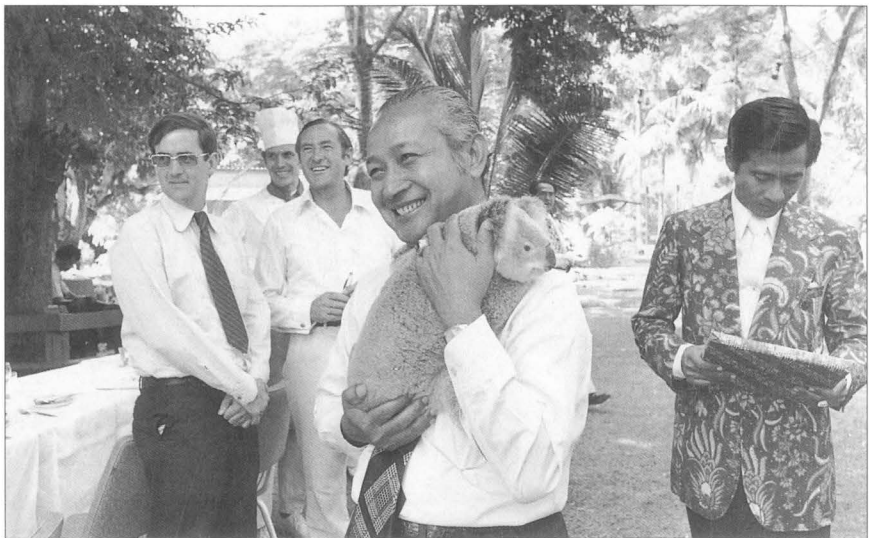


*From left to right: R. A. Woolcott, Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs;
President Soeharto; J. J. Spigelman, Senior Adviser and
Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister; and R. W. Furlonger,
Australian Ambassador to Indonesia*

THE TOWNSVILLE TALKS, APRIL 1975



President Soeharto (left) and the Prime Minister, E. G. Whitlam



President Soeharto with koala. Immediately behind the President is G. J. Forrester, Department of Foreign Affairs (left), with R. A. Woolcott, Australian Ambassador to Indonesia.



*Dr Antonio Matias, Portuguese Ambassador to Australia (centre), after presenting his credentials to the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr (right), Government House, Canberra, January 1975.
J. R. Rowland, Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, is on the left.*



General Costa Gomes, President of Portugal (left), and Dr Mario Soares, Portuguese Foreign Minister (right), talking with Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations, New York, October 1974



Dr Almeida Santos, Portuguese Minister for Inter-territorial Coordination (centre), meets the Australian Prime Minister, E. G. Whitlam (right), and Minister for Defence William Morrison, 1 September 1975.



Major E. A. de Melo Antunes, Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs (left), with Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations, 9 October 1975



*Australian Parliamentary Delegation leaving Darwin for Dili, 16 September 1975:
(from left) Rick Collins of Australian Associated Press, Senator Neville Bonner,
Michael Darby of ASIAT, Senator Arthur Gietzelt and Ken Fry MP*



*M. J. Dan (left), Minister, Australian Embassy, Jakarta, meeting a delegation of
Chairmen of Indonesian Student Councils, 2 October 1975*

- (a) bringing home to the Indonesians the damage that our relations with Indonesia would suffer if the Indonesians were to resort to military force in Portuguese Timor;
- (b) placing on record Australian opposition to the use of force in Portuguese Timor;
- (c) interesting the Indonesians in considering other possible means of containing the dangers which they see in Portuguese Timor.

3. At the same time we should recognise, as Mr Renouf mentioned to you yesterday, that it is doubtful whether anything can be done which will restrain the Indonesians from a military action if they are bent on it. For this and other reasons it is important that the warning set out in the letter should itself avoid damaging our relations more than is necessary; and we have been concerned in the draft not to fall into a hectoring or remonstrative tone and not to dot all the I's and cross all the T's in describing the likely consequences for our relations with Indonesia and for regional and international affairs of an Indonesian resort to force in Timor. We have also been concerned in the draft to limit so far as is possible our involvement in the problem of Portuguese Timor.

4. You have seen the letters recently exchanged between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Defence about Portuguese Timor.² In a letter of 11 February the Minister for Defence expressed his anxiety about the implications of Portuguese Timor for Australian defence and strategic interests and also for the Government's domestic political position. We have therefore consulted the Department of Defence in drafting the attached letter to President Soeharto but a number of points of difference remain. I advise you to seek the views of the Minister for Defence before settling on the terms of the letter.

Talking Points

5. In addition we are preparing a substantial series of talking points setting out our views on Portuguese Timor. These might be used by Mr Woolcott when he goes to Jakarta. They would also be useful when General Surono comes here shortly and on other occasions.

Other Governments

6. The question arises of the extent to which we should tell other Governments of what we are saying to the Indonesians and ask them to do the same. Our view is that we should keep our exchanges with the Indonesians very much to ourselves at least for the time being. Among other countries we think that only the United States are likely to have much influence on Indonesia. I recommend that we should tell the United States what we are doing and that we should also keep the New Zealanders informed. The latter are already aware of our intention of approaching the Indonesians.³

G. B. FEAKES

Acting Deputy Secretary

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, viii]

² Documents 81 and 88.

³ A marginal comment notes Rowland's approval. No record of Whitlam's response has been found.

94 MINUTE TO TANGE, ROWLAND AND WOOLCOTT

Canberra, 24 February 1975

SECRET

Draft Letter to President Suharto

This is a very strong letter. A main theme of the letter, if not the predominant one, is the prospect of Indonesian direct military action against Portuguese Timor. Page 4 and half of page 5 is devoted to this. It is picked up again in the conclusion where it is made quite clear that it is our 'immediate concern' and cause of our 'apprehension'. Indeed the letter ends on the note of our apprehensions.

2. The letter warns the President of the Republic of Indonesia:—

- (i) that resort by Indonesia to military force 'would make it extremely difficult for an Australian Government to maintain the close and substantial relationship which we have developed with Indonesia';
- (ii) that 'the damage to our relationship with Indonesia would be of the gravest concern to us';
- (iii) 'to speak plainly, military action against the territory would inevitably have serious consequences for our relations'.

3. The letter is thus very strong. For an Australian Prime Minister to address the President of the Republic of Indonesia in language such as 'to speak plainly' goes beyond the customary forms of communication at this level, also having in mind President Suharto's great sense of dignity and pride in the position he holds. The letter is so strong that it could jeopardise the sense of understanding and will to work together that now characterises relationships between Australia and Indonesia; put at risk the special personal relationship between the Prime Minister and the President; and (if it got into the public domain) put in doubt the President's willingness to make his forthcoming visit to Australia.

4. These considerations are, of course, self evident and will have been taken into account in the preparation and drafting of the letter. The questions, however, that I must put to you are whether the available intelligence warrants a letter of this nature at this stage.

5. It is true that the letter contains a formal disclaimer by the Prime Minister as to the credence of the reports about military intervention, but the substance of this letter is based on giving them the greatest credence. It seems to me that such a letter would be warranted only if the Australian Government were satisfied in its mind that the Indonesians were on the verge of direct military intervention, and that the highest levels of authority in Indonesia—and that means the President himself—were almost if not wholly committed to this course in the early future. No other basis of reasoning and assessment would support so strong a letter.

6. I myself am not prepared to subscribe to that assessment. The hard military intelligence we have, supported by the 'atmospherics' of other reporting, is that the Indonesian Armed Forces have put themselves in the position where they have the capability to mount a direct military operation against Portuguese Timor, once such an order is given, in about one or two weeks from the time of the order. We do not have the evidence to say that all the military activities which we have noted, such as exercises, have been planned and geared to this end. However, it would be prudent to assume that this has been the case. We also think, as a matter of opinion, that the Indonesian Armed Forces are not developing the capability merely on a contingency basis or for reasons of show of force. We believe they have been preparing a

military option which they then have at their disposal for implementation dependent on their Government's decision in the light of the developing situation.

7. At an earlier stage, some three months ago, we were of the opinion that President Suharto was resistant to the idea of resort to force and preferred other means of diplomatic and political manoeuvre. The other means not appearing to work, we could not say this today. It would now be prudent to assume, if he could not be satisfied with developments in other ways, that he would exercise the military option. We cannot evaluate the recent message from [US Government sources]¹ that Indonesia is currently planning a military operation against Portuguese Timor to be launched at the latest by August 1975. As given to us it is an indicator not evidence of a Presidential decision.

8. The advice that I have given to Departments is that the Indonesians do have the military capability, that at senior levels of Government they are contemplating the military option, but that there is no evidence of basic decisions having been taken concerning the resort to the military option or the timing. I have further advised that, in view of the developments in Portuguese Timor and the Indonesian reading of developments inside Portuguese Timor, events had overtaken the policy position developed between the Prime Minister and the President last year—and that, if the Australian Government wished to influence the Indonesians away from serious contemplation of the military option, then we should resume high level discussion about alternative possibilities and prospects (such as set out on page 6 of the draft letter). In my view, on the basis of the military evidence, the letter is too much addressed to the military concern.²

G. A. JOCKEL

Director
Joint Intelligence Organization

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/7, i]

95 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 24 February 1975

O.JA7901 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

I have just returned from a call on Harry Tjan of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. As soon as I arrived Tjan said that he knew what I wanted to talk about. He said that he would have called me had I not taken the initiative. He said that Yoga Sugama, the Head of BAKIN, had only just spoken to him. Sugama, as you know, is the regular Chairman of the Special Committee on Portuguese Timor. Because of the possible importance of the following exchange with Tjan I am reporting it as accurately as possible in dialogue form.

¹ Less than half a line has been expunged here.

² A marginal note in Rowland's handwriting reads: 'This wd suggest maybe shortening the passage on the military aspect. I told Mr Jockel I thought we were bound to have a letter, but I thought that precise terms cd still be amended according to evaluation of the urgency'.

Tjan Yoga is furious about the Reuters report from Canberra in the Singapore *Sunday Times* on 23 February.¹

Dan Why is he furious?

Tjan Because of the leak of the top secret intelligence report of an impending amphibious and airborne assault on Dili. (Tjan read those words from a copy of the *Sunday Times* report in his hand.)

Dan Is Yoga suggesting that this was an Australian report that was leaked in Australia?

Tjan Oh no. It is an Indonesian report and Yoga believes that someone in an Indonesian Government Department was responsible for the leak. He thought it might have even come from the Centre. I assured him that we were not responsible.

2. As you know, Tjan is a highly intelligent and articulate man. He is completely loyal to the Indonesian Government. I believe that this slip by him, the acknowledgement of the existence of this top secret Indonesian plan, was made quite unintentionally.

3. I then told him of the various reports in the Australian press and of Mr Peacock's statement.² I asked him quite bluntly whether there was any intention by Indonesia to take Portuguese Timor by force within the next few weeks or even within the next few months. Tjan said that he could assure me personally that there was no such intention. He said that apart from anything else 'the timing was all wrong'. He said that as he had told us before, Indonesia wanted to see what was going to happen in Portugal before deciding what Indonesia had to do in relation to Portuguese Timor.

4. Tjan went on to say that he wanted to make one thing very clear to me. He said that he thought he had already got this message across, but he wanted to be absolutely sure that I did understand it. He said that a decision had been taken by the Indonesian Government that sooner or later Portuguese Timor must form part of Indonesia. This was a unanimous decision by all the leading Indonesian personalities involved, including the President. All that remained to be decided was when, and how, this should be brought about. As he had said, it would not happen in the very near future. But it would happen. The Indonesian Government would first try every conceivable means before turning to a military solution. He described the latter as the 'ultimate act'.

DAN

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, x]

¹ The Reuters report quoted 'a Foreign Affairs Department spokesman' who stated that the Australian Government was closely following a report of Indonesian preparation for invasion and described it as 'highly speculative'. It went on to note that the Australian Labor Government supported self-determination and would be 'highly embarrassed' by an invasion, recalling that the previous Government had given 16 Sabre jet fighters to Indonesia in 1972.

² 24 February. It condemned the 'continued failure of the Labor Government to implement its own policy of self-determination', called on it to ascertain urgently the exact position and to seek from Indonesia a firm statement of its attitude, and to make an unequivocal statement 'supporting complete freedom of choice for the people of Timor'. 'Overt pressure' from Indonesia could be seen as a direct extension of the 'foolish encouragement of measures to influence any plebiscite' in Whitlam's statement the previous September that Australia would accept integration if it was the wish of the Timorese.

96 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 24 February 1975

O.LB740 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I saw Santos today and made the points in para 2 of your 38.¹

2. Santos said the report was inaccurate and that there was in fact no call for immediate independence. On the contrary Fretilin/UDT had proposed an interim period of eight years during which power would be progressively transferred to a transitional government to be followed by elections for a constituent assembly.

3. Santos then read over to me the actual text of the cable from the Governor of Timor to Lisbon (and subsequently gave me a copy on an AUSTEO basis). Specifically Fretilin/UDT proposed the following agenda for discussion with the Central Government:

- (a) Maintenance of the status quo with an enlarged advisory council for 2 years; followed by a 3 year period under a high commissioner, a transitional government including political parties (presumably Fretilin/UDT) and the same advisory council. Then a further 3 year period (which could be extended) again with a high commissioner and an enlarged transitional government and continuation of the advisory council.
 - (b) Elections for a constituent assembly within about 8 years.
 - (c) Relations with Indonesia. A policy of non-alignment and a pact of non-aggression and cooperation with maintenance of peace and good neighbourliness together with non-interference and cooperation in all fields and at all levels.
4. Santos commented that he thought a transitional period of 8 years was unrealistic but was encouraged by the parties' apparent willingness to cooperate with Lisbon (and Indonesia) in working out a solution. I reminded Santos that the press report spoke of immediate independence with no reference to self determination.

This was bound to strengthen the hand of those elements in the Indonesian Government who were reported to favour intervention in Timor. I asked Santos if he had yet consulted the Indonesians because it appeared to us that there was now an even more urgent need to do so.

5. Santos said he has asked Soares to try to set up a meeting with the Indonesians in Paris next weekend which he would attend. Meanwhile he would have no objection if we were to let the Indonesians know the substance of the Fretilin/UDT proposal but he asked me to safeguard the text of the cable from Dili which was for our eyes only. (Text follows in my immediately following telegram to Canberra and Jakarta only.)

6. I asked Santos would they be prepared to retain responsibility for Timor for the period envisaged above? He said they would if Indonesia and Australia agreed to cooperate and assist with Timor's economic development.

Comment

7. Although Santos clearly has doubts about the feasibility of the Fretilin/UDT proposal he seemed relieved that the pressure for rapid decolonisation appears to have lessened.

COOPER

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, v]

¹ Document 92. The Canberra/Lisbon post serial number is given, presumably incorrectly, as 538 on the file copy.

97 FILE NOTE IN DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET
Canberra, 25 February 1975

Portuguese Timor

Mr Anderson asked me to check with Mr Forrester about the draft letter on Portuguese Timor being drafted in Foreign Affairs, and asked if I would flag with Forrester the need for a Defence input and a sighting by ourselves of the draft which Foreign Affairs are to put before the Prime Minister, and, which Mr Woolcott would hand to President Soeharto this week.

I spoke to Forrester and also Lance Joseph. Joseph told me that the letter was out of his hands—it was now with Mr Rowland. The draft had been cleared by the Prime Minister. Some refinements were now being done to the letter and Mr Pritchett of Defence and Mr Jockel of JIO had been involved in its preparation.

Given the time factor of Mr Woolcott seeing the Prime Minister this afternoon and presumably presenting the letter for signature then, it was most unlikely we would see a copy of the letter until after the event.¹

P. McELLIGOTT

[NAA: A1209, 74/7573]

98 LETTER FROM WHITLAM TO SOEHARTO
Canberra, 28 February 1975

SECRET

Your Excellency,

The arrival of our new Ambassador in Jakarta offers me the opportunity to convey to you my warm personal greetings and good wishes. Following on our agreement last September to meet again, and on subsequent exchanges between our officials about the timing of such a meeting, I should also like now to propose to you a date for the visit which we then agreed you should make to Australia. We should be very happy to welcome you in the first week of April, if that were convenient to you. From my point of view 4 to 7 April would be best. I realise that these dates are not far ahead, and I regret that the heavy demands on your time and on mine make forward planning difficult, but I very much hope that this time will be agreeable to you.

There are, I am sure you will agree, many subjects on which we should find personal discussion useful and timely. One of them is the future of Portuguese Timor—a subject which, as a result of various press reports, has lately been much in the news in this country, in a manner, I may say, which I should not have wished.

¹ A minute the previous day by J. D. Anderson reported his telling Joseph that 'without knowing of [Foreign Affairs'] direct approach to the Prime Minister last Friday we had considered the possibility of the Prime Minister sending a letter to President Soeharto. The letter would as we saw it register the difficulties presented for us and for Indonesia by possible military action in Timor. However, this point could be made less direct by referring to discussions . . . in Yogyakarta last [September] and . . . the next meeting foreshadowed for the early part of April'.

In September you explained to me your concern about the future of Portuguese Timor and Indonesia's important national interest in the security and stability of that territory and in its close association with your country. I fully understand your concern and interest. You expressed the belief that Portuguese Timor, poor and weak as it is, could become a source of instability and an attraction for other powers and political interests unfavourable to Indonesia. We agreed that the solution which we preferred was that the territory should become part of Indonesia, but that this outcome would need to result from the properly expressed wishes of its people. Both of us recognised the importance of self-determination in Portuguese Timor, a principle which both our governments have strongly supported in the United Nations and elsewhere.

Developments in the territory over the last months have been more rapid than we had expected, and the direction in which they seem to be leading the territory is towards eventual independence. In this situation, I should like to offer some suggestions which you may find helpful in your own deliberations.

In looking at the situation in Portuguese Timor, we both recognise the risk that possible political developments in Portugal itself might have unfavourable repercussions in Portuguese Timor. But our own current assessment in Australia is that the drift in Portugal seems to have been arrested, at least temporarily: the elections scheduled for April are to proceed, with the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement apparently overruling the opposition of the Communist Party.

Second, as we agreed in September, there is likewise always a risk of interference in Portuguese Timor by external powers. In Australia, however, we know of no evidence to support anxiety on this score at present: we have the impression that there is little interest in Portuguese Timor on the part of China or the Soviet Union, or indeed of other great powers; and our judgment is that those powers which might be tempted to meddle there would hesitate to jeopardise their relations with Indonesia, with the other countries of South-East Asia, or with Australia and Papua New Guinea, by doing so.

I feel, therefore, that the dangers we discussed in September need not now be seen as immediately pressing.

In this connexion I should like to refer again to the recent public debate here about Portuguese Timor. It was, as I have said, precipitated by newspaper reports about the possibility of some Indonesian military action against Portuguese Timor. I should say that I was very gratified to know of the denials of these reports issued by your Defence and Foreign Ministries, and also to have confirmation of these denials from your Ambassador.

The public debate does, however, serve to indicate the delicacy of the question, the widespread support here for an internationally acceptable act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor, and the great sensitivity of Australian Parliamentary and public opinion to any suggestion of a possible resort to unilateral action. I should like, if I may, to impress this sensitivity upon you. I am sure you will understand that no Australian Government could allow it to be thought, whether beforehand or afterwards, that it supported such action. A primary concern of any Australian Government, and certainly of my own, is the preservation and promotion of the close and mutually advantageous relationship between our two countries which has been and will remain so important to succeeding Governments in this country. Any damage to that relationship, or any action or statement that could disturb it or evoke public controversy and criticism of our closest neighbour, would distress us very greatly.

I am hopeful, however, that, as events are developing, there should be time and opportunity for a political solution to be found which will meet not only the proper aspirations of the people of Portuguese Timor, but also the important interests of Indonesia and those of Australia

and the region in general. I think that a new approach could be adopted which would avoid the various dangers of which we are both so much aware, and that there should be time to explore and develop it.

In this connexion, we now have some new information from the Portuguese authorities—which indeed you may already have heard from the Portuguese themselves. It is to the effect that, although various reports have attributed to the UDT and FRETILIN a call for immediate *de jure* independence, the two parties have, on the contrary, proposed to Portugal a program for constitutional progress extending over a period of eight years, during which power would be progressively transferred to a transitional government and elections would be held for a constituent assembly.

We also understand from the Portuguese authorities that the two parties propose a policy of non-alignment and a pact of non-aggression and co-operation with Indonesia, providing for the maintenance of peace and good neighbourliness, non-interference and co-operation in all fields and at all levels. For their part, the Portuguese tell us that they would be prepared to retain responsibility for the territory for a transitional period of this kind, though they would wish Indonesia and Australia to co-operate and to assist in Timor's economic development.

I believe that this information is significant in indicating both that the prospect of independence is not imminent in the eyes of either the Portuguese or the FRETILIN–UDT parties, and also that the Portuguese, at least as matters now stand, are prepared to maintain their responsibilities in the territory—as I believe we would wish them to do.

The UDT–FRETILIN proposals could offer, I suggest, a promising basis for close co-operative arrangements between Portuguese Timor and Indonesia and one which, in time, could no doubt be developed or modified. Immediately, however, it would seem to call for active efforts on the part of Indonesia, in particular, to establish co-operation with Portugal and friendly relations with the political leaders in Portuguese Timor, which could influence their outlook. We should be ready to give whatever help we could in this.

Should you perceive the same possibilities as I do in this approach, I should be happy for such consultations as you might wish between our two Governments. Our Ambassador is ready to take part in discussions. I can assure you that, whatever solution may be found, Indonesia's interests will certainly continue to weigh very heavily in our own thinking.

I have written to you at some length, Your Excellency, because I feel that the depth and importance of the relationship between our two countries is such that I owe it to you to expose our views fully. I hope that you will see value in the approach to Portuguese Timor which I describe, and will agree with me that it could offer to our two countries the opportunity to develop a further area of close and useful co-operation.¹

Yours sincerely

GOUGH WHITLAM

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, vii]

¹ In submitting the final draft, Rowland proposed that the text of the letter be telegraphed to the Embassy in Jakarta so that it could be 'handed in' before the weekend. Woolcott was to arrive there with the signed copy on Monday 3 March, and was unlikely to be able to give it to Soeharto before 4 March. Despite JIO's assessment that prospects of immediate military action were 'nil', 'there are a few ominous seeming signs'. [Minute from Rowland to Whitlam, 27 February, on file NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/7, i.]

99 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 2 March 1975

O.JA8007 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor*Ref O.CH180260, O.JA8008¹*

Tjan (CSIS) made no comment on the UDT/Fretilin proposals. In a long conversation he made the following main points:

- (a) It was his assessment based on intelligence reports from the Governor of East Nusatenggara 'and his men' that if a referendum were held in Portuguese Timor, Apodeti would muster enough support to win. This conflicts with a view that was expressed to us some weeks ago by a BAKIN source (our JA7445 para 8 refers²). He was therefore pleased to see that Air Marshal Soedarmono had referred to a referendum in his *Antara* statement on 27 February (our JA7981 refers). About 60 percent of Portuguese Timorese lived in the west and the north, close to the border with Indonesia. All were Catholic, as were the Indonesians living near the border. There were thus religious, family and traditional ties between the majority of Portuguese Timorese and Indonesian Timorese.
- (b) Because of their backwardness and conservatism, Portuguese Timorese would undoubtedly choose to continue under Portuguese rule, if given a completely free choice between continuing Portuguese rule, independence and union with Indonesia. If this were to happen, the Indonesians would be quite happy. However, the Portuguese wanted to be rid of Portuguese Timor, thereby leaving only two choices. Because of the current movement towards communism of the UDT/Fretilin coalition, the majority of the population would choose union with Indonesia in preference to a UDT/Fretilin type government.
- (c) Tjan said that Indonesia was as serious as Australia about the right to self-determination and freedom. However, if the independence of another party threatened one's own freedom, that was another matter. The right to protect oneself from threats was the moral basic right. Indonesia saw an independent Portuguese Timor as a *certain* threat to her own security and therefore would *not* allow it. He said that Australia's belonging to ANZUS was an indication that Australia too believed in warding off threats. He repeated (our JA7901) that a military action would be the last resort. However, he added that if the Soviet Union could do it in Hungary and

¹ Cablegram CH180260 (26 February) provided a summary of recent events, including the 'encouraging' developments in 'Portuguese thinking and in the approach of UDT and Fretilin to relations with Indonesia' (see Documents 92 and 96). Cablegram JA8008 (2 March) reported discussion of these with Abbas and Akosah. Abbas had questioned whether the implementation of the proposals could be guaranteed, and reiterated that Indonesia could not allow Portuguese Timor to become 'a base for Communist activity', and would not expect an unfavourable reaction from non-aligned or ASEAN nations if a military solution were to become necessary to prevent it. Akosah took a more moderate approach, but agreed. Military intervention would be a last resort, and 'if it took place it would do so under circumstances which the Indonesians considered did not constitute aggression'. Neither showed great concern about international public reaction: 'Indonesian national interests, as perceived by the Indonesians, came first'.

² Paragraph 8 of Cablegram JA7445 (5 February) began: 'The Indonesian assessment is that Apodeti has no chance of success. The other groups are better organised'.

Czechoslovakia and the United States in Vietnam, Indonesia could do the same in Portuguese Timor. International criticism would not matter. For Indonesia, security was paramount.

2. Tjan said that the problem at the moment was that Apodeti was 'out'. It was not being given a fair chance or in fact any chance at all. He had received information from 'his men' in Indonesian Timor that there were some hundred[s] of refugees now in Atambua. Some Apodeti support[er]s had in fact been killed in Portuguese Timor. Terror was reigning. The 'NCO's campaign' (our JA7445 para 6³) was concentrating on the five kingdoms nearest the border, which supported Indonesia. It was important that the Apodeti side of the story be put before the world and this was one of the reasons for the stories appearing in *Antara* and the Indonesian press. Some of the detail of these stories may be questionable but their overall message was fact. He expected that they would continue. Tjan made this point in reply to our expression of concern about the *Antara* reports (your CH180872⁴).

3. Tjan said that though Australia and Indonesia had many similar regional interests, their way of perceiving regional problems was different. Portuguese Timor was closer to Indonesia than Australia and Australia had not shared Indonesia's bitter experience with Communists.

4. If Australia made too much noise about Portuguese Timor, some might begin to think that Australia itself had interests in seeing an independent Portuguese Timor (perhaps, he said, because of oil)). We repeated to Tjan that Australia had no interests in Portuguese Timor and would welcome it if the Portuguese Timorese freely chose to join Indonesia.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, v]

100 MEMORANDUM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 3 March 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

Attached is a copy of 'talking points with Indonesia' prepared in consultation with the Department of Defence on the subject of Portuguese Timor.

2. The talking points were foreshadowed in a submission (copy attached) sent to the Acting Minister on 22 February.¹ They have been cleared by the Acting Secretary.

³ BAKIN had described a 'left-wing inspired "political movement" among NCOs in the army . . . [which had] placed one NCO in each of the main villages. The local inhabitants are being intimidated and told they must accept independence for the territory'.

⁴ 27 February. It suggested that allegations concerning the spread of communist influence, the issue of arms to Fretilin and that Pires was a communist served 'to heighten the tension . . . and to increase speculation . . . about Indonesian intentions'.

¹ Document 93.

3. You would, of course, wish to draw upon the points selectively depending on the interlocutor and the circumstances of each discussion.²

LANCE JOSEPH

Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia Branch

Attachment

PORTUGUESE TIMOR—TALKING POINTS WITH INDONESIA

Australia and Indonesia share a strategic interest in trying to ensure that Portuguese Timor does not become a source of regional instability or a vehicle for external influences inimical to the interests of our two countries. Australia recognises the particular importance of the Indonesian interest. Portuguese Timor, whatever the constitutional status that it may ultimately have, forms and will form part of the Indonesian world.

In addition it is basic to the philosophy of the Australian Government that the inhabitants of Portuguese Timor should be given the opportunity to decide their own future through an internationally acceptable act of self-determination. If they should opt for merger with Indonesia, we should welcome that choice. But we must also respect their choice if it were for a political process leading to continuing links with Portugal, or for an independent status.

These two considerations are not incompatible. It should be possible to achieve a position which both protects Indonesia's security concerns—and our own—and meets the need to respect the proper aspirations of political groups in Portuguese Timor.

A. Developments in Portuguese Timor

[matter omitted]³

B. The Risks and Opportunities

[matter omitted]⁴

C. Indonesia's Fears

We recognise Indonesia's apprehensions about Portuguese Timor. But we wonder whether, especially in the light of the evident acceptance by UDT/FRETILIN of a protracted timetable for independence, these fears are to be seen as immediately pressing. Our own studies suggest that the situation is not yet at all dangerous.

As we understand it, one Indonesian fear is that an independent Portuguese Timor would be poor and weak and therefore vulnerable to penetration by external influences, hostile to Indonesian interests, which would seek to use Portuguese Timor as a base for subversive activities against Indonesia. It goes without saying that the Australian Government would not want a political entity to emerge in Timor (or anywhere else) that threatened Indonesia—or Australia.

² Woolcott wrote in the margin: 'I would like to discuss these talking points with Political Section & reply to the Dept about them. Case is largely based on several dubious premises, namely FRET/UDT don't want immediate or even early independence, the drift to the left has been arrested in Portugal & that there will be "plenty of time" to work out a political solution. All of this is very tenuous & sententious'.

³ Points omitted deal with the apparent predominance of UDT/Fretilin, their proposal for a protracted transitional process, possibly reflecting a desire to meet Indonesian fears, and a judgement that the drift to the Left in Portugal had been arrested 'at least temporarily'.

⁴ Points omitted deal with the danger of 'arousing . . . radical and irrational attitudes' in the Timorese parties by appearing to oppose independence; the risk that such attitudes might endanger the self-determination process and tempt Portugal to withdraw; the importance of a 'measured and deliberate' decolonisation process; the use of aid to encourage continued Portuguese involvement; and warnings to Portugal of Indonesian sensitivity.

Is there, however, any serious prospect that this is a short-term contingency? In the first place, as we understand it, the Portuguese Timorese are *not* seeking early independence. Even were they to obtain it, would that pose any immediate problem for us and Indonesia unless they had obtained independence in a climate of hostility towards us (and we should be able to avoid that)?

Certainly an independent Timorese state would be poor and weak. But it would be no more exposed than some of Australia's South Pacific neighbours. We have detected no evidence of Chinese or Soviet interest in Portuguese Timor. Nor do we think that either would wish under present or immediately foreseeable circumstances to risk the development of their relations with South East Asian countries by meddling in Portuguese Timor. That territory would seem to be peripheral, at a great distance, to the present focus of Chinese and Soviet global pre-occupations. The map itself does not suggest either power would find it easy to develop a policy of penetrating the territory.

The anxiety that developments in Portuguese Timor might stimulate separatist sentiment and activity elsewhere in Indonesia is, of course, very much a matter for Indonesia's own judgment. But Indonesia has shown itself well able to contain similar problems in the past. It should not be impossible to bring this problem home to the Portuguese Timorese themselves and to ensure their cooperation with Indonesia. There is reason to hope that Portugal would act likewise.

In summary, and while we should welcome further discussions with the relevant Indonesian authorities, our assessment, based on a full study of the possibilities, is that in the shorter term developments in Portuguese Timor do not pose unacceptable risks to the region. This is a matter we should like to pursue with Indonesia at the next round of ⁵ talks.

D. What of the longer term?

There has been speculation that Indonesia might feel its long-term interests sufficiently threatened to move militarily in the short term to pre-empt any development of Portuguese Timor in the direction of independence. This possibility of an Indonesian resort to force is a very sensitive matter, and we raise it with Indonesia only after careful reflection. We are, of course, glad to note the emphatic denials from Indonesia which followed the flurry of press speculation at the end of February. But the reports have persisted and continue to attract public attention in Australia. We believe that the consequences of precipitate action by Indonesia would be of such an order, in particular to our bilateral relations on which we place great store, that we owe it to Indonesia to expose our anxieties fully and frankly.

In the first place, Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor would have a heavy impact on Australian public opinion. It would likely evoke strong criticism in the Australian community which would see it as intervention designed to forestall an act of free choice in Portuguese Timor. The recent press criticism in Australia is indicative of the strength of feeling on this score. Pressure of public opinion of all shades would damage, to an extent we cannot at this point precisely measure, the close and substantial relationship we have developed with Indonesia. It could risk changing or at least overshadowing, the very favourable climate in which that relationship has been developing.

We would be concerned secondly lest military intervention by Indonesia in Portuguese Timor provoked an unfavourable reaction both in the region and the world at large. Such action by Indonesia would constitute an abrupt departure from the regional policies Indonesia has followed during the last decade. Would not the sense of trust and regional equilibrium that Indonesia has succeeded in building up over this last decade be disrupted?

⁵ Less than half a line has been expunged here.

African opinion could be alienated especially in view of FRETILIN's links with Frelimo in Mozambique. Indonesia would have to expect criticism in the Committee of Twenty-Four and also, perhaps, in the Security Council. Australia could not help Indonesia in this. We could imagine a situation in which many of Indonesia's friends would likewise find it difficult to sustain the warmth and depth of their relationship with Indonesia.

Would there not be a risk that the incorporation of Portuguese Timor in the face of declared opposition from the principal political groups would create risks of, and opportunities for, foreign meddling? We have received a telegram from Horta talking of the danger of a 'new Viet Nam'⁶ (i.e. threatening guerrilla resistance). This could make Portuguese Timor a source of the very instability that the initial military action was intended to forestall.

E. The Alternative Approach

We understand Indonesia's abiding concern that there be stability in its border regions, and have admired its constructive contributions to this end, for example, in relations with the Malaysians, in the maritime approaches and in Borneo and as regards the situation in Sabah and the Southern Philippines. (The same concern to help maintain stability in South East Asia is reflected in Indonesian policies in ASEAN and its membership of the ICCS in Viet Nam and its efforts to bring about negotiations in Cambodia.) Do not these processes and institutions point the way for handling the question of Portuguese Timor? The Portuguese Timorese themselves have already spoken of an understanding or 'pact' with Indonesia on cooperation and good neighbourliness. This idea would seem well worth studying and developing.

We feel that if we and Indonesia were to embark on cultivating good and influential relations with the Timorese there could be favourable prospects for stability in the territory. There would be obvious advantages to Indonesia and Australia in terms of both security and goodwill. The Timorese themselves would feel under less pressure to look outside the region for comfort and support. And we for our part would have established the basis for shaping events in ways that ensured that the contingencies which currently give rise to fears and anxieties about an independent Portuguese Timor did not materialise. As Indonesia will know, Mr Ramos Horta and other FRETILIN leaders have many times expressed their own goodwill to Indonesia and a desire to establish close and friendly relations with Indonesia and Australia. In the Australian view we should put this expression of good-neighbourliness to the test.

At the same time Portugal should be encouraged to keep its shoulder to the wheel in Portuguese Timor, at least until such time as we can be reasonably assured that an independent Portuguese Timor could emerge without disturbance to neighbouring countries. The policy implication is that both Indonesia and Australia should be trying to influence Portugal to reduce the pace of decolonisation at least to a pace which it is likely that the majority of Timorese themselves would prefer.

Australia would be willing to work with Indonesia in such an approach. Could we not sit down together and consider the practical scope of what might be achieved in such an endeavour? In the process fresh ideas could be expected to emerge which would help promote our common objectives of anchoring Portuguese Timor in a stable relationship with the rest of the region.

One thing we should like Indonesia to consider with us is whether our shared objective of 'containing' the Portuguese Timor problem might not be served through a coordinated program of economic assistance to Portuguese Timor. Australia has already offered to consider such assistance partly as a means of encouraging the Portuguese to maintain their own involvement. But aid can be looked at in a broader p[er]spective. If Indonesia were to join Australia in

⁶ A marginal comment in Woolcott's hand here reads: 'That can't be taken seriously'.

providing aid to Portuguese Timor it could be represented as assisting the Timorese to emerge from their isolation, making it unnecessary for them to look beyond Indonesia and Australia (and Portugal) for support.

F. Conclusions

We accept that difficulties will emerge from time to time as regards Portuguese Timor. It will be important to talk about them and to keep closely in touch. Indonesia's interests continue to weigh heavily in our own thinking. We should hope that Indonesia would similarly take Australia's interests into account. Thus far both our countries have tended to ignore what seems to be the increasing inevitability of the emergence of a new independent state on our doorstep (albeit under a fairly protracted timescale). In the past we have both tended to take a grudging attitude to that prospect fearing that an independent Portuguese Timor could be a source of regional instability. We believe that this is not a short-term prospect. We also believe it is within our means jointly through peaceful and constructive processes to ensure that it does not become a long-term prospect.

A positive approach for both Australia and Indonesia would therefore be to accept the challenge of helping in the process of decolonisation in Portuguese Timor, preferably in a cooperative effort. The Timorese leaders have been looking anxiously to Australia and Indonesia for some signs that we would be prepared to help them in their political and economic development. We should now put their professions of good-neighbourliness to the test.

At the same time we do not regard ourselves as a party principal, participating for example in tripartite negotiations. The chief responsibility rests with Portugal and the Timorese, with the Indonesians occupying next place because of their predominant interest. Our role will be to help all those concerned to work together.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, viii]

101 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN WHITLAM, SURONO AND HER TASNING

Canberra, 4 March 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor: Visit of President Soeharto to Australia

9. *The Prime Minister* said that he could understand Indonesian anxieties about, and indeed impatience with, Portuguese Timor. Though few Australians might have visited the territory, he was sure that Portuguese Timor would exhibit a trait common to many developing countries facing decolonisation. That is, Portuguese Timor must have an elite of Portuguese and half Portuguese/Timorese bureaucrats who preferred a European lifestyle and who fancied themselves the leaders of an independent State. This had been the case in Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. But this group had been engulfed by the rapidly developing nationalist groups. The Prime Minister said that he could understand that Indonesia might be 'galled' or

'provoked' by the statements or actions of the present Timorese leaders. But might they not ultimately give way to others? The Prime Minister asked whether there were also Chinese in Portuguese Timor, connected perhaps with Macao.

10. *Mr Tasning* replied that the presence of the Chinese was one reason for Indonesian fear of external, Chinese-inspired subversion.

11. *The Prime Minister* said that events had moved faster than either he or President Soeharto had contemplated during their talks last year. His position remained, however, that described to the President in those talks. He still believed that the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia was the most desirable outcome. But Indonesia should achieve this in a respectable manner, acceptable to public opinion in Australia: in the language of the United Nations, by means of an act of self-determination.

12. *The Prime Minister* said that Australia wished to maintain good relations with Indonesia. This was as much at the military level, represented by General Surono¹ himself, as at the political level. He did not wish to see anything emerge which might damage the co-operative relationship and understanding that had developed with Indonesia. The Prime Minister said that he would not go into the questions of political detainees. But developments in Portuguese Timor had the potential to disrupt those relations. The Prime Minister said that the optimum solution for the moment seemed a maintenance of the status quo, with continuing Portuguese sovereignty. The Prime Minister hoped this would eventuate but expressed some doubt that the Portuguese would in fact wish to stay on. Perhaps they would follow the example of Mozambique.

13. *The Prime Minister* asked the General to consider, however, the repercussions on the relationship of Indonesian military intervention, if Indonesia ever felt provoked to such action. The Prime Minister warned that the Australian people were 'easily upset'. The recent press reports had shown that. It might therefore be impossible to avoid repercussions on the relationship. The Prime Minister pondered whether defence aid might be affected.

14. *The Prime Minister* said that Indonesian military action would also be clearly embarrassing for the Government. He had spoken to the President in September last year and would hopefully be talking to the President again in April. If Indonesia took unilateral military action, popular interpretation would have it that the President had ignored his points. In short, the Australian Government would be clearly embarrassed by direct military intervention.

15. *General Surono* said that he appreciated the Prime Minister's concern. But the Indonesian Government had no intention of taking action against Portuguese Timor. The Indonesian Government respected the right to self-determination of the people of Timor. Moreover, Indonesia relied heavily on the defence aid Australia provided. It would be 'folly' to prejudice this by a military adventure in Portuguese Timor. General Surono also noted that he had already publicly denied the reports of Indonesian preparations for invasion during a meeting with the press in Wellington. All that Indonesia hoped to see was 'fair play' for all groups in Portuguese Timor, including the pro-Indonesian APODETI party.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, viii]

¹ Surono, ABRI Chief of Staff, was visiting as a guest of the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. He had been invited by Barnard in December 1974.

102 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN WILLESEE AND CALLAGHAN

London, 4 March 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor and Indonesia

11. Senator Willesee¹ informed Mr Callaghan of the Australian Government's views on the future of Portuguese Timor, stressing the Government's wish that the issues should not be hurried and there should be a 'clean'² act of self-determination recognised by the United Nations. Australia felt that it may be in the island's best interest to remain with Portugal in the immediate future and had spoken with both the Indonesian and new Portuguese Governments on this point. Senator Willesee commented on current discussions of Portuguese Timor in Australia, and also on the changing situation within Indonesia: the increasing power of the Special Operations Unit, new waves of oppression, and what may be a new tendency for the Indonesian Government to criticise the United States of America.³

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxiii]

103 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN MATIAS AND TANGE

Canberra, 5 March 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Timor

Dr Matias opened on the theme that a nation's foreign policy reflected the sum of various interests, defence an important one among them. He said he was grateful to Sir Arthur for an opportunity to make his acquaintance and to learn something of how Australian defence interests were reflected in foreign policy.

2. Sir Arthur Tange spoke of the consultative machinery and sharing of information which provided for close co-ordination in Australia between Foreign Affairs and Defence in those areas where the two depended upon one another. Facts of geography and of post-war political development had defined South East Asia as the region pre-eminently of concern common to foreign and defence policies. Estimation of what the situation demanded had differed under different Australian Governments—the previous Government had committed sizeable Australian military forces to the Vietnam War—but focus on South East Asia was a continuing one in Australian strategic thinking.

3. Dr Matias said his own background was in Europe and America and that he had served also in Africa. He was not familiar with what he described as the oriental region, but felt that, compared to other areas, there was much that was enviable about its stability.

¹ Willesee had arrived in London on 2 March to attend the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting on Food Production and Rural Development.

² A marginal query suggests that the word 'clear' might be intended.

³ Curtin noted in the margin of the covering memorandum: 'para 11 is disturbing'.

4. Speaking of Australia's near neighbours in Asia, Sir Arthur Tange said it was true that the general situation looked more stable than one might have foreseen ten years ago. This had come about partly through some determined measures—including on occasion military measures—and partly through the emergence of some highly competent national leaders concerned for their region's security—among other things as regards the potentiality for interference from without.

5. Avoiding direct reference to Timor, Dr Matias conveyed some scepticism about the possibility of Russian or Chinese interference in the region. In any event, he said, it seemed Russian activity would be aimed at containing China. Sir Arthur Tange said it would comfort him little, as an Australian, to know that China was the reason why Russians had appeared in the vicinity. If they had to squabble let them do it elsewhere.

[*matter omitted*]

8. Dr Matias referred to the close attention that Portugal's Minister for Inter-territorial Co-ordination was now paying to Timor. He referred to a press statement that the Minister had issued on the previous day. Dr Matias said it was unfortunate that whilst two of the political parties in Portuguese Timor had accepted Lisbon's invitation to discuss the future of the territory, the third—the party favouring integration with Indonesia—had declined. He indicated difficulty on the Portuguese side in developing a dialogue with the Indonesians—however his Indonesian colleague in Canberra seemed an able man with whom he had had good conversations, even though their viewpoints differed. The opening of an Indonesian Mission in Lisbon should help, even though the Indonesians should have taken this action earlier. Dr Matias went on to speak of Indonesian political history and attitudes (which he found puzzling), oriental indirectness, the West Irian precedent and recent Indonesian propaganda.

9. Sir Arthur Tange agreed that aspects of the present situation were reminiscent of West Irian, and rather typical of the Indonesian political style. He recalled that in the case of West Irian, a form of self-determination had also been part of the solution sought by Indonesia. He conveyed that from a broad security standpoint, Australia understood Indonesia's apprehensions about Timor. These had to be seen against a background of Indonesian experience in its 25 years' existence in administering a state comprising many islands and comprehending many regional differences.

10. Dr Matias said he had formed the impression that Indonesia did not intend to take precipitate action in Timor, at least in the short-term: but as against this there were the recent reports by Australian journalists. Whilst doubtless they had exaggerated the situation, journalists usually (Dr Matias felt) had some basis of fact underlying their reports. What did we think?

11. Sir Arthur Tange indicated that we too had not assessed military action by Indonesia to be likely, at least in the immediate future. President Suharto was an able and cautious man who would not lightly embark on extreme courses. Sir Arthur Tange outlined Australian interests. He said we had a defence interest, as did Indonesia, in not having East Timor under the influence of a hostile external power and would not see that interest threatened were Indonesia to have a considerable influence on the territory; but using force would create a situation (involving also foreign policy aspects into which he would not go) in which Australian public opinion would be adverse, defence co-operation with Indonesia would be prejudiced and the principle of self-determination adhered to by the Government would not have been followed. Sir Arthur Tange said our position had been made well known to the Indonesians.

12. Sir Arthur Tange said it would, however, be imprudent of him to predict that Indonesia would on no account take military action in Timor. There was some discussion to the effect

that the Indonesians would be considering whether their long-term apprehensions were really so serious as to call for pre-emptive action in the shorter term. Sir Arthur Tange indicated that in his view, the Indonesians' attitudes could be influenced favourably if they felt reassured there were no sudden changes about to be made, that Portugal intended to discharge deliberately its responsibilities in Timor, and that there were prospects for eventual self-determination which, if it did not lead to incorporation of the territory into Indonesia, might be accompanied by arrangements—perhaps binding international arrangements—which satisfied Indonesia's security concerns.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxiii]

104 LETTER FROM FEAKES TO HILL

Canberra, 5 March 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Forgive me for not having written to you sooner about Portuguese Timor. But we have been rather hard-pressed one way and another.

As you will by now have seen from the record of their conversation on 20 February, Senator Willesee raised the question of Portuguese Timor with Mr Walding.¹ He said that Australia wanted to tell the Indonesians that it would be stupid for them to step into Portuguese Timor. Our intention, Senator Willesee said, had been to wait for Mr Woolcott to arrive in Jakarta and present his credentials before delivering this message but it might now be necessary for our Chargé to go in before the new Ambassador arrived. Senator Willesee expressed the hope that the New Zealanders would support this Australian approach, which would be followed up by Mr Whitlam during a visit which President Soeharto was to make here later this year. Mr Walding replied that he could see no reason why the New Zealand Ambassador to Indonesia should not act but he would refer the matter to Wellington.

In discussion with the Minister and the Secretary later that day I expressed the view that the situation was not so urgent as to require action by our Chargé d'Affaires in Jakarta before the Ambassador arrived and that for various reasons (which I shan't go into here, but which might be described as atmospheric and cosmetic) it would be better to wait until the Ambassador arrived in Jakarta before we made our approach to the Indonesians. I also expressed the view that, when we did make an approach, we did not want to leave the Indonesians an impression that we and others were ganging up on them: it would be best, therefore, if the New Zealanders and others were not invited to join us. In any event, I considered, the New Zealanders would have little influence on the Indonesians. Apart from ourselves the only people with some influence in Jakarta on the question of Portuguese Timor in the context of possible Indonesian military intervention seemed likely to be the Americans. But in order to avoid leaving the Indonesians with the impression that we were ganging up on them I thought that we should discourage the Americans from making any parallel approach to the one we had in mind.

The Minister and the Secretary, with some reluctance, accepted these views. Meanwhile John Rowland received a message from Wellington that Mr Norrish² wanted to speak to him,

¹ J. A. Walding, NZ Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs.

² Merwyn Norrish, Deputy Secretary, NZ MFA.

we assumed on the subject of Portuguese Timor. It was evident that the New Zealand High Commission in Canberra had reported the conversation I describe between Mr Walding and Senator Willesee. Eventually on 21 February John and I spoke to Mr Norrish on the telephone. He explained that shortly before he received the report of the conversation between the two Ministers—I think the date he mentioned was Wednesday 19 February—he had called the Indonesian Ambassador in to warn him in general terms of the dangers of precipitate action in Portuguese Timor. When he had received the message about the Minister's discussion he had decided to instruct the New Zealand Ambassador in Jakarta to make the same noises to the Indonesians at official level as he had to the Ambassador in Wellington. I thanked Mr Norrish for this information and explained that Ministers had not yet decided here what we should say to the Indonesians and by whom it should be said. But I promised to let him know what the outcome was.

The outcome has been that Dick Woolcott carried with him to Jakarta a letter from the Prime Minister to President Soeharto. The letter was aimed at:

- (a) suggesting to the Indonesians that the dangers they saw arising in respect of Portuguese Timor need not be regarded as immediately pressing;
- (b) placing it on record that no Australian Government could allow it to be thought that it supported military action in Portuguese Timor; and putting the Indonesians on notice of the damage that could be caused to our bilateral relations by resort to such action;
- (c) interesting the Indonesians in considering other possible means in containing the dangers which they see in Portuguese Timor.

In relation to (c) the Prime Minister's letter to President Soeharto invites attention to new Portuguese proposals which could offer a promising basis on which to build a close and co-operative relationship between Portuguese Timor and Indonesia in a way which would meet the proper aspirations of the Timorese, the legitimate interests of Indonesia and the need to preserve regional stability.

I should be most grateful if in order to honour my promise to Mr Norrish, you could pass on the information in the preceding paragraph to him. With the Prime Minister's approval the only others whom we are advising of our approach to the Indonesians are the Americans. The text of the letter from Mr Whitlam to President Soeharto is being very closely held here, closely enough, I hope, to avoid its appearing in the press! The letter was delivered in Jakarta to the Indonesian Chief of Protocol, General Latif, on Tuesday 4 March.

We should much prefer the New Zealanders not to take any parallel approach to the Indonesians at a high level and we certainly shan't be putting that thought into their minds here. What their Ambassador in Jakarta will have said to the Indonesian authorities as a result of Mr Norrish's earlier instructions will not, I think, have done any harm as it may well not have percolated up to the very top. We have seen a New Zealand telegram reporting an approach to the Indonesian Foreign Ministry on 25 February.³

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xx]

³ Cablegram WL2405 (6 March) reported that F. H. Corner, Secretary, NZ MFA, had told Hill that New Zealand, while supporting self-determination, took 'a more relaxed attitude' regarding Indonesian intentions in Timor than did Australia.

105 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA AND LISBON

Canberra, 5 March 1975

O.CH183503 SECRET ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Our immediate[ly] following telegram contains the text of an AAP-Reuters report from Jakarta on APODETI's rejection of Portugal's invitation to visit Lisbon for discussions on Portuguese Timor. The report notes that the other two parties, UDT and FRETILIN, have accepted the Portuguese invitation.

2. In recent discussions with the Portuguese Embassy in Canberra we have been at pains to underline that, despite Portugal's assessment that APODETI has minimal support in Portuguese Timor, it seems important that APODETI should not be simply ignored, among other reasons because to ignore APODETI would arouse further suspicion in Indonesia. It seems to us that the Portuguese are acting correctly in inviting APODETI with the other two political parties to participate in discussions about the territory's future. We suppose, moreover, that any discussion will cover the latest proposals advanced by UDT-FRETILIN, including the proposal for a protracted transitional period before an act of self-determination and for an agreement on non-aggression and co-operation with Indonesia.

3. As you know, we are encouraged by these latest UDT-FRETILIN proposals which we believe offer a promising basis for progress with the problem of Portuguese Timor, meeting both the proper aspirations of the Timorese and the legitimate security interests of Indonesia.

4. We have hoped that the Indonesians would see the same possibilities in this approach as we do, and indeed we are keen to engage the Indonesians in discussion about UDT-FRETILIN ideas.

5. There would seem to be a place for APODETI in all this. Clearly it would need to modify or at least stop pressing its demands for *immediate* integration with Indonesia. But then UDT and FRETILIN have also been forced to compromise, UDT by accepting eventual independence, FRETILIN by abandoning its claim to immediate independence; and their support for very gradual decolonisation in Portuguese Timor provides APODETI with an opportunity. Cannot APODETI also be brought to cooperate in that process on the basis that it could build its hopes for a close relationship with Indonesia on the suggestion for an agreement with Indonesia?

6. When opportunity presents, we should like you to put the foregoing to the Indonesians. At the least there would seem no reason why APODETI should not go to Lisbon to see what the Portuguese have to say. And we hope that the Indonesians would see value in encouraging APODETI in this course. We appreciate that they may be hesitant to encourage APODETI to join in the decolonisation process envisaged by UDT-FRETILIN because for APODETI to do so would be hard to reconcile, for instance, with Indonesian allegations of governmental suppression of APODETI in Portuguese Timor. For all that, we think it worth approaching the Indonesians as we suggest.

For Lisbon

7. We assume that Portugal will be taking an early opportunity to discuss the latest UDT-FRETILIN proposals with Indonesia. As agreed by Dr Santos, we have already given the Indonesians a general outline of the new proposals, but they are clearly awaiting . . . a direct

approach from Portugal. We imagine that this might be done through the new Indonesian Embassy in Lisbon or, perhaps more likely, with Ali Murtopo who, Jakarta tells us, is shortly to arrive in Lisbon.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, vii]

106 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 7 March 1975

O.JA8135 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Your O.CH183503¹

It is important before seeking to persuade the Indonesians to get Apodeti to adopt a more compromising position that we understand correctly the UDT/FRETILIN proposal.

2. Leaders of both the coalition parties told Taylor in Dili that the first point in their proposal was now the immediate recognition of *de jure* independence of Timor-Leste. The Administration gave Taylor a copy of the proposal dated 5 February 1975, which is consistent with what the party leaders had said. (See paragraph (d) our JA8095.) Point one of the proposal reads: 'Reconhecimento imediato da independencia *de jure* para o Timor-Leste'.

3. The coalition parties claim that the great majority of Timorese want independence. They seek a solution to the political future of Timor along similar lines to that adopted in Portugal's African colonies. No country had objected to that. They argued also that it was United Nations policy that people who are not already free could not choose to become subjects of another nation. The parties seemed more flexible in their attitude to an act of self-determination (which is not included in their proposal) than in their demand for immediate recognition of *de jure* independence.

4. The Governor and senior members of his Administration stressed to Taylor that the UDT/FRETILIN proposal was tentative. They saw it as a negotiating position. They considered that an internationally recognised act of self-determination was required and that it include the choice of integration with Indonesia. But several, not including the Governor, personally expressed agreement with the argument that the people must be independent before they could choose their future. They would not agree with the coalition parties, however, that this recognition of independence should include the idea that independence was the objective of the act of self-determination.

5. There are then two separate, but related, issues. The act of self-determination and the call for an immediate recognition of *de jure* independence. Taylor's assessment is that the Portuguese would insist on an act of self-determination including the choice of integration with Indonesia, and that the UDT and FRETILIN would agree, provided an acceptable means of supervision is found. Recognition that independence for Timor was the Portuguese Government's objective would, of course, be inconsistent with such an act.

6. We should stress that at present there is no clear idea in Dili about the course which

¹ Document 105.

would be adopted. The situation should be clearer following the Governor's discussions in Lisbon, the talks between Portugal and Indonesia, and the talks between the Portuguese and party representatives.

7. I agree that there would be value in seeking to persuade the Indonesians to encourage Apodeti to participate in discussions with the Portuguese. We might adopt the approach that we believe the Portuguese would want an internationally recognised act of self-determination including the choice of integration with Indonesia. Apodeti's refusal to discuss preparations for this act could make it more difficult for the Portuguese to reject the coalition's proposal. The option to withdraw from the talks would exist. Apodeti might argue that their participation in any transitional government could imply recognition that an independent Timor was desirable. But surely Indonesia would agree that a period of preparation for an act of self-determination in Timor was necessary. Would it not be in Apodeti's interests to participate in this preparation? Indonesia and Apodeti could seek to ensure that a transitional government could not be equated with an independent government.

8. I consider that we should also inform the Indonesians that according to what we have now learned in Dili the information in the Prime Minister's letter of 28 February to President Soeharto² that UDT and FRETILIN had not demanded immediate *de jure* independence was incorrect. We might say that our understanding is that at present such a demand was part of the coalition's constitutional proposals. But this proposal had yet to be discussed by the Portuguese and may prove flexible. As far as we know the Portuguese had not formulated their attitude to the proposal.

9. Grateful your early comments on paragraphs 7 and 8 above.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, vii]

107 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 7 March 1975

RESTRICTED

Portuguese Timor—Preparing for Democracy

During my visit to Portuguese Timor I saw one of the first democratic elections in the territory. It was at Iliomar in the district of Lauten on 2 March and was one of a series of similar elections in that district. They are an experiment. If they succeed the system of elections would be adopted, with minor alterations, throughout the territory. For the Portuguese Administration the elections have two basic objectives. To decolonise the district political and administrative structure by involving the people and to educate the people in democracy.

[*matter omitted*]

6. The elections represented a primitive form of democracy. It was market day at Iliomar on 2 March. When Lieutenant Rial, from the political affairs office in the Administration in Dili, arrived those who wished to vote—they numbered several hundreds—gathered in a field.

² Document 98.

Major Rial was assisted by the district civil administrator, an interpreter and representatives of UDT and FRETILIN, who adjudicated in any dispute. (APODETI had initially supported the elections seeing them, as did UDT and FRETILIN, as a necessary part of the decolonisation process. Subsequently APODETI refused to participate because of its program of non-cooperation with the government resulting from the ban on its radio program.) There were to be two votes, one for the chief of the suco of Fuato, the other for the chief of the suco of Iliomar. Participants in each election were grouped together.¹

7. I saw only the first election. Before Lieutenant Rial could explain the procedure, supporters of the challenger were arguing with him. They did not want an election. Most people in the suco disliked the existing chief, they said. Thus he should be summarily deposed in the time honoured fashion. Lieutenant Rial explained the meaning of the election and the democratic process. After a long, quite heated, discussion the Lieutenant won and the election proceeded.

8. Each person, the men before the women, took one stone and, in turn, placed it in one of two baskets. The baskets were distinctively marked and the people had been told several times which was for each candidate. So the vote would be secret these baskets were inside a large drum. To prevent people voting twice they filed past the drum from one side to the other. The party representatives jointly supervised the voting and the counting of the stones. On this occasion the challenger won. As far as I could judge the decision was accepted by the defeated faction.

9. Lieutenant Rial said that the average number of people voting in the elections was about 50% of those eligible. For instance, in the suco of Leuro the possible vote was 496. 223 (including 65 women) voted for the existing chief and one against. In the suco of Souro the possible vote was 969. 368 voted for the existing chief and 37 against him. One stone missed the basket and was declared an invalid vote. 104 women voted in that election. It was possible to abstain from voting by telling the supervisor. One abstention had been recorded so far. The party representatives had decided that a 50% vote was sufficient.

10. Three main principles underlie the organisation of the elections. First, they were not party elections. The issues were local. Lieutenant Rial said, however, that APODETI had sought to stir up trouble in connection with the elections in several villages. There were also reports that FRETILIN had organised candidates. It would be strange if this were not the case. At Iliomar though no party influence was noticeable.

11. Secondly, the decolonization program recognised that the traditional power structure in the villages—the chiefs—was important to the people. It respected this structure but combined with it the western democratic practice of voting. Where there were kings the proposal was to make the kings non-elected district councillors. Their position would be respected and they would retain their importance. But their discretionary power would be reduced through their inclusion in the Council. The Portuguese realised that when they left the Timorese may choose not to continue with the new system.

12. Thirdly, the program sought to introduce the people to the democratic process. It would demonstrate that the chief's authority depended on his maintaining the people's confidence. The people would become aware that they all, women included, could participate publicly in their own government. It sought to make them conscious that Portugal aimed at the democratic organisation of the administration with the liberty of expression and the right of people to join together in pursuit of a common program.

¹ A *sucu* was a group of villages. District Councils comprising directly elected chiefs of villages and *sucos* were to replace the former Civil Administrators and to work initially with government-appointed advisory administrators.

13. This system of elections was open to abuse. It might be possible to vote twice, though others in the village would probably notice. While the vote was secret it was possible to tell in which area of the large drum the voter placed his stone and, by knowing which basket was in that area, to know how a person voted. An unscrupulous group could take advantage of this. In the election at Iliomar, however, there was no evidence of abuse.²

14. The elections, and the restructuring of local politics and administration of which they form a part, demonstrate that the new Portuguese administration in Timor was genuine in its attempt to decolonise the territory. They claim to see this objective as their duty under the program of the Armed Forces Movement. In Iliomar at least there was no doubting the enthusiasm of the Portuguese in this experimental election system. An enormous obstacle to their success, however, is the backwardness of the people, particularly the lack of skilled manpower. Considerable time would be required; the Governor and his advisors recognised this. Whether they are given time, however, would depend on the Government in Lisbon.

15. Copies of this memorandum are being sent to UNNY and the Australian Embassies in Lisbon and Washington.

A. R. TAYLOR

Counsellor

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, vii]

108 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 8 March 1975

O.JA8148 SECRET PRIORITY

Discussion with President Soeharto

I presented my credentials to President Soeharto this morning. Text of speeches exchanged by separate telegram.

2. After presentation I had 25 minutes substantive private discussion with President about proposed visit to Australia and Timor. He said he would like fuller discussion when it could be arranged probably next week on both subjects.

[matter omitted]

4. President's speech and manner was very warm and there is no evidence of any coolness as a result of recent attitudes in Australia although the President said there seemed to have been some over-reaction there to inaccurate press reports of possible Indonesian military intervention in Timor.

5. Soeharto said categorically that Indonesia had 'no intention' of attempting to integrate Portuguese Timor by military force. He asked me to pass this assurance on to the Prime Minister. President added Indonesia had been in the vanguard of anti-colonial movements and

² On his visit to the territory in July Taylor saw another election in Lailea for a *suco* chief. The method of voting had by then been changed: voting slips and ballot boxes (representing each candidate) were used, and voting took place behind a screen for secrecy. Taylor noted then that the main possibility for manipulation lay in the fact that no lists were kept of who had voted, although all villagers would know of and need to be part of any conspiracy.

wanted to see orderly and proper decolonisation process in Portuguese Timor. Moreover Indonesia did not want to impair its improved international standing. Nor did it want to see disturbed the situation in South East Asia and the Pacific. The President also said 'we love independence but we love peace more'. President invited me to nominate officer of Embassy to accompany senior Indonesian officer to visit border between Portuguese Timor and Indonesian Timor to see both refugees from Portuguese side and lack of preparations on Indonesian side for military operations. Although Taylor has just returned he did not visit border area. This seems a good idea, and I propose to follow it up.

6. President also said however that pro-Indonesian elements in Timor were being persecuted and this created difficulties for Indonesian Government.

7. I said the Prime Minister as his letter showed, had not moved away from the position he had adopted in Yogyakarta and Wonosobo in September, at which he had said that the future of Portuguese Timor, including the possibility that it become part of Indonesia, would need to be the outcome of the properly expressed wishes of its people and that there should be an act of self-determination.

8. While the Government appreciated Indonesia's important and legitimate interest in the future of Portuguese Timor, it was concerned about the probable effect on the Australian/Indonesian relationship of the likely parliamentary and public reaction to any Indonesian military action if it were to occur. Press reports in Australia, whether or not they were accurate, had given some foretaste of this.

9. What we thought was needed was time to be allowed by the Portuguese for a political solution to be worked out in cooler circumstances, which would take account both of Indonesia's legitimate national interest in the colony's future and the wishes of the people of Timor.

10. The President said that there was really no difference in our positions.

11. The President said there was a need for high level discussions with the Portuguese Government, and he had instructed Ali Murtopo to go on to London from Algiers to meet a Portuguese minister there. The conversation was temporarily interrupted at this stage and it was not clear whether Ali Murtopo would go on to Lisbon but the impression I had was that talks with Portuguese would, if possible, be in London.

12. President thanked me for Prime Minister's letter, which he said he was studying carefully. He hoped to have another chance to talk to me in some detail about Timor and other matters, probably next week.

13. I told the President that the Prime Minister had told me before my departure last Sunday that long term importance of the Australian/Indonesian relationship was overriding issue and any possible complications in our relationship should be seen in that context. The President said that he agreed. If problems arose I should always feel free to contact him personally. He added 'you are no stranger to me or to Indonesia'.

14. My overall impression, admittedly preliminary, after being here only 5 days, but which is reinforced by Taylor's visit to Timor and the Naval Attache's private discussion in Bali on 6 March with General Pranoto, Commander of KODAM 16, which includes Timor, is that while some influential groups (some hard liners in HANKAM and at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies) here may look to a military solution of the Timor question, this should be seen, at present, *not* as Indonesian policy, but as one option which might be reluctantly adopted in certain future circumstances. Indonesian Defence planners probably feel a need to have the capacity on the ground to exercise the military option in case the situation in Portuguese Timor deteriorates to a point at which they consider their national interest is threatened.

15. But the President and other influential groups seem at present strongly opposed to military intervention and he would, in my view, be most unwilling to authorise it unless he considered situation in Portugal had become hopeless and that there was real danger of chaos, a left-wing takeover in Timor, and the killing of pro-Indonesian elements there.

16. Only in such a situation might Indonesia decide that its longer term national interest demanded that it move into Timor, notwithstanding the short term effects this might have on its relations with other countries, especially Australia.

17. It seems clear however that there is no likelihood of early action of this type and we should therefore use what influence we have with the Indonesians and the Portuguese to work towards an acceptable political solution and a cooling of the developing animosities between Dili and Kupang and along the border.

18. As my calls progress and especially after I have seen the President again, Yoga, Murtopo and Sudharmono, I shall attempt a more considered assessment.

19. Suggest you pass this message to Cooper in Lisbon.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, vii]

109 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TJAN AND TAYLOR

Jakarta, 10 March 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor: Ali Murtopo

Portuguese Timor

[*matter omitted*]

4. Harry [Tjan] asked how the Presentation of Credentials had gone and referred to the extensive press coverage of it. Did the Ambassador have a chance to talk with the President and did they discuss Portuguese Timor? I said that he did and that the President had given an assurance that Indonesia would not invade Portuguese Timor. Harry said he was pleased to hear this. There would be no invasion of Portuguese Timor but we should not be surprised at Indonesian activity in Portuguese Timor. He said that at the last ministerial level meeting about Portuguese Timor, only Ali Murtopo had taken a moderate line. Malik had been very tough in his approach. He had said that Portuguese Timor should be integrated—by force if necessary—and that he could look after the international reaction. It would be hostile for about a year, but he could manage that. I asked Harry what sort of action was being discussed. Harry said that there might be a Government supporting integration with Indonesia formed in Portuguese Timor in the border area. When efforts were made by Dili, or the political parties to squash this Government Indonesia could come to its support. He stressed that as far as he knew decisions along these lines had not been taken. It represented, however, the sort of argument being bandied about at senior levels. He agreed that the final decision on any large scale intervention in Timor would be taken by the President. Only the President (advised by

Ali Murtopo) was moderating Indonesia's policy at present. He was concerned to maintain Indonesia's international reputation. Also although Portuguese Timor was part of the Indonesian world, Indonesia had no historical claim to it and no territorial ambitions there. But in the last resort the President's thinking would be determined by his concern to maintain the security and stability of the region.

5. The crucial question would be what happened in Portugal. If Portugal turned communist, so went the argument put forward in the committee on Timor, Portugal could allow a communist power such as Russia to gain influence, and perhaps even set up a base, in Portuguese Timor. The area would become strategically important when heavy shipping was passing through the Lombok and Sunda Straits. Indonesia would not countenance such a situation and foreign opinion would not matter one bit.

6. BAKIN's report on the security of Indonesia in 1975 (a copy of which he showed, but did not give, to me) said there would be intense rivalry between communists and Muslims in Indonesia in the second half of 1975, and on into 1976. (Harry said that the leaflets referred to in the press recently by the Chief of KOPKAMTIB were a part of this rivalry.) Both the Russians and the Chinese would be seeking to strengthen their support in Indonesia at each other's expense in preparation for Indonesia's reopening of diplomatic relations with China expected in 1976. The Muslims would seek to further strengthen their position and build up support for their demands for an increased role for religion in the government system.

7. Ever present in the back of the minds of many senior Indonesians was the belief that communism had taken over in Indo-China and would soon threaten Thailand and Malaysia. Indonesia did not mind left-wing governments, for instance it agreed Khieu Samphan and Long Boret¹ should form a coalition government in Phnom Penh. But they would be very concerned if the Khmer Rouge formed a government by itself and was able to pursue its communist objectives untrammelled. This was why Indonesia had asked the United States to proceed slowly in its moves to set up a coalition government in Phnom Penh. Indonesian leaders believed in *détente* in theory. But in practice they saw that communists remained intent on subverting and overthrowing governments, such as the Indonesian one. Indonesia's history added force to this belief. If the communists were to gain a foothold in South East Asia the world balance would be upset, not just the balance in the region.

8. I asked Harry whether the recent activity on Portuguese Timor in Australia had caused any anger amongst leading Indonesians. He said that the President had not been particularly concerned. As we would have noted, he laid special emphasis in his speech at the Presentation of Credentials ceremony on his understanding of Australian policy since he had met Mr Whitlam. The President placed great store on what Mr Whitlam had told him about Australian policy. He believed that he could trust Mr Whitlam to fulfil his word. *Mr Whitlam had told the President that he, not Dr Cairns or anyone else, was the leader of the party. If Labor were defeated in elections Mr Peacock would carry out a similar policy towards Indonesia. Harry commented that the President had concluded from Mr Whitlam's remarks that Mr Whitlam would prefer Mr Peacock as his successor rather than Dr Cairns. Referring to Dr Cairns' forthcoming visit I said that we hoped the President would be able to see him.

9. I noted that Mr Peacock seemed to have adopted a different emphasis in his policy on Portuguese Timor. Harry agreed. I mentioned that Mr Peacock might visit Portuguese Timor in several weeks.*²

¹ Khieu Samphan was nominal head of the Khmers Rouges; Long Boret was the last Prime Minister of the Lon Nol Government.

² A marginal note referring to the words between asterisks in paragraphs 8 and 9 reads: 'This section not sent to Canberra'.

10. Harry repeated that Indonesia had no territorial ambitions; for instance, it wanted Australia to keep Christmas Island. Indonesia did not want Singapore to have it. Indonesia preferred a stable situation rather than to create instability through territorial claims.

11. Whether Indonesia would be prepared to enter some form of non-aggression treaty with an independent Portuguese Timor would depend on the Portuguese. If they were prepared to play a similar role in bringing Portuguese Timor and Indonesia together, as Australia had done with Papua New Guinea, Indonesia might agree to some form of agreement. Indonesia had no concern about the border problems in Papua New Guinea, and did not talk about them, because Indonesia believed that Australia was guaranteeing the situation. Perhaps if Portugal were to play a similar role, some treaty with Portuguese Timor might be feasible.

[*matter omitted*]³

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, viii]

110 MINUTE FROM TAYLOR TO WOOLCOTT

Jakarta, 14 March 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Radio Kupang

Richardson told me yesterday that in broadcasts from Radio Kupang at the end of last week the Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and you were quoted as having supported Indonesia's position on Portuguese Timor. The broadcasts had been extreme and apparently talked in terms of Indonesia taking over the territory.

I heard a part of one Radio Kupang broadcast while in Dili. The commentator was shouting, there was martial music and the sound of machine-gun fire. A song was played for the prostitutes in Dili. People in the Administration and others said this type of broadcast was common. In general the aim seemed to be to frighten the people and impress them with the military might of Indonesia. I understand that Radio Atambua is not as bad as Radio Kupang.

In your calls on people such as Ali Murtopo, Yoga and Malik, you might consider it worthwhile mentioning that we have heard reports that Australia's position was being misrepresented by Radio Kupang.¹

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

³ A short discussion of Ali Murtopo's influence is omitted. Tjan corrected Taylor's suggestion that Murtopo had no power base; he had no legal authority to make decisions, but was heeded by senior people because of his influence with the President. His overall position had not been affected by his apparent isolation on Timor, and the President had so far supported his moderate position. The influence of CSIS was based mainly on the fact that it prepared position papers for Murtopo. In an attached handwritten minute (17 March) Taylor proposed sending the record to Canberra with a covering memorandum pointing out that assurances that there would be no invasion 'do not mean that Indonesian interference in the territory will not continue' and that 'Ali's star has not waned'.

¹ Woolcott noted in the margin: 'Yes. You should also make the point to Deplu'. In a briefing dated 6 March, for Willesee's forthcoming visit to Malaysia, concern was also noted about 'the strident tones of *Antara* reports. There seems to be an attempted "Sudetenisation" . . . with *Antara* portraying a highly exaggerated picture of repression of the pro-Indonesian groups in Portuguese Timor'.

111 LETTER FROM RENOUF TO HEADS OF MISSION

Canberra, 14 March 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

You will know that we have been much concerned with Portuguese Timor over the last two or three weeks. The possibility of Indonesian military action in Timor has always been with us. And indeed it is clear that as long ago as last October contingency plans for direct military intervention were being prepared or revived. But we think that, in the development of Indonesian policy towards Portuguese Timor, those within the Indonesian administration who favour a program of more or less discreet pressure and persuasion—and no doubt subversion—as distinct from direct military intervention, to achieve the objective of incorporation of the territory into Indonesia have been in the ascendancy.

At the same time voices favouring a more direct approach have never been entirely muted, and indeed we have all along been aware¹ that contingency planning for possible military action, in addition to subversion, has been proceeding apace—to the extent, in fact, that we had already decided by mid-February that the arrival of our new Ambassador in Jakarta and the introductory calls he was to make should become an occasion to bring home to the Indonesians the damaging impact military intervention in Timor would have on relations between Australia and Indonesia. On 21 February the Prime Minister agreed in discussions with me that he would send a message to President Soeharto to be handed over by our new Ambassador. The Minister had mentioned our apprehensions to the visiting New Zealand Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs (Walding) on 20 February.

There are a number of theories about how the press became engaged. But the following week saw an outburst of press reporting on the Timor situation stimulated, it seems, by a feature article written by Peter Hastings in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Hastings referred *inter alia* to Indonesian amphibious exercises then about to take place; he inferred that the military now had the upper hand in Indonesian policy making, and that armed intervention in Portuguese Timor was just around the corner.

There followed the urgency debate in the House of Representatives on 25 February, which in turn generated political pressures on us to seek clarification of their intentions from the Indonesians. In the event, the Indonesians made emphatic denials, private as well as public, of any intention to intervene in Portuguese Timor and these were received with relief. Our latest advice is from Dick Woolcott following his presentation of credentials on 8 March. President Soeharto gave a categorical assurance that Indonesia had ‘no intention’ of attempting to ‘integrate Portuguese Timor by military force’ and asked that this advice be passed on to the Prime Minister.

While there thus seems little likelihood of early military action, we do not rule it out once and for all. Indeed, intelligence reports have continued to focus on the question of possible timing of Indonesian military action—and it is evident that an Indonesian subversive effort in Portuguese Timor is already under way.

Meanwhile, we have had some more encouraging news from Lisbon. Dr Santos, the Portuguese Minister for Interterritorial Co-ordination, has outlined to Frank Cooper new proposals which he has received from the FRETILIN–UDT coalition and which envisage a protracted transitional period before independence in Portuguese Timor, with steps to be taken meanwhile to bring about a rational ordering of relations with Indonesia. Earlier reports

¹ Half a line has been expunged here.

suggested that UDT-FRETILIN were pressing for immediate independence, and for this independence to be on the basis of a simple transfer of power that by-passed an act of self-determination. Hints of such a Mozambique-type solution have also been evident in some Portuguese attitudes. And all this has fuelled Indonesia's suspicions and added to our own anxiety about possible Indonesian intervention.

Dr Santos' new information, since confirmed by our Counsellor in Jakarta, who has just returned from a visit to Dili, is thus encouraging. There are still indications that UDT-FRETILIN will be seeking immediate endorsement of the ultimate objective of independence thereby ruling out other options. But we have some hopes that the Portuguese will insist that all choices be left open, including that of integration with Indonesia.

In any event, the new UDT-FRETILIN proposals would seem to remove the immediate urgency from the situation and we believe that they offer some hope for achieving a political outcome in Portuguese Timor which could meet both the political aspirations of the Timorese and the legitimate security interests of Indonesia.

On the other hand, recent developments in Portugal indicating a further increase in the strength of the Left there will worry the Indonesians. These developments also raise questions about the extent to which future governments in Lisbon would be prepared to follow a program of gradual constitutional development in Portuguese Timor like that favoured by Dr Santos.

I mentioned earlier political pressure generated by the press speculation about an imminent Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor. It was partly because of this (and partly, too, because we felt that the sooner action was taken the better) that it was decided that Dick Woolcott should proceed to Jakarta a few days earlier than initially planned. He arrived there on Monday, 3 March, carrying with him a letter from the Prime Minister. The letter has now been handed over in Jakarta and, as mentioned, drew the encouraging response from President Soeharto to which I have already referred.

I hope that the foregoing helps to bring you up to date with developments relating to Portuguese Timor. I should say that we have had severely to limit the distribution of cables on this subject (as well as the treatment of it in the PIR). These restrictions were the result of the concern expressed by the Prime Minister over the leaks to the press in Canberra late last month. In particular, I think he was irritated by the report in the *Australian* of 25 February foreshadowing his message to President Soeharto. We had hoped to keep the fact of this message secret, and indeed even now we have confirmed its existence only to the United States and New Zealand.

Before concluding this letter I should like to register the Department's own interest in receiving from ASEAN posts an assessment of the likely reaction of ASEAN governments to Indonesian military action against Timor. We have been inclined to feel, if a little cynically, that the reaction would probably be very muted, and indeed understanding of Indonesia's action, a possible exception being the reaction in Singapore. The Department of Defence, on the other hand—and commentators like Peter Hastings—argue that regional countries would in fact be sorely disturbed by Indonesian intervention in Timor, that such action would revive fears of Indonesia's expansionism, and that, indeed, it would constitute a serious disruption to regional stability, undermining the sense of trust and the regional equilibrium which have obtained over the last five or six years. As I say, we feel this to be an exaggerated assessment. But we should be grateful to have the views of the ASEAN posts themselves. We should also be glad to have anything you might glean about how the ASEAN countries regard our recent reactions to the problem of Portuguese Timor, that is, the press interest here and the

Parliamentary debate. Do they think the reactions were justified? Or do they think that these reactions show that we are not attuned to thinking among ASEAN countries?

I am sending copies of this letter to our Heads of Mission in all ASEAN countries. I am also attaching a note prepared for the Minister's visit to Kuala Lumpur this week which covers the main policy questions raised by the Timor issues.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, i]

ASEAN ATTITUDES

The Association of South-East Asian Nations was established by the Bangkok Declaration on 8 August 1967. At that time it comprised five countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. One of the principal objectives of the organisation was to ensure the stability of the South-East Asian region; the support of Soeharto's Indonesia was regarded as crucial to achieving that objective. It was this that was central to the expected ASEAN approach to Portuguese Timor. Replies to Renouf's letter (Document 111) were received from Birch, Johnston, Nutter and Mayne-Wilson (the last as Acting High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur). All replies were based on impressions and speculation stemming from discussions with Foreign Ministry officials and, in the case of Singapore, also with journalists.

Reactions in both Singapore and Thailand were expected to be muted, although neither government had given the issue much thought. Much the same line was taken in the Philippines, but with an added dimension of self-interest; a strong line on the issue of Portuguese Timor risked Indonesian opposition to the Philippines' suppression of Muslim dissidents in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. Of all the ASEAN governments Malaysia appeared to have given the greatest consideration to possible Indonesian military intervention there. Public support for an act of self-determination in Timor stemmed from Malaysia's own interests in the incorporation of Brunei. Mayne-Wilson also suggested, however, that Malaysian Ministers might be more prepared than the Foreign Ministry 'to turn a blind eye to any Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor because they may want to retain such an option for themselves in respect of Brunei'. Consequently Malaysia would have no real objections. The Malaysians had also concluded that the Indonesian case for military intervention might have such internal momentum as to make it inevitable. Given that, the need for ASEAN unanimity behind the cause of regional stability was paramount.

112 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 14 March 1975

O.LB814 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I had a useful talk with Pires today.

2. Contrary to advice from Indonesian Counsellor here (Our 762) Santos saw Ali Murtopo secretly in London last weekend. According to Pires the meeting was 'very helpful'. The main point that seems to have emerged is that Ali apparently agreed in principle to encourage APODETI to cooperate with Pires and Timor administration. Pires was hopeful that Jakarta now accepted that any military move was not only undesirable but unnecessary. He believes that the prospects for working out a solution acceptable to all concerned have improved.

3. Pires acknowledged that UDT/FRETILIN's advocacy of immediate *de jure* independence was inconsistent with their proposed timetable for achieving it. What they really wanted was Portuguese recognition of the right to independence—a right which Portugal freely acknowledged as being in line with their decolonisation policy and which was not necessarily inconsistent with an act of self-determination. The scenario envisaged by Pires is for gradual progress towards self government with the political parties (including APODETI) assuming a greater role in the government, eventually culminating in an act of self-determination in which independence or incorporation into Indonesia would be the options.

4. Pires said he was concerned at the amount of deliberate misinformation and distortions reaching Jakarta principally from the Indonesian Consul in Dili. He referred specifically to allegations that he and his advisers were communists, that he had approved the sale of arms to FRETILIN, and that his administration was persecuting pro-APODETI supporters. He said the situation was quiet and that the Indonesians were themselves to blame for such invasion fears as were circulating.

5. As expected, Pires renewed his representations for the reopening of an Australian consulate in Dili and I repeated the arguments why we did not favour this course at the present time. Pires said if not a consulate could we not step up the frequency of our visits? I said I thought you would be receptive to the idea and promised to pass it on.

6. Pires is leaving Lisbon tomorrow, will stop over in Singapore on Sunday night and will arrive Jakarta on Monday. The purpose of the visit will be principally to allay Indonesian misgivings about future Portuguese policy, and to try to enlist Indonesian help in persuading APODETI to cooperate with the administration in the decolonisation process and to agree to participate along with the other parties in projected discussions in Lisbon next month. I said we welcomed the initiation of talks with Indonesia and also the idea of trying to induce both Indonesia and APODETI to adopt a cooperative approach to working out a solution. Pires' visit to Jakarta will apparently be followed by a visit from the Portuguese Ambassador in Canberra about a repeat about a week later.

7. As I took my leave, Pires' parting observation was 'I am much more concerned about the situation here in Lisbon than I am in Timor'.

COOPER

113 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 18 March 1975

O.JA8319 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: Amnesty International: PNG

Following are main points from one hour discussion with General Yoga Sugama yesterday. As well as Head of BAKIN Yoga, in effect, controls the Special Coordinating Committee on Portuguese Timor (General Panggabean is the nominal Chairman).

[matter omitted]

8. Turning to Timor Yoga said that there seemed to him to have been some build up of anti-Indonesian feeling both in Australia and in Portuguese Timor itself. Yoga said that it was important that the Australian and Indonesian Governments understood each other on this matter, especially on the eve of Dr Cairns' visit here and the President's visit to Australia. He said that reports of invasion plans in the Australian press had been false. He added 'Indonesia does not want more territory'. Portuguese Timor was already heavily subsidised by the Portuguese Government and it would only become another economic burden if it were part of Indonesia. Yoga added that both the Indonesian and Portuguese Governments now 'agreed that the majority of the people there should decide their own future'.

9. Yoga said that we should not 'mistake contingency plans and routine exercises' for an Indonesian policy of military intervention. Press reports and public reactions to them in Australia had been unjustified and alarmist. For example, the alleged military road which was being constructed by the Army had been in the original Repelita I plan. No invasion was planned.

10. I said that I was glad to hear this. The Australian Government thought that the Indonesian Government should encourage APODETI to participate in discussions with the Portuguese authorities in Timor and in the political process which was being planned for the territory. The hostility which was developing in the island between Kupang and Dili was not in either side's interests.

11. General Yoga said that he agreed. He said that Indonesia would now be urging APODETI to enter into discussions with the Portuguese authorities in Dili. APODETI would also be encouraged to take part in discussions with the Portuguese in Lisbon and in the discussions with political parties planned in Macao for next May. (He added Indonesia would have people in Hong Kong ready to visit Macao and participate in these discussions if necessary.) Yoga said he was also taking steps to moderate the strident radio propaganda from Kupang to Portuguese Timor.

12. Yoga said that the Indonesian side would be trying to 'minimise the antipathies between the Portuguese and Indonesian Governments, especially on the ground in Timor'.

13. I asked Yoga whether Indonesia would accept an independent Timor. Yoga said Indonesia would not deny Portuguese Timor the option of becoming part of Indonesia if it so wished despite the economic burden this would entail. But Indonesia would be 'happy if it became independent'. It would however be 'unhappy if it became a trouble spot'. Yoga then said that

he was aware that our Embassy in The Hague had issued visas to South Malaccas dissidents.¹ His own information suggested that the dissidents based in The Hague did intend to attempt to build up a group in Portuguese Timor which would be used as a base for guerilla operations against Indonesia. Having failed to achieve this in Papua New Guinea or West Irian they were now making a new attempt in Timor. If this were to happen Indonesia would 'be unable to take it quietly'. Indonesia would also be concerned if, after obtaining independence, Portuguese Timor were to allow either guerrilla groups hostile to Indonesia or communist countries to seek to subvert Indonesia from Timor. Yoga added that 'if those two things do not happen, we will be happy to cooperate with an independent Timor'.

14. I suggested that some Indonesians tended to exaggerate Soviet and Chinese interest in Timor. I said that my reading of the situation was that although Sino/Soviet competitive tensions were continuing my impression was that neither the Soviet Union nor China had shown any real interest in Timor. The Soviet Union would not want to impair the continuing consolidation of its relations with Indonesia. I would also guess that the Chinese would be more interested in re-establishing relations with Indonesia than interfering in Timor. Both, I thought, would take the pragmatic view that their relations with Indonesia were more important to them than meddling in Timor. General Yoga said that he hoped this would prove to be correct.

15. He said that intelligence reports reaching him suggested that the Taiwan Consul felt threatened by some members of the Chinese community in Timor who were in contact with China through the Chinese Embassy in Australia. I said I had no information on this matter. Yoga also said that the 'Southern African Liberation Centre' in Australia had connections with FRETILIN and he had heard rumours of 400 weapons being smuggled into Timor by this body. I said that the Australian Government would certainly not permit or condone the export of arms in this sort of situation and I asked whether he thought these 'rumours' had any substance. Yoga said that he did not know but he was following this up. He also added that the campaign for Independent East Timor based in Castlereagh Street Sydney was also connected with FRETILIN and urging an immediate declaration of independence.

[*matter omitted*]

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, viii]

¹ In late 1950 the Republic of the South Moluccas (RMS), a group of four small islands in East Indonesia centred on Ambon, was forcibly incorporated into the Republic of Indonesia. Several thousand Moluccan refugees fled, via New Guinea, to the Netherlands; the remnants of the RMS government went into hiding on the largely inaccessible island of Ceram. In 1952 most of the RMS leaders were captured and imprisoned by Indonesian forces. The last remaining leader in hiding, Dr Chris Soumokil, was captured in 1963, tried, and eventually executed in 1966. The following year a group of young Moluccans began a radical campaign from their base in The Hague, attacking both Indonesian representatives and Dutch officials and citizens. It is to this latter group that Yoga refers. In fact steps were taken to ensure that the Moluccans applying for visas in The Hague did not enter Australia (see the last paragraph of Document 119).

114 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

Washington, 21 March 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

On 20 March, Kelly (Portuguese Desk, State) said that a middle level 'Working Group' of State Department officers whose directorates had an interest in Timor had met recently. It had come to the following broad conclusions:

- (a) the Timor issue was peripheral to United States interests as a whole and peripheral in the context of United States relations with Portugal;
 - (b) it was in the United States interest to have the Timor question sorted out with the minimum of fuss. It did not really mind whether Timor merged with Indonesia—a possibility which had something to be said for it—or decided to go its own way. But it was a matter of concern that the Indonesians not take any action which would blow up the issue;
 - (c) the United States should continue to support fully the Australian attitude on and initiatives in respect of Timor. It should not however get out in front of Australia;
 - (d) it was pleased that Portugal and Indonesia were now talking and encouraged this development;
 - (e) there was a danger that if too much attention was focused on Timor, the issues could be magnified and the problem enlarged. It believed that the United States Embassy in Jakarta was perhaps paying too much attention on it.
2. Kelly said that it was unlikely that there would be a further meeting of the Working Group in the absence of notable new developments.
 3. Copies of this memorandum have been sent to Jakarta, Lisbon and JIO.

J. P. McCARTHY

First Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, i]

115 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 23 March 1975

O.JA8418 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*Ref O.JA8375¹*

General Ali Murtopo returned to Jakarta on 21 January not 18 January as previously reported. After the London meeting he went to Saudi Arabia to prepare for the President's visit there later this year.

2. Lim Bian Kie (CSIS) who had spoken briefly with Ali told us on 22 March that he believed the London meeting would ensure that the 'doves' on the Timor issue, that is, Ali, would gain the upper hand. Ali had agreed, and Bian Kie believed the President would also agree, that Indonesia would reduce the tension in Timor. Propaganda would be toned down and Indonesia would adopt a more positive attitude towards economic cooperation between the two Timors.

3. Bian Kie confirmed that the Portuguese considered the best solution would be integration with Indonesia. Indonesia would be able to seek to influence the act of self-determination (which Bian Kie thought might take the form of elections to a Constituent Assembly) but this should not be too obvious. Bian Kie acknowledged that it would not be easy to achieve the desired result. Provided the act of self-determination was not for several years, however, he thought Indonesia could achieve its objective of integration.

4. The council to which Ali agreed in principle would consist of representatives of the UDT, FRETILIN and APODETI. Details of its functions and so on had not been worked out. Bian Kie said that whether Indonesia agreed to encourage APODETI to participate would depend on what the Portuguese wanted the council to do. It should not be such that it might prejudice the act of self-determination in favour of independence.

5. Bian Kie was more optimistic than Tjan about the London meeting.² He thought there was a better understanding between Indonesia and Portugal about what was going to happen. Portugal was sensitive about the possibility that it would be accused of conspiring with Indonesia and Bian Kie said the details of the London meeting were being held closely.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, viii]

¹ 20 March. It reported information from Tjan and Akosah, based on a telegram from the Indonesian Ambassador in London, regarding Murtopo's talks with the Portuguese in London. The Portuguese had proposed a transitional government having *de jure* responsibility and with the three parties equally represented, or a Consultative Council, with similar representation, but of which the functions were not clear. Murtopo had not agreed to the former, but had agreed in principle to the Council. The Portuguese had rejected his proposal for an Advisory Council, consisting of representatives of Portugal and Indonesia, to operate to ensure integration with Indonesia; Portugal had already undertaken to maintain full responsibility for the territory until its future had been determined. In response to Portuguese objections to blatant support of Apodeti by the Indonesian Consul in Dili, Murtopo had agreed to remove him.

² Tjan had said that Portuguese and Indonesian positions still seemed far apart.

116 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 27 March 1975

O.JA8533 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: ASEAN Views

I have now made my initial calls on the four ASEAN Heads of Mission here. In each case I have asked their Governments' views on Timor. All four Ambassadors said their Governments had made no public comment on the issue, including the possibility of Indonesian military intervention.

2. The Malaysian Ambassador said that Britain had helped Malaysia effect the incorporation of Sabah and Sarawak although the Sarawak United People's Party had initially held out for independence as FRETILIN was doing in Timor now. It was essential for the Indonesians to persuade the Portuguese to help them prepare Timor for association with Indonesia. I asked the Ambassador (Zainal Abidin bin Sulong) whether this represented his Government's policy. He said that he was not entirely sure of the latest thinking in Kuala Lumpur but that it was inevitable sooner or later that Portuguese Timor would become part of Indonesia one way or another. Notwithstanding possible difficulties in the United Nations and over the principle of self-determination, Malaysia's relations with Indonesia were far more important to it than what happened in Portuguese Timor. Moreover, Malaysia needed to think of the situation in Brunei. Malaysia itself was likely to make another attempt in the near future to draw Brunei into Malaysia.

3. The Thai, Singaporean and Philippine Ambassadors generally took the view that while the use of force or undue pressure by Indonesia would be embarrassing, their relations with Indonesia and the need to maintain ASEAN outweighed other considerations. None thought that international reaction would be particularly hostile to Indonesia or sustained for very long if Indonesia were to opt for military solution.

4. I said to each Ambassador that Australia would be very concerned if Indonesia were to resort to force and that the public reaction in Australia to such an event might place a considerable strain on our bilateral relations. None of the four thought that this would be the case in respect of their own relations with Indonesia. Naturally they would prefer to see such a situation avoided but, if it were to happen, each thought their Governments would be as helpful to Indonesia as they could be in the circumstances. The Malaysian Ambassador in particular saw any act of self-determination simply as a means to a desirable and inevitable end. He added that the problem with insisting on a proper act of self-determination was that it could be equated with advocacy of independence for Timor which was not in Indonesia's interests nor in those of other countries in the region.

5. No doubt Heads of Missions here are influenced by the local environment and the importance of Indonesia in the context of ASEAN but, if they are accurately reflecting their Governments' thinking, then I think we can expect the other four ASEAN countries not to involve themselves in this issue and to avoid public criticism of Indonesia.

WOOLCOTT

117 MINUTE FROM TAYLOR TO WOOLCOTT

Jakarta, 27 March 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

One point you might consider making in the Department (if you agree with it) concerns the Department's view that UDT/FRETILIN ha[ve] compromised on their demands for immediate independence. As you know the program of the coalition calls for the immediate recognition of *de jure* independence. From an Indonesian viewpoint this is almost as bad as immediate independence. From the information available to us it is the Portuguese who have watered down the coalition's proposal, not the coalition itself. There is no evidence that the coalition has weakened in its demand for immediate recognition of *de jure* independence.

If I am correct the significance of this point is that we should not be arguing that UDT/FRETILIN is reasonable and compromising and that therefore APODETI should be prepared to cooperate with the Portuguese and work with the other parties. There may be good reasons for arguing that APODETI should cooperate, but the reasonableness of the coalition on the independence issue is not one.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, viii]

118 BRIEF FOR WHITLAM

Canberra, 31 March 1975

SECRET

Australian Policy: Background and Recent Developments

We need to be wary of becoming too deeply enmeshed in the Timor problem. You are already on record as saying that henceforth social and political conflicts in Asia should be allowed to work themselves out without intervention by outside powers, even if the contest for power and change leads to violence. While speaking against the background of the Viet-Nam experience, your statement was meant to have general application in South East Asia.

Australia's interest in Portuguese Timor

2. A separate paper has been prepared by the Department of Defence on the strategic significance of Portuguese Timor. Timor, along with Brunei, constitutes the remaining colonial problem in South East Asia. Although Australia has a natural interest in the final outcome and the Government supports self-determination in the territory, it is a long way from this point to accepting any overall responsibility for Timor. That responsibility rests primarily with Portugal and the Timorese, with Indonesia occupying the next place because of its predominant interest. Australia should not be a party principal. Its role should be to help the other countries and parties concerned to work together.

3. At the same time, however, we have to bear in mind the danger that Indonesian policy towards Portuguese Timor may jeopardise our present relations with Indonesia. The Minister for Defence has invited your attention to the risk that an Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor would endanger our program of defence cooperation with Indonesia and he has also pointed to the danger of wider repercussions for our relations with Indonesia and indeed for the strategic concepts on which our defence and foreign policies are based.

4. There are domestic pressures at work which may deeply affect our policies towards Portuguese Timor. These pressures come from both sides of the political spectrum. Mr Peacock initiated the urgency debate in the House on 25 February. The Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Caucus has discussed Timor on several occasions; a group from the Committee recently visited Timor. A trade union and student group, led by Mr Jim Roulston, has also recently returned from Timor. Ministerial correspondence on the subject is increasing; it invariably calls on the Government to adopt a robust stand with Indonesia over Timor. Another strand of opinion has stressed the special obligation we have to the Timorese because of the help extended to the Australian 'Sparrow Force' during the war. In all of this there are strong undertones of anti-Indonesian sentiment.

5. In the last few weeks too the Australian press has descended on Timor; its reporting has occasionally been tendentious and it has overdrawn the Indonesian threat. Of some relevance is the remark by the Governor of Portuguese Timor to Mr Woolcott that reporting of some Australian journalists has been irresponsible; Governor Pires mentioned Stannard of the *Australian* and Scully of the ABC.

6. Public comment and activity in Australia have not gone unnoticed in Indonesia. We have had reflections of irritation from Harry Tjan, General Yoga Sugama (Chief of BAKIN), as well as from President Soeharto himself when in his discussion with Mr Woolcott on 8 March he spoke of the 'over-reaction in Australia to inaccurate press reports'. General Yoga also spoke to Mr Woolcott on 17 March. He referred to a 'change in public attitudes in Australia towards Indonesia' and speculated that this reflected the Australian media's approach to the Timor issue as well as the attitude of groups like Amnesty International. He expressed concern about the visit of the six ALP members to Timor and hoped that they would not confine their fact-finding to contacts with FRETILIN. (In fact, they had wide-ranging contacts, including APODETI.)¹

7. Much of the Australian interest and 'involvement' has been stimulated by the FRETILIN group in Timor. Ramos Horta is anxious to draw Australia in as a counter to the threat he perceives from Indonesia. Australian press and public comment is being played up in Timor as evidence of Australian support for FRETILIN's cause. Horta continues to correspond with groups with which he made contact during his earlier visits to Australia.

8. Australian policy to date has been to avoid this involvement so far as possible. In particular, we have felt that we cannot permit our relations with Indonesia to become the hostage of Ramos Horta and his UDT-FRETILIN group. But domestic political factors may be nudging us further into the Timor quagmire. Departmentally, we hope that these pressures can continue to be resisted. Mr Woolcott has also recommended from Jakarta that some measure of Australian disengagement would best serve our interests.

[matter omitted]²

¹ See Document 113. These views were expressed in paragraphs 3 and 4 which have been omitted.

² Matter omitted refers to Whitlam's letter to Soeharto (Document 98), the Portuguese-Indonesian talks in London and other 'encouraging developments'.

15. But one should guard against optimism. There are still many loose ends in the Portuguese plans for Timor and uncertainties about the attitudes of UDT and FRETILIN, and indeed of Indonesia. While UDT–FRETILIN appear to accept a fairly protracted transitional period before independence is attained, the coalition also clearly envisages a progressive transfer of power in that period to a government firmly reflecting political forces in Timor. They may not take kindly to the notion of a consultative council. It is clear too that ultimate integration remains a firm policy objective of the Indonesian Government. The Indonesians see integration as being accomplished through an Indonesian influenced act of self-determination and they believe (probably inaccurately) that they have won Portugal's agreement to facilitate Indonesian covert efforts to this end. But all the indications are that at least in present circumstances an act of self-determination would favour the pro-independence parties and not APODETI, no matter how much covert Indonesian involvement. Another uncertainty derives from the conflicting statements of the Indonesians and Portuguese. The Governor of Portuguese Timor was reported on 20 March as still speaking of an election for a constituent assembly 'within the year'. How does this fit in with what emerged from the London talks? Recent advice from Harry Tjan³ also conflicts with what General Yoga told Mr Woolcott about encouraging APODETI to participate in discussions with the other political parties and with the Portuguese.

16. Beyond all this, that measure of agreement which was reached in London between the Indonesians and the Portuguese is uncertain. It would seem still to fall far short of what the Indonesians really want—a privileged place for APODETI and an agreement by Portugal to influence the Timorese in the direction of integration with Indonesia. Harry Tjan confirmed to our Embassy on 19 March that Indonesian and Portuguese positions were still 'far apart'. He complained that, while the Portuguese maintained that the best solution was integration with Indonesia, they would not work to that end.

17. Another uncertainty is that the discussions with the Portuguese took place before the attempted coup in Portugal on March 11 and the subsequent shift to the left there. An up-to-date assessment of the Portuguese situation is being prepared separately. But it is clear that Indonesia's anxieties about Communist influence in Portugal will be heightened.

18. The events in Portugal must also raise the question of whether future governments in Lisbon will be prepared to follow the program of gradual decolonisation and cooperation with Indonesia in Timor worked up primarily by Dr Santos. That Santos continues in the new Portuguese Cabinet is a hopeful sign. That many of the key figures of the new government, including the President, Prime Minister and the new Foreign Minister, have also been members of the Decolonisation Committee is another. They would presumably have approved Santos' brief for the London talks. It is also relevant that the Portuguese delegation at the talks included Major Vitor Alves, a leading member of the Armed Forces Movement in Lisbon and a member of the new Portuguese Revolutionary Council. Our Embassy in Lisbon believes that the advent of the new Portuguese Government will *not* result in any policy changes in relation to Timor.

[*matter omitted*]⁴

Assessment of Indonesian position

25. Where does the foregoing leave us? As long as Portuguese Timor remains quiet, no firm evidence of Communist subversion emerges, and groups there do not allow themselves to be used by dissident groups from Indonesia itself, the Indonesian Government is likely not to

³ Cablegram JA8375 (20 March). See note 1 to Document 115.

⁴ Paragraphs omitted deal with Indonesian fears of Portuguese Timor's potential as a base for subversion and suspicions of 'hostility' and links with groups in Australia, including the examples mentioned by Yoga in Document 113.

take precipitate action in the territory, but concentrate on developing its influence there. President Soeharto is cautious and pragmatic. He prides himself on Indonesia's responsible foreign policy and will search for a solution to the Timor problem consistent with it. In time, provided there are no untoward developments in the territory, the Indonesians might come to accept the idea of an independent Timor and modify their policy objective accordingly. But there are certainly no signs that they have done so yet. In the final analysis, Indonesia's decision will be based on how it sees its national interest and on the extent to which it perceives Portuguese Timor as a threat to its security.

An Alternative Approach for Indonesia

26. In your message to President Soeharto, you suggested that there were other means by which Indonesia could contain the threats which they see arising in respect of Timor. Indonesia's present course is driving the emerging nationalist forces in Timor into increasingly intransigent, anti-Indonesia positions. By rigidly opposing independence, the Indonesians are attracting the opposition of the currently dominant forces in the developing political life in Timor. There is the clear risk that the more extreme the position Indonesia takes, the more extreme will be the opposition engendered. This would indeed open up a prospect of instability in the territory, and friction and instability between Indonesia and any independent state that may emerge. It adds to the risk of external attention and involvement.

27. If, instead, the Indonesians were to try to build friendly and influential relations with the Timorese, and if they were at pains to avoid stimulating the fears that UDT-FRETILIN no doubt hold about Indonesian intentions, it would seem to us that developments in Portuguese Timor would be less likely to threaten regional stability. We should urge on the Indonesians this alternative approach.

[matter omitted]⁵

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, i]

PORTUGAL SHIFTS TO THE LEFT: MARCH 1975

At midday on 11 March a small group of dissident Portuguese officers, loyal to ex-President Spínola, launched several attacks throughout Lisbon on military units loyal to the Government. Three hours later President Gomes was able to issue a communiqué announcing that the attempted 'reactionary' coup had been successfully quashed. The result of the abortive coup was to strengthen the Portuguese Left and to further discredit the Right. The Provisional Government was again reorganised, with the Communists increasing their representation from one minister to four, largely at the expense of the moderate socialists. The Armed Forces Movement quickly abolished the Council of State and Junta of National Salvation, replacing them with a 28-man Revolutionary Council. The council was to have an effective veto over all decisions of the Provisional Government. Despite these changes, there was no great lurch towards leftist extremism. At the elections for the first Constituent Assembly on 25 April the parties of the centre left out-pollled the Communists by almost five votes to one. Moreover, there was no real evidence of Indonesian concerns about the direction of Portuguese politics until the approach of the Macao talks in June 1975.

⁵ The final paragraphs refer to the possibility of 'a modest Australian aid program' to encourage the Portuguese 'to fulfil their responsibilities', and a similar Indonesian program.

119 BRIEF FOR WHITLAM

Canberra, 31 March 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

Public interest in the Soeharto visit to Australia will focus on your discussions with him about Portuguese Timor. After the Yogyakarta talks speculation arose that you had reached an understanding with President Soeharto that Timor was to be 'handed over' to Indonesia. This speculation has subsided. But there will be close public interest in whether you take the occasion of President Soeharto's visit to reaffirm the importance Australia attaches to self-determination in Portuguese Timor and to register with him Australia's opposition to military intervention there. [matter omitted]¹

4. In your forthcoming discussions with President Soeharto we suggest that you follow the line of your letter of 28 February to him. Some suggested talking points are set out below which are based on the letter, taking account also of subsequent developments. The note attached gives some policy background on Portuguese Timor.

Talking Points

You might wish to begin by inviting an expression of President Soeharto's views on Portuguese Timor in response to your letter of 28 February. By way of introduction you could summarise the main points of the letter thus referring to the importance we attach to self-determination in Portuguese Timor and to our opposition to military intervention there, as well as to our understanding of the Indonesians' important national interest in the security and stability of the territory and in its close association with Indonesia.

Early in the conversation you would also no doubt wish to thank President Soeharto for his message to you through Mr Woolcott affirming that Indonesia had no intention of attempting to integrate Portuguese Timor by military force. This reference would no doubt serve the useful purpose of inviting President Soeharto to repeat the assurance he gave to Mr Woolcott.

Our assessment, which you conveyed to President Soeharto in your letter, was that the drift to the left in Portugal seemed to have been arrested, at least temporarily. Recent developments belie that assessment; there has clearly been a fresh shift to the left. The Indonesians will be worried by the risk that this change carries . . . a spread of extreme left-wing influence to Portuguese Timor. But so far we have seen no evidence of it: the Governor and his senior advisers are anti-Communist.

While it is still too early to judge all their implications, recent developments in Portugal could add to the risk that the Portuguese Government may abandon its responsibilities in Timor, rapidly transferring power to the pro-independence groups without an act of self-determination. (Hints of such Mozambique solution have been evident in earlier Portuguese attitudes.)

But it would be wrong to see such a change as inevitable. On the contrary, the arrangements still being discussed, both in Portugal and Timor itself, envisage a gradual progress towards self-government. The political parties, including APODETI, would assume a greater role in

¹ Paragraphs omitted review the content and intention of Whitlam's letter to Soeharto (Document 98) and Soeharto's response that Indonesia had no intention of attempting to incorporate Portuguese Timor by military force (see Document 108).

the government, and there would eventually be an act of self-determination in which incorporation into Indonesia would be one of the options. UDT-FRETILIN have themselves proposed that meanwhile there should be a rational ordering of relations with Indonesia. They have proposed an agreement of non-aggression and cooperation with Indonesia. This program would seem to reflect not only an awareness of Indonesian fears that Timor could become a vehicle of external interference, but also a desire on the part of UDT-FRETILIN to allay these fears. It is also clear that the approaches of the UDT-FRETILIN and the Portuguese administration towards decolonisation have not yet been finally settled. We feel that they are open to influence on points of importance to Indonesia.

We welcomed the outcome of the recent talks between Portuguese and Indonesian representatives. We regard it as significant that these talks were attended by an important AFM officer, Major Vitor Alves, who has also now been promoted to membership of the Portuguese Revolutionary Council. His endorsement of the concept of gradualism in constitutional development in Timor offers prospects that this policy will continue to guide Portuguese actions. In any event, it is clearly in the interests of both Indonesia and Australia that Portugal should be encouraged to maintain its responsibilities in Timor. The policy implication is that we should both be trying to influence Portugal to adhere to the kind of timetable and approach adopted by the Portuguese representatives in London.

We understand that Indonesia regarded the terms and language of the communiqué of 22 January 1975 announcing the coalition between UDT and FRETILIN as provocative. Australia too was singled out for critical mention in the communiqué.² We believe that these criticisms of Indonesia and Australia were at least partly a response to our own attitudes, and that the more strongly the idea of independence is thought to be rejected or under attack, the more extreme the supporters of independence may become. We need to avoid arousing radical and irrational attitudes among the present Timorese leaders, attitudes which they might not otherwise adopt, and which could colour their outlook for years to come, whatever the final constitutional status of the territory may turn out to be.

We understand Indonesia's abiding concern that there be stability in its border regions and we have welcomed its constructive policies to this end: for example, in relations with the Malaysians, in the maritime approaches, in Borneo, and as regards the situation in Sabah and the Southern Philippines. (The same concern to help maintain stability in South East Asia is reflected in Indonesian policies in ASEAN and its membership of the ICCS in Viet-Nam and its efforts to bring about negotiations in Cambodia.) Do not these processes and institutions point the way for handling the question of Timor? The Timorese themselves have already spoken of an understanding or 'pact' with Indonesia on cooperation and good neighbourliness. This idea would seem well worth studying and developing.

We feel that if Indonesia and Australia were to embark on cultivating good and influential relations with the Timorese there could be favourable prospects for stability in the territory. There would be obvious advantages to Indonesia and Australia in terms of both security and goodwill. The Timorese themselves would feel under less pressure to look outside the region for comfort and support. And Indonesia would have established the basis for shaping events in ways that ensured that the contingencies which currently give rise to fears and anxieties about an independent Timor did not materialise.

Australia would be willing to work with Indonesia in such an approach. One thing we should like Indonesia to consider with us is whether our shared objective of 'containing' the Timor problem might not be served through a coordinated program of economic assistance

² See note 1 to Document 73.

to Timor. Australia has already offered to consider such assistance partly as a means of encouraging the Portuguese to maintain their own involvement. But aid can be looked at in a broader p[er]spective. If Indonesia were to join Australia in providing aid to Timor it could be represented as assisting the Timorese to emerge from their isolation, making it unnecessary for them to look beyond Indonesia and Australia (and Portugal) for support.

In general a positive approach for both Indonesia and Australia would be to accept the challenge of helping in the process of decolonisation in Timor, preferably in a cooperative effort. The Timorese leaders have been looking anxiously to Indonesia and Australia for some sign that we would be prepared to help them in their political and economic development. We should now put their professions of good-neighbourliness to the test.

You may also wish to go over with the President the domestic pressures on the Government to take a more forward position on Portuguese Timor. You could refer to the recent visits to Portuguese Timor of Australian delegations, including one from the ALP Caucus committee on defence and foreign affairs. These visits, which were without Government sponsorship, reflect Australian public interest in Portuguese Timor. In this context, you might wish to explain in particular the pressures to re-open the Consulate in Dili, which could draw us more deeply into the internal affairs of Timor than we think is desirable at least for the moment. You might also take the opportunity to reaffirm that the Australian Government in no way encouraged the establishment of the party favouring incorporation into Australia, and does not support its stated aims. You could add that Australia has no intention of taking on new quasi-colonial responsibilities at a time when it is divesting itself of its responsibility in PNG.

You may wish to recall briefly that we had acted swiftly and decisively to prevent the two South Moluccan dissidents from passing through Australia on their way to Timor. We now know that the Portuguese Government has cancelled the visas authorising the two to enter Timor. Warnings are being sent to Australian posts against issuing visas to anyone with South Moluccan or Irian Jaya dissident connexions and who appear to be seeking entry to Timor.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, i]

120 SUBMISSION TO WHITLAM

Canberra, 1 April 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor—Australian Representation

The purpose of this submission is to invite your attention to proposals for re-establishing the Australian consulate in Timor and to recommend that, at least for the time being, we should not move to reopen the consulate. The consulate was closed in 1971, mainly because the reduced workload did not justify the expense of maintaining it (about \$41,000 a year).

[*matter omitted*]¹

¹ Omitted paragraphs review the December decision not to reopen the consulate (see Document 67) and more recent pressures to do so. The latter included requests by Pires both to Taylor in Dili and to Cooper in Lisbon, and requests by Fretilin and UDT to Taylor and to visiting union, student and ALP delegations. A Labor Caucus resolution calling for re-establishment had been foreshadowed by ALP member John Kerin, and supported in an editorial in the *Age*.

Political Involvement

7. In fact nothing has occurred since our earlier submission on this matter which would lead us to recommend that the earlier decision be reversed. If anything, recent developments have confirmed our view of the risks of plunging further into the Timor quagmire. It is now clear that Ramos Horta and his FRETILIN–UDT coalition are anxious to draw Australia in as some sort of counter to the threat he perceives from Indonesia. Were we to open the consulate in Dili it would be interpreted by FRETILIN and UDT as support for them alone. It could be similarly interpreted by the Indonesians. Departmentally, we still think that Australia should remain very cautious about any move which might allow our wider relations with Indonesia to become a hostage of the Timorese.

8. In advocating the re-establishment of the consulate, Mr Kerin has suggested, *inter alia*, that it would allow Australia to ‘act as a referee in the political jousting between the parties’. He referred to Australia as being a country ‘to whom the people of Timor naturally look for protection’. He proposed the establishment of an Australia–Timor Friendship Society. The danger in the outlook which these remarks express is that it could lead us into exercising quasi-colonial influence in Portuguese Timor, or indeed into assuming some *de facto* responsibility for the territory. It does not necessarily follow that establishing a consulate will lead us into these pitfalls, but it would certainly make it very much more difficult for us to avoid them: in the Lilliputian politics of Portuguese Timor, an Australian mission would loom very large.

Migration Aspects

9. There is a further important consideration which tells against an early opening of the consulate. The political uncertainties in Timor, and the presence of a minority Chinese community, could contain the seeds of a second Uganda. Press reports have already referred to the increasing nervousness of the Chinese population, which is reportedly leading many Chinese to consider leaving Timor. It is to be expected that some of the Chinese, perhaps many of them, might be inclined to look to Australia as a possible haven. Indeed we understand that a number may have already begun to try to build a financial stake in Australia. This tendency might be expected to increase were Australia to establish a consulate or any other diplomatic presence in Dili. At present persons seeking visas must apply to Darwin.

10. Some of these considerations could apply to the Timorese as well. We understand that there has been some contact between the Katherine sub-branch of the ALP and Timorese groups in Dili about possible resettlement in Australia. We have sighted separately a petition apparently signed by more than one thousand Timorese affirming their wish to come to Australia. This petition has been sent to a Sydney-based returned servicemen’s association representing members of the Australian Sparrow Force which operated in Timor during the war.

11. We recognise that there are sensitive considerations, both internal and external, involved in this migration question. One of the reasons advanced (among others, by Mr Kerin) for reopening the consulate is precisely to facilitate the issue of visas, and indeed no doubt some of the would-be applicants would be eligible for residence. But the great majority would not, at least under present criteria. Should the political situation in Timor deteriorate, we should expect pressures of a humanitarian character to develop which might lead the Government to consider taking a number of refugees and persons seeking asylum, whether or not we had a consulate in Dili. But the presence of a consulate would undoubtedly make us more vulnerable to pressure to accept refugees from Timor than would otherwise be the case. Ours would be one of only three consulates in Dili, the others being the consulates of Indonesia and Taiwan.

Conclusions and Recommendations

12. We believe that the factors described above point to the merits of reaffirming the decision of last December, namely, that we should not move to reopen the consulate, for the time being. The question should be left under review: we are not in principle opposed for all time to the idea of reopening the consulate. Meanwhile, it is intended that our program of visits to Portuguese Timor should be stepped up in frequency to one visit every two or three months. Such a visit program will probably be necessary in any event if, as is agreed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, we were to begin a modest aid program to Timor.

13. *It is recommended* that you endorse the position in paragraph 12 above. A possible parliamentary question is being submitted separately.²

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, i]

121 LETTER FROM WOOLCOTT TO WHITLAM

Canberra,¹ 2 April 1975

SECRET

Meeting with President Soeharto—Townsville April 1975

You may find it helpful to have the following comments on the current atmosphere in Jakarta and on the present approach of the President and his close advisers to Australia, for your meeting with him in Townsville.

Present Relations with Australia

2. When I arrived in Jakarta on 3 March I detected a trace of coolness towards Australia. This was relative and based, I believe, on what the Indonesians regarded as an over-reaction in Australia to reports that Indonesia was on the verge of invading Timor. The President and leading Indonesians have tended to expect understanding from Australia. I suspect they were disappointed in this case.

3. On my arrival the indications at that stage were that the President might not accept your invitation to visit North Queensland and that he would not receive the Deputy Prime Minister on his recent visit to Jakarta.² I was also unable to hand over your letter personally in advance of presenting my credentials, although I was able to present the latter only five days after my arrival.

4. I believe that at the meetings in Yogyakarta and Wonosobo our relationship with Indonesia reached a new high point. Since that time the Indonesians have, however, been uneasy about us because, I believe, we alone of the countries in South East Asia had taken a strong position

² Whitlam noted his agreement on 2 April.

¹ Woolcott was in Australia to assist with Soeharto's visit.

² During a brief visit Cairns did in fact meet Soeharto on 26 March. Their discussion included the question of political detainees.

on what we assumed to be their policy towards Timor and because of Dr Cairns' involvement in the recent Amnesty International delegation's visit.

[*matter omitted*]

7. It is in this context of growing uneasiness in Australia, including amongst some members of Parliament, about our large and restless neighbour and the future course of both its domestic and foreign policies, that what I believe to be the overriding long-term importance of the Australian/Indonesian relationship needs to be seen. Whatever Government is in power in Indonesia and, indeed, whatever Government might be in power in Australia, the price of a hostile or unstable Indonesia for Australia would be very high, not only for us but for the Indonesian people themselves.

8. A theme I have adopted in my discussions so far in Jakarta, including those with the President, is that as our relations mature and pass beyond the mutual search for goodwill, it is natural that issues and problems will arise between the two countries as they did in the early sixties. Any such problems should however be seen by both sides in the context of the mutual interest of both countries in maintaining a long-term cooperative relationship.

9. The President's decision to visit Queensland at fairly short notice emphasises that he continues to attach very considerable importance to strengthening the developing partnership with Australia and that he continues to want to treat Australia as a honorary member of a sort of South East Asian Club, an approach he has not adopted towards any other non-Asian country.

10. The President continues to believe that both Indonesia and Australia are destined to play a significant role in the development of the West Pacific region. Also he will increasingly look to us for assistance in the fields of agricultural development, resources and technological assistance. Furlonger used to say that the President and those around him regarded Australia as unique amongst countries of Western origin in the degree of understanding that we showed towards the problems of Indonesia and the region. This attitude is of great value to us and it would be a pity if we were to lose it.

11. While we are committed to such principles as human rights and self-determination, I do not think we should, from the relative comfort of our Continental pulpit, lecture the Indonesians on how to conduct their domestic affairs. Despite our proper concern for these issues I believe we should seek to avoid a meddling attitude or, as I have said before, seek to become the conscience of Asia. We need to show some understanding of Indonesia's complex social and political problems; of its recent history, especially in the early sixties. As Dr Cairns said in his recent discussion with President Soeharto, any assumptions about Indonesia based on the easier and less complex life in Australia are completely unjustified.

[*matter omitted*]

Timor

13. I remain somewhat worried about Timor. We could be working ourselves into a position where we are impaling ourselves on the hook of self-determination. While this is a principle to which most countries including Australia and Indonesia adhere, the fact remains that there have been few proper acts of self-determination in recent times and none so far in any of Portugal's other former colonies such as Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola. To demand it too stridently in Timor at present can be equated with a demand for independence. Do we want actually to encourage an independent East Timor? I would doubt it. It is not wanted by Indonesia; nor, I believe, by any of the other countries in the region. This is why other neighbouring countries remained silent about Timor in February and March and why, in contrast, we appeared to become front-runners in support of Timorese independence.

14. My own belief is that we should seek to disengage ourselves as much as possible from the Timor situation which could well become pretty messy. Indonesia is very unlikely to mount a military invasion of Timor unless it regards the situation there as hopeless and as a real threat to its security. But the Indonesian Government has not abandoned its ultimate objective of integrating Timor and it will pursue both covert and overt activity to influence Portuguese Timor to decide in favour of integration at the eventual act of self-determination. It will also urge the Portuguese Government to assist in this process as the British Government assisted in bringing Sabah and Sarawak into Malaysia in 1962/63. It would be unfortunate if we were to come to be regarded as, politically, a party principal in Timor, when the real parties principal are the people of Timor and the Governments of Portugal and Indonesia, and allow ourselves to be drawn into a situation in which we could find ourselves as the only, or the main, country in the region obstructing what Indonesia and its other neighbours would see as Indonesia's legitimate national interest.

Domestic Situation in Australia

15. The President will be very interested in your personal views on the political situation in Australia. The President clearly feels that he has a personal bond with you and he may also now feel that he has broken the ice with Dr Cairns. Ali Murtopo told me on Saturday that the Indonesian Government's 'strategy in its dealings with Australia was to support the Whitlam Government'. (He was seeing me at the request of the President.) As you know, I believe our long-term relations with Indonesia are sufficiently important that there should be a bipartisan approach to Indonesia—a view I know you and Dr Cairns share. This does not alter the fact that the Indonesians, although they may at first have had some anxiety about the change of Government in December 1972, now feel they have a stake in the continuation in office of the Labor Government. Against this background, your second personal meeting with Soeharto in seven months will be a further test of whether, despite sensitivities on both sides in what is still fundamentally a fragile relationship, the relationship can be further consolidated. I would hope that the relationship can become both bipartisan and irreversible. Although President Soeharto is pragmatic and hard-headed, I would agree with Furlonger that he would be sensitive to any sign of our backing away either from him personally or from his regime. As I have noted there were signs of this when I arrived in Jakarta. His Government's image in Australia has unattractive features and there are some domestic political dangers in over-identifying with Soeharto personally. The problem remains, however, that he is very much in control of the situation and, barring accidents, is liable to remain so for several years. If you personally, or the Government, were to adopt a more detached approach this would be misinterpreted in a society in which leadership is highly personalised and Javanese pride important.

[matter omitted]

122 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 3 April 1975

O.LB855 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor and Angola

I called on Almeida Santos yesterday to receive a briefing on his London talks with Ali Murtopo.

2. In outlining Portuguese views, Santos painted the following scenario. Portugal would be prepared to accept the principle of *de jure* independence for Timor, but before this principle could be implemented, there would be a transitional period of 6–8 years to be divided up as follows:

- a) For the first two or three years—Portugal would retain sovereignty in the person of a high commissioner and a Portuguese administration which would be assisted by a consultative council composed of representatives of the three political parties.
- b) For the next two or three years—a transitional government in which the three parties would be represented but with the Portuguese retaining a majority.
- c) For the next two years—a transitional government in which the political parties would have a majority.
- d) At the end of this period there would be elections for a constituent assembly to decide the territory's future constitutional status.

(You will note that Santos' plan is similar to the UDT/FRETILIN proposal.)

3. As a first step a secret meeting would be held in Macao during April which would be attended by representatives from Portugal and the three political parties in Timor. At the same time Indonesian representatives would be available for consultation in Hong Kong if required.

4. Santos said that Portugal would not impose any solution on Timor. There must be an act of free choice. But the proposed transitional period gave Indonesia and APODETI plenty of time to work for integration into Indonesia if that is what the Timorese wanted.

5. I asked Santos if Ali Murtopo had accepted the above. He said yes including the proposal that APODETI should attend the preliminary meeting in Hong Kong.

6. Towards the end of our meeting I reminded Santos of his previous offer to let me have a copy of the Portuguese record of the London talks and he obliged. The document is classified 'most classified most secret' and runs to 22 pages. We shall forward a translation by next safe hand bag. The record shows that Ali gave very little away and in substance did not go beyond saying that he would convey the Portuguese views to President Suharto. He is not on the record as having agreed to anything.

7. There is thus a wide divergence of views between the two sides and, in the light of Jakarta's reports, Santos has very little reason to be optimistic. This is reinforced by a report just received from Governor Pires that for the past two days Radio Kupang has renewed its propaganda broadcasts to Timor.

8. I thanked Santos for his advice and for the record of the London talks which I undertook to safeguard appropriately. I said our conversation was timely as President Suharto was currently in Australia for talks with Mr Whitlam and I was sure that Timor would be on the agenda. This prompted Santos to say that he would be grateful if I could brief him on the outcome of the

Prime Minister's talks with Suharto in relation to Timor. I said I would be glad to do this as it was our mutual advantage to keep in close contact on the subject. (Grateful therefore if you would keep in mind Santos' request so that I can brief him accordingly.)

[*matter omitted*]

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

123 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN WHITLAM AND SOEHARTO

Townsville, 4 April 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

EXTRACTS

Record of the second discussion, at Brandon, 1.00 p.m. Friday 4 April 1975

Portuguese Timor

3. The Prime Minister said that Viet-Nam was one of the issues exploited by the Opposition to criticise the Government's foreign policy. Portuguese Timor was another such issue. He said that the President would be aware of the recent publicity in the Australian press about reports that Indonesia was about to invade Portuguese Timor. There had been a regrettable over-reaction from the Australian people to those reports. The Prime Minister said that he made this point in the letter he had sent to the President in March 1975.¹ The Prime Minister went on to note that since the letter had been sent there had been two changes to which he would like to invite the President's attention. First, there had been a further shift to the left in Portugal. Second, in Portuguese Timor itself, the FRETILIN and UDT parties were in fact demanding immediate independence.

4. The Prime Minister said that he should emphasise first of all that he strongly believed that it was in the best interests of Indonesia and Australia to maintain good cooperative relations. There were elements in Australia, however, which might seek to disturb the good relations he had tried to develop with Indonesia. On the one hand, there was the extreme Right, people who believed that Australia's foreign policy interests still lay predominantly in Europe. These people would go so far as to suggest that Papua New Guinea should remain in Australian hands, that the Dutch should never have abandoned Indonesia and that the Portuguese ought to retain control of Portuguese Timor. On the other hand, there was the Left. There were people who had a different attitude to relations with Indonesia. They tended to be paternalistic, patronising and wholly convinced of their purity and of the soundness of their own views. From this basis they assumed the right to criticise the domestic politics of other countries and to find fault with certain aspects of the social or political structure of other countries, including corruption or the fact that there were too many Generals in government departments.

5. The Prime Minister said that he was not worried about the people of the extreme Right. But he might on occasion have to take account of the people on the Left. He recalled that

¹ Document 98. The reference to March is presumably to the date on which the letter was delivered.

during his talks with the President in September last year he had affirmed that, if the Australian Government ever wished to convey criticism of Indonesian Government policy to Indonesia, it would do so through the official channels, namely through our Ambassadors. The President should understand that the Australian Government did not use the Australian press to convey criticism of the Indonesian Government. The Prime Minister asked the President to be wary of those newspapers which claimed to report his personal views based on sources 'in his private office', 'in his Department', or 'close to the Prime Minister'. Often he was quoted by different newspapers as having completely different views on the one subject. He mentioned the case of the proposed visit of the PLO² delegation: some newspapers reported him as supporting the visit, while others said he was opposed to it.

6. The Prime Minister remarked that Indonesians had been very tolerant of certain aspects of Australian life with which they might not fully agree. A number of Indonesians, for example, might object to the situation in the Cocos Islands or to our treatment of aboriginals, particularly in the days before a Labor Government. Indonesia, however, had never publicly criticised Australia on these counts.

7. The Prime Minister referred to his discussions with President Soeharto last September on Portuguese Timor. He said that he still hoped that Portuguese Timor would be associated with or integrated into Indonesia; but this result should be achieved in a way which would not upset the Australian people. The Prime Minister mentioned in this context the possibility of United Nations consideration of the Timor question and noted that the Indonesian Ambassador to the UN, Mr Anwar Sani, would become Chairman of the Committee of Twenty-Four this year. He suggested that this circumstance presented opportunities for cooperation between Australia and Indonesia in the formulation of measures for the ascertainment of the wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor.

8. The Prime Minister added that Australia would also be pleased to help Portuguese Timor in terms of economic assistance and aid.

9. The Prime Minister said that one problem with Portuguese Timor was that the educated, those who were most able to talk to the press and so forth were the sons of Portuguese fathers and Timorese mothers. They were the group who had economic interests to protect or who sought to retain a European life-style in Portuguese Timor. Newspaper men who sought sensational stories naturally gravitated to the people, in Portuguese Timor, who were most able to give them stories they thought worthwhile. The Prime Minister said that he could not help feeling that the majority of the people of Portuguese Timor had no sense of politics, and that in time they would come to recognise their ethnic kinship with their Indonesian neighbours.

10. The Prime Minister referred to the recent publicity in the Australian press about the possibility of an Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor. He noted that the elements on the Right, which he had referred to earlier, were exploiting these rumours to suggest that Australia was militarily unprepared to face an expansionist Indonesia. Those on the Left were, in their own way, seeking to put distance between Australia and Indonesia and were calling on the Australian Government not to condone those aspects of Indonesian society which they personally did not like. Though their numbers were small and their influence limited, Communist elements in Australia were also seeking to bring about tensions in Australian society and to embarrass the Government on the issue of Portuguese Timor. The Prime Minister said that he did not like the way in which the Australian people, in the face of the rumours of an invasion of Portuguese Timor, had been shown to be overly nervous and fearful of Indonesia. It was an unnecessary and unwarranted reaction to rumours in the press.

² Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Australian Interest in Portuguese Timor

11. The Prime Minister affirmed that Australia did not want to be seen as having a primary responsibility for the outcome in Portuguese Timor, an issue which was essentially the responsibility of the people of Portuguese Timor, Portugal and Indonesia. The question of Portuguese Timor was simply not the responsibility of Australia. The Prime Minister said that in this regard he should explain to the President the possibility that Australia might re-open the Australian Consulate in Dili. He wished to explain quite frankly his position both in the Labor party and in the Parliament. He did not wish in any way to be seen as supporting the FRETILIN-UDT parties, but there was pressure on the Labor Government from within the Labor party to re-open the Consulate. If the Consulate were re-opened, it would not be allowed to become the instrument of the UDT and FRETILIN parties. Nor should the re-opening of the Consulate in any way go against the basic principle that Australia's interests in maintaining a good relationship with Indonesia were paramount.

12. The Prime Minister went on to refer to reports from Indonesian intelligence officials to the effect that Communist elements in Australia might be intending to smuggle arms to the FRETILIN-UDT parties in Portuguese Timor. The Prime Minister said bluntly that such a thing was not possible, mainly because the Communists here in Australia had little money to finance operations of this sort. The Prime Minister said that he had been interested to know what links there were between Communist elements in Australia and Ramos Horta of FRETILIN in particular. As far as he could see, the Prime Minister knew of no influence on Ramos Horta from these elements; but he noted that Horta had been anxious to seek support from any quarter and that Communist elements here, anxious to embarrass the Australian Government and to create a rift between Indonesia and Australia, had acknowledged his written requests for support. The Prime Minister reiterated that, ever since the events of September 1965, Communist elements in Australia had been hostile towards Indonesia and had sought to create a rift between the two countries. Their support for independence for Portuguese Timor was another move in this play. But these elements had little, if any, support among the mass of the Australian people. The Prime Minister said that he hoped that the President understood the various elements within the Australian society which sought to influence our relations with Indonesia. There would always be those who sought to frighten Australians about Indonesia, just as there were people in Papua New Guinea who sought to undermine the efforts of the Foreign Relations Minister, Sir Maori Kiki and the Chief Minister, Mr Michael Somare, in developing closer relations with Indonesia. The Prime Minister said that he had attempted to identify issues, including Portuguese Timor, which could be used by those within Australia opposed to good relations with Indonesia. He wished to re-affirm, however, that he strongly desired closer and more cordial relations with Indonesia and would ensure that our actions in regard to Portuguese Timor would always be guided by the principle that good relations with Indonesia were of paramount importance to Australia.

Indonesian policy towards Portuguese Timor

1[3]. President Soeharto thanked the Prime Minister for his survey of Portuguese Timor. He said that Indonesia was well aware that there were those in Australia who had cast doubts on the real intentions of Indonesia towards Portuguese Timor and who had speculated about the possibility of an Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor. The President said that as a country which endorsed the principles of freedom and democracy, Indonesia would never contemplate such a course of action. Like Australia, Indonesia sought to resist those tendencies which

would divide Indonesia from Australia and prejudice the good relations existing between them. The President said that he was happy to see that Australia, too, had the same goal of preserving good relations between the two countries. The President mentioned in passing that the issue of Portuguese Timor was, in fact, much less significant than the much more momentous and serious problems posed by recent developments elsewhere in the region.

1[4]. President Soeharto re-affirmed that Indonesia had no territorial ambitions to include the territory of Portuguese Timor into the Republic of Indonesia. The process of decolonisation in Timor had, however, produced some who sought the integration of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia. Indonesia had studied the three possibilities open for Portuguese Timor:

1. independence;
2. continued links with Portugal;
3. integration with Indonesia.

Indonesia had concluded that integration with Indonesia was the best solution.

1[5]. Indonesia had recently discussed the future of Portuguese Timor with the Portuguese Government during discussions in London. During these discussions it had emerged that the Portuguese Government supported the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia provided the people of the territory desired it. But the question arose of what in fact were the wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor. There were those who sought integration with Indonesia, but there were also those who wanted independence. The latter group had in some cases sought to oppress those seeking integration with Indonesia, and there were many who had fled across the border seeking asylum in Indonesia. The President returned to the London talks between Indonesia and Portugal. The most important conclusion was that Portugal did not regard the problem of decolonisation in Timor in the same light as the process adopted in the Portuguese African territories. In Portuguese Timor, Portugal would not adopt the procedures evolved for Africa. A particular reason for this Portuguese attitude was that in Timor there were not the mature politicians who had developed over a long period of time in the African colonies. At the London meeting, the Portuguese had proposed the formation of a provisional government composed of the three parties in Portuguese Timor (UDT, APODETI and FRETILIN). This provisional government would have control for three or five or even possibly eight years. Alternatively, the Portuguese Government had proposed that Portugal should retain sovereignty and control of the government, which would be in the hands of the Governor, who would in turn be assisted by a consultative body comprising the three parties in Portuguese Timor. Indonesia had firmly rejected the former and had accepted the latter.

1[6]. At the London meeting, the Portuguese had said that they believed that integration with Indonesia was the best outcome, provided, of course, that this was what the people of the territory wanted. The Portuguese had also agreed that there should be no 'international interference' in Portuguese policy towards decolonization in Timor. It would be for Indonesia to achieve the integration of the territory. To this end Indonesia had the approval of the Portuguese Government to assist and to develop the pro-Indonesia APODETI party, and to make approaches to, and to influence the line of policy of, the UDT and FRETILIN parties.

1[7]. The President went on to mention the planned meeting in Macao between all three parties—FRETILIN, UDT as well as APODETI which Indonesia had expressly asked to attend. Indonesian delegates would be available for consultation. The purpose of the meeting would be to begin the process of assisting and developing APODETI and to come to terms with UDT and FRETILIN. The meeting was secret because Indonesia did not want to be seen to be assuming a principal role in Portuguese Timor which might lead it to be charged with interfering in the internal affairs of Portuguese Timor.

1[8]. The President went on to comment that APODETI was at present still under extreme pressure from the other political parties in the territory and many of its supporters had accordingly sought refuge with the Indonesian Consulate in Portuguese Timor. This had led to the criticism that the Indonesian Consulate was playing a provocative role in Portuguese Timor. Indonesia believed, however, that there was ample evidence that APODETI was being discriminated against by the other parties.

1[9]. President Soeharto concluded by saying that Indonesia appreciated the understanding shown by Australia towards Indonesia's goal of integrating Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. He expressed the hope, however, that if Australia were ever to give aid to Portuguese Timor, then the provision of aid should not give rise to interpretations which could eventually put a distance between Australia and Indonesia. The President said that he hoped that Australia and Indonesia could work towards a peaceful solution of the Timor problem in the interests of peace and stability in the region.

[*matter omitted*]

Portuguese Timor and China

2[2]. At the conclusion of the talks President Soeharto returned briefly to the question of Portuguese Timor. He said that Indonesian intelligence reports suggested that Chinese Communists were trying to go to Portuguese Timor via Australia. They were being helped in this by the Chinese Embassy in Canberra. The President asked whether Australia had any evidence of traffic of this nature. The Prime Minister said that we had been advised by General Yoga of *Bakin* of these reports but that Australia did not have any evidence of such traffic nor of the involvement of the Chinese Embassy in Australia in it. He mentioned, however, the recent attempt by two members of the South Moluccas separatist movement to travel to Portuguese Timor via Australia. He explained that the Australian Embassy in The Hague had issued visas to the two men but when subsequently advised of their affiliations, we successfully sought to withdraw their visas. We understood that they had not succeeded in travelling to Portuguese Timor. The Prime Minister assured President Soeharto that steps were now being taken in our Embassy in The Hague to ensure that this did not happen again.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, x]

124 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN MURTOPO, MOERDANI, FEAKES AND CURTIN

Townsville, 4 April 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Indo-China & Portuguese Timor

Indo-China

In the light of President Soeharto's comment to the Prime Minister on 3 April that resistance in Cambodia could continue even after the fall of Phnom Penh, Mr Feakes invited General Ali Murtopo to comment on Indonesia's attitude towards events in Indo-China.

[*matter omitted*]

6. A recurring theme behind Ali's views on Indo-China was that Indonesia was not yet ready to meet the challenge of an undivided Viet-Nam or a Vietnamese-dominated Indo-China. Even if Indo-Chinese Communism was not by nature expansionist, subversive forces in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia would receive a strong moral boost from its final victory. Ali and Moerdani said flatly that neither Thailand nor Indonesia (nor Malaysia) had the necessary 'national resilience' to withstand a serious challenge: Thailand (as in 1941) would bow to any strong alien force, and Indonesia, with eighty million in total poverty, was still too fragile to stand up to an ideological contest. According to Ali, Indonesia had based its 'strategic assessments', and its national economic planning, on the assumption of 20 years of divided Indo-China. He agreed that the assumptions would have to change, but made it clear that a good deal of thinking had yet to be done.

7. Moerdani asked whether Australia could accept a Communist Indo-China. When he was told that we would, he professed deep disappointment at the prospect of Australian acquiescence and he would have nothing of the argument that further fighting would serve little purpose other than to prolong the suffering of the Indo-Chinese people. He also seemed unimpressed by arguments that the countries of South-East Asia should avoid policies of confrontation in dealing with North Viet-Nam, especially in the initial period following the cessation of hostilities in Indo-China.

Portuguese Timor

8. Ali said that his talks with the Portuguese in the first half of March, 1975, had produced several important areas of agreement:—

- (a) the Portuguese had agreed not to set up a Provisional or Transitional Government, and to defer establishment of a Constituent Assembly for at least several years ('five to eight years');
- (b) there would thus be a long drawn-out process towards a decision (via the Constituent Assembly?) on the political future of the colony;
- (c) Indonesia would be consulted on the appointment of APODETI members to an Advisory Assembly/Council which would be set up a year or so into the long drawn-out process ('we will choose them');
- (d) APODETI officials to train in Indonesia;
- (e) Indonesian 'economic affairs' and tourist offices to be established in Dili.

9. The main thing, according to Ali, was time. Indonesia accepted that the battle would be one of votes and that time would be needed for APODETI, admittedly not strong at the moment, to be sure of securing the necessary number of them. Ali seemed to be keen to get on with the contest. He was not greatly worried about FRETILIN's call for 'immediate *de jure* independence' (in the context of a long drawn-out process of decolonization): the final decision on the status of the colony would not really be taken until the end of the process. Ali said that the Indonesian Government had no problems with the use of the expression 'self-determination' in relation to Portuguese Timor.

10. Moerdani mentioned the Australian reaction to the March, 1975, press stories alleging that there were Indonesian plans to invade Timor. He said that Indonesia was worried by the sharpness of the reaction. (Another member of the party mentioned that the Indonesian Embassy had spoken to Peter Hastings.) Moerdani said that he had hoped that we would have seen the difference between preparations and actual intent to act. He said that Indonesia was 'hoping for the best but preparing for the worst' (other members of the party used this formulation in

speaking with us); the worst, he suggested, being hasty Portuguese withdrawal and a reneging on the understandings reached with Ali. Moerdani was told that the Australian Government understood the distinction he was making. The Prime Minister had also noted President Soeharto's assurances to Mr Woolcott.

11. Ali said that Indonesia would have no objection to the reopening of the Australian Consulate in Dili, but asked that the Indonesian Government be advised before any announcement, and that there be no announcement until after his second (May) round of talks with the Portuguese. Both he and Moerdani said that the Consulate should only cover East Timor.

12. Ali said that there might be problems with proposals for Australian aid to Portuguese Timor. Indonesia would not be able to contribute as generously as Australia, and the provision of aid might encourage Timorese thinking on (aid-supported) independence. Ali said he would write to us on the subject of aid.

Comment

13. Both Ali and Moerdani seemed grateful for an opportunity to speak 'frankly'—if at times a little unscientifically—about their views on Indo-China and Timor. They both seemed at a loss to understand how things could have gone the way they have in Indo-China; and they both went out of their way to assure us that their understanding with the Portuguese on Timor was to their satisfaction—if all went according to the book.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

125 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 7 April 1975

O.JA8701 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

President Soeharto's Visit

I consider that President's visit to Townsville went well. Following comments may supplement Feakes' impressions.

2. President was clearly very satisfied with visit and this was clear from comments he and senior members of his party made on return flight.

3. I believe that trace of coolness which I detected in attitude towards Australia on my arrival—which at that time stemmed mainly from uneasiness about what was regarded as over-reaction in Australia on Timor issue and uneasiness about increasingly critical attitudes in Australia towards detainees and aid—has been dissipated partly by the Deputy Prime Minister's recent visit and especially by the President's visit to Australia. The spirit of Wonosobo has been strengthened in Townsville and the Indonesians are now thinking in terms of another round of private talks, provisionally scheduled for about April next year in Sumatra.

4. Soeharto also said on plane that informal talks of the nature which had developed in Wonosobo and Townsville were the best way of strengthening Australian-Indonesian understanding and of dealing with any problems which might arise on one side or the other in

our bilateral relations. We have in fact achieved a unique position for a non-Asian country with these arrangements. We should attach importance to preserving them.

5. Although both President and Prime Minister start from the basis that the long term relationship between the two countries is the key issue and that problems which may arise between the two countries should be seen in that context, there are several issues which will need careful handling over the next few months.

Indo China

6. Australian and Indonesian attitudes are still substantially different in respect of the situation in Indo China. While Australian Government takes the view that a communist dominated Indo China, even if it were to include strong nationalist elements, is inevitable and unlikely to be expansionist beyond Indo China, Indonesians are still wary of possible effects on ASEAN, in particular on Thailand. They are still, at this late stage, attempting to get a negotiated settlement in Cambodia rather than see complete Khmer Rouge takeover. They are also uneasy and concerned about the ramifications in Asia of what they regard as a loss of resolution, leadership and prestige on the part of the United States.

Timor

7. We shall continue to need to watch the Portuguese Timor situation. While the issue has cooled down, which is a good thing, there are differences of interpretation here and in Lisbon on what the two governments have agreed upon. Also if Portugal itself were to become highly unstable or if FRETILIN were to become more dominant and move to the left in Timor while retaining vocal public support in Australia the situation could again become difficult.

[matter omitted]

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, vi]

126 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 15 April 1975

O.JA8887 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Indonesian/Portuguese Timor Border

Summary begins

Rodgers visited Kupang, Atambua and Kefamenanu in Indonesian Timor 8-11 April. Two calls were made on the Governor of Indonesian Timor, El Tari, and discussions were held with local civilian, military and police officials. No indications whatsoever of unusual military activities were sighted. The situation concerning the refugees is more complex, particularly in regard to a camp near Atambua housing approximately 200 young men. There is no significant movement of refugees over the border at the present time, although two-way movement over the border is on-going and appears to be relatively easy. The total number of refugees currently stands at about 280.

Summary ends

Indonesian officials with whom Rodgers spoke emphasised that Portuguese Timor must become part of Indonesia. All Timorese felt as one and integration into Indonesia would be the natural expression of their will. El Tari was particularly emphatic on this point and insisted that Portuguese Timor must be 'returned' to Indonesia. El Tari was convinced that FRETILIN was already strongly leftist and would become more so. Portuguese Timorese were being bribed with 200 Escudos into joining FRETILIN. FRETILIN was also providing small tractors in an attempt to win support from the villagers. El Tari was convinced that the money for such expenditure was coming from China.

[*matter omitted*]

6. The third group of refugees was a camp of about 200 young men located at Nenuk, eight kilometres from Atambua. Although the spokesmen for this group said that they were all APODETI supporters who had been intimidated by FRETILIN and that they wanted to return to Portuguese Timor but were too frightened to do so, in other respects there are features about this group which are in marked contrast to the other two groups. All members of this group are aged roughly between 18 and 30 years and live at the camp at Nenuk where they are said to receive training in agriculture and carpentry. This training was being energetically pursued during Rodgers' visit to the camp although there is remarkably little agricultural progress when it is considered that the bulk of this group has lived in the camp for 2-3 months. All members of this camp were wearing a working uniform. Perhaps the most surprising feature is that although most of the members of this group were said to be married, their wives and families are, on the whole, still living in Portuguese Timor. This is odd in view of the fact that the other groups of refugees, where at all possible, crossed the border as family units. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this camp is involved in other activities besides agriculture and carpentry in spite of adamant statements by the Indonesian officials with whom Rodgers spoke that Indonesia was not involved in any way, or wished to become involved, in the military training of Portuguese Timorese.

7. The visits to Atambua and Kefamenanu were the centre of much attention and officers of the Indonesian Department of Information based in Indonesian Timor played a prominent role in organising and recording the visits. It is clear that the Indonesians were intent on gaining as much mileage out of the visit as possible.¹

8. Full report follows by bag.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

¹ In a submission to Willesee dated 16 April, Feakes commented that Rodgers' impressions and other reports of careful Indonesian preparation for the visit suggested that the men at Nenuk were 'being trained to constitute the nucleus of a pro-Indonesian insurgency movement in Portuguese Timor'. [On file NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, i.]

127 LETTER FROM WOOLCOTT TO WILLESEE

Jakarta, 17 April 1975

SECRET PERSONAL

I am attaching for your information a paper which I prepared for the Prime Minister personally on the eve of his recent meeting in Townsville with President Soeharto.¹ I had hoped to see you in Canberra to discuss the talks with you on my way to Townsville but you were out of the country at the time.

I hope that there is nothing in the paper with which you would disagree.

There have been several recent developments concerning the policies towards Indonesia which I should mention to you. One is aid.

Both Dr Cairns, during his recent visit, and the Prime Minister, in Townsville, have made comments on aid to the Indonesian Minister for Finance and to the President which will, I think, be regarded as commitments here. It will be necessary to keep this in mind at the time of the budget discussions. Both the Prime Minister and Dr Cairns have indicated that the value of our aid to Indonesia in the next triennium will be maintained in real terms. The Prime Minister has also added that, unless some unforeseen emergency arises which places special demands on the Australian Government, we would hope to maintain Indonesia's present percentage of our total aid program in the future. Dr Cairns also told the Minister for Finance that he would support at the ADB reconsideration of the exclusion of Indonesia from the list of countries eligible for soft loans.

Another issue on which more precise definition of our attitude would be helpful is Timor. I feel that Australia has become too directly involved in this question; too much of a front-runner on an issue which is quite likely to become difficult in the future. But the problem for the Department as well as me is that there still seem to be differences in the approach to Timor between you, as Foreign Minister, and the Prime Minister. As I understand it, you tend to place the main emphasis on a proper act of self-determination for Portuguese Timor. If this act were to lead to incorporation in Indonesia, you would 'accept' this. However, it was clear in Townsville that the Prime Minister continues to believe that the logic of the situation is that Timor should become part of Indonesia and we would 'welcome' such an outcome to an act of choice. While we support the principle of self-determination and while we certainly could not condone the use of force, the Prime Minister still does not want to encourage the emergence of an independent East Timor and he believes that continuing public emphasis on self-determination, at this stage, is likely to strengthen pressures for independence. This is, of course, a matter of policy and I mention it only insofar as there is a policy issue which may need some further consideration by the Ministry.

I must say that although I miss being at the centre, I am finding this posting challenging, active and absorbing.

¹ Document 121.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the end of May if the ASEAN Heads of Missions meeting comes off as planned. There should be plenty to discuss in the context of recent developments in the region!²

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii]

128 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 22 April 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

Attached is a copy of a Record of Conversation with Mr Akosah from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 April.¹

2. It will be noted that Mr Akosah confirmed that Indonesia had adopted a new approach to the problem of Portuguese Timor but that it had not changed its objective of integrating that territory into Indonesia. The new approach, which Akosah described as more 'elegant' than the previous one, was evident in the treatment given to leaders of UDT during their visit to Jakarta last week. (JA8979 refers.) Mr Lopez da Cruz, President of UDT, told us that he was pleased that Indonesia had adopted this new approach and thought it might provide the basis for closer cooperation between Indonesia and an independent Portuguese Timor, which he considered the likely result of the decolonisation process there. In answer to questions, he said that the Indonesian ministers and others to whom he had spoken had made a concerted effort to convince him of the benefits of integration. General Ali Murtopo had apparently made vague promises of financial assistance, but he had not, according to Mr Lopez da Cruz, set a figure on it, nor indicated where it would come from. Mr Lopez da Cruz seemed quite realistic in his assessment of what the Indonesians were trying to achieve by inviting him to Jakarta.

3. Mr Lopez da Cruz made it quite clear, however, that he would accept integration with Indonesia if that were the result of the elections in Portuguese Timor (which he thought would take place next year). But as mentioned in our JA8923, there is a dispute within UDT about the approach towards APODETI the party should adopt.

² Woolcott sent this letter with another, dated 19 April, in which he summarised its contents for Renouf. He left it to Renouf's judgement whether the question of 'the continuing difference of emphasis on Timor' between Whitlam and Willesee was too sensitive a matter to raise, although he himself believed it 'could usefully be flagged with the Minister and discussed between him and the Prime Minister'. Renouf, about to depart overseas with Whitlam, minuted to Rowland, 'I leave this chestnut to you!'. [On file NAA: A11443 [10].] In the event Willesee did receive it: see Documents 138 and 152.

¹ Taylor had met Lopes da Cruz and Mousinho, apparently by chance, on the way into the Foreign Ministry, and took the opportunity to ask Akosah about their visit. Akosah had explained that the new aim was 'not to frighten the Portuguese Timorese but to convince them that integration . . . was the best solution'. This new approach corresponded more closely with that advocated by the Ministry all along. Akosah agreed that the softer line would not necessarily achieve the objective of integration through self-determination but, 'given time, there was a chance which Indonesia should not lose'. He admitted that the Foreign Ministry had little influence on Portuguese Timor policy, on which BAKIN had the running.

4. Mr Lopez da Cruz said he had agreed with the Indonesians that Portuguese Timor should not become a centre for communist activity in the region. FRETILIN was not a communist party, he had said, although it did contain communist members. In his brief discussions with us he expressed much more criticism of FRETILIN radicalism than he had during his discussions with us in March.²

5. Mr Akosah confirmed on 15 April that the UDT leaders were not the guests of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but of BAKIN. The lunch we had for the Portuguese Timorese³ was arranged through Lim Bian Kie in General Ali Murtopo's office and was attended by Indonesians who were looking after the guests during their stay in Jakarta. These included Colonel Jusack (who accompanied Mr Rodgers to Atambua) and Mrs Maria Sugiarto (the wife of the Secretary-General of GOLKAR). It seemed clear that the visit was in fact arranged by OPSUS.

6. Mr Horta's (FRETILIN) visit too was arranged by OPSUS. He described the visit to us as a private one. He met General Ali but as far as we know has not yet met ministers.

7. We have reported by telegram the main points of our talks with Mr Horta on 21 April.⁴ Mr Horta was much less confident about FRETILIN success than in early March, although he maintained that FRETILIN strength had increased since then. Previously he had talked of the Timorese taking to the hills to resist an Indonesian invasion. Now he virtually said the Timorese would be bought off by Indonesia. He would continue to struggle for independence, but much of his earlier enthusiasm seemed to have gone. He said he intended to spend three months at the ANU starting in June. (An offer to study in the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta had been turned down by him.)

8. The possible Indonesian tactic which concerned Mr Horta most was the use of television. He considered that when the satellite which would relay Indonesian TV was operating (sometime in 1976) and the Indonesians were providing cheap—or free—TV sets in Portuguese Timor, APODETI would be in an almost unchallengeable position.

9. Mr Horta may be overreacting to the change of approach by Indonesia. But his views suggest that the Indonesian task of persuading the people of Portuguese Timor to favour integration may not be as difficult as we have thought.

10. A copy of this memorandum has been sent to Lisbon.

A. R. TAYLOR

Counsellor

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

² A file note by Taylor on 17 April records information from Lim Bian Kie that Lopes da Cruz claimed UDT had been 'dragooned' into coalition with Fretilin, which was communist-inspired. In response to Taylor's argument that UDT still favoured independence, Bian Kie agreed it would be difficult to persuade them to support integration. Indonesia would be sending 'hundreds of tourists' to assist Apodeti in Portuguese Timor, and 'economic support—not aid, as that would be too much obvious intervention for the time being'.

³ At the lunch on 16 April Lopes da Cruz informed the Embassy that he and Mousinho proposed to visit Australia from 22 April; the Embassy recommended that the Minister and the Department agree to see them (Cablegram JA8923, 17 April). In the absence of both Whitlam and Willesee, Morrison, as Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, agreed to see them. A briefing note dated 23 April for the meeting began: 'Much of the urgency has been removed from the Timor issue. The red lights which were flashing in late-February . . . now show a steady amber. The Indonesians have assured us at all levels that they are not contemplating military intervention. There is a less strident tone to Indonesian propaganda. Latest . . . reports reveal no preparations for *early* military action'.

⁴ Cablegram JA9024 (22 April). It reported Horta's view that the changed Indonesian tactics were 'a serious setback for the cause of an independent Portuguese Timor'.

129 MEMORANDUM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 23 April 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Economic Aid for Portuguese Timor

As you know, we have been thinking for some time about the possibility of a modest Australian aid program for Portuguese Timor. Before we get down to serious drafting on the lines and size of the program we would like you to talk things over with the Indonesians. We will also, of course, have to have discussions with Portuguese officials in Lisbon and Dili.

2. We are thinking mainly in terms at least initially of commodity aid and possibly some forms of technical assistance including training. In order to help point up Portuguese Timor's place in the region we might look into the possibility of untying some commodity aid for purchases from ASEAN countries (say, rice from Thailand), and also of making some 'third country' training scholarships available. All this would need to be cleared with the Aid Agency and the Treasury, and there could be internal problems, for example over untying. Nevertheless, we believe that the time has come to press ahead. There are domestic pressures on us to do so and, as you know, we have already informed the Portuguese of our intention to provide some assistance.

3. We should therefore like the Embassy to make an early approach to the Indonesians to inform them of our thinking and to say that we envisage commencing an aid program with an allocation of about \$A1 million [in] 1975/76, mainly in commodity assistance (which would amount to balance of payments support).

4. We recognise that this may cause some difficulties with the Indonesians. We already know from our conversations with Ali Murtopo in Townsville that he has reservations: Indonesia might not be able to compete with a large Australian program and foreign aid might encourage the Timorese in their thinking about independence.¹ (Ali Murtopo said that he would put his ideas on paper for us, but has not yet done so.) Also, when the Prime Minister raised the matter briefly with President Soeharto in Townsville, he was told that care must be taken to ensure that the provision of aid did not give rise to 'misinterpretations'.²

5. We are not quite sure what the President was driving at. But you should make it clear to the Indonesians that we are thinking of a modest program only and that we would probably not be involved in major projects on the ground. The Indonesians should by now be aware that we are not seeking to influence the thinking of the Timorese on their political future. We would be making every effort to put any Australian aid program into an entirely non-political framework. In any event, we are virtually committed domestically to some form of aid program. You will have noticed in this regard the Minister's answer to a question without notice in the Senate on 10 April.³

¹ See Document 124.

² See Document 123. A memorandum by Forrester, sent to Jakarta on 29 April, noted a discussion in which Murtopo interpreted Soeharto's remarks as 'saying no to Australian aid'. Murtopo had reiterated to Forrester points made in Document 124, but was attracted to commodity assistance, particularly the idea of enabling Portuguese Timor to purchase commodities from ASEAN countries. The idea of technical assistance was acceptable, as was the figure of \$A1-2 million.

³ In reply to a question by Senator Gietzelt, Willesee had claimed credit for Australia 'in toning down the situation that was developing' by its efforts to bring Portugal and Indonesia closer together, and noted that Australia was 'anxious to provide assistance to Portuguese Timor, preferably in company with the Indonesians'. ADAA had taken the matter over and was attempting to help.

6. You could make the point that we are hoping that Indonesia will also be giving aid (but not 'in competition' with us) as a means of increasing its political influence in Portuguese Timor and establishing its credentials there. In addition, we continue to feel that the provision of aid by Australia and Indonesia would help encourage Portugal to approach its decolonisation responsibilities in Timor in a measured and deliberate fashion which it was agreed in Townsville was an important policy objective of both the Indonesian and Australian Governments.

7. We expect to examine Portuguese Timor's aid requirements during Mr Curtin's visit to Dili in late May. It is possible that an officer of ADAA will be making the trip also. We will thus need a response to this memorandum by 20 May at the latest.⁴

LANCE JOSEPH

Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia Branch

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

130 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN FEAKES AND DA CRUZ

Canberra, 24 April 1975

SECRET

Indonesia/Portuguese Timor; Australian Interests in Portuguese Timor; Re-opening of Australian Consulate; Constitutional Development; Chinese and Taiwanese Interest

Mr Feakes welcomed Messrs da Cruz and Mousinho to the Department.¹ He noted that both had recently visited Jakarta and remarked that the Australian Government was happy to see the leaders of Portuguese Timor showing interest in the views of Indonesia. Mr Feakes asked Mr da Cruz for his impressions of his Jakarta visit.

2. *Mr da Cruz* (speaking in Portuguese interpreted by Miss Boyd) replied that in his view three countries were important for Portuguese Timor. They were Indonesia, Australia and, naturally, Portugal. It was for this reason that the first countries he should visit were Indonesia and Australia. His visit to Jakarta had been most successful. He had called on the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, Communications and Information. Indonesia's attitude towards UDT had changed dramatically. Mr Mousinho had been ignored during his visit in September last year. Now that Indonesia realised that the people of Portuguese Timor favoured independence, Indonesia had begun to fete UDT. Indonesia had offered assistance, initially in the field of tourism. An Indonesian team would arrive in Dili next month to investigate the

⁴ Woolcott noted in the margin: 'This is an important matter which will need careful handling & presentation . . . we shall need to discuss it with care'. Dan was more pessimistic: 'I think the Dept's approach is full of dangers. The nature of the proposed aid—and its size—are likely to arouse the Indonesians. Can we discourage Canberra?'

¹ On this occasion the two UDT leaders spoke with Feakes, Curtin and Forrester. They also met Morrison, as Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Joseph. Susan Boyd acted as their interpreter in all these meetings and they were accompanied, throughout their visit, by three businessmen who were former members of 2/4 Independent Company which had served in Timor in 1942–43. They were also assisted by the Portuguese Honorary Consul in Sydney, whom they described as 'UDT representative in Australia'.

possibility [of] tourist flights from Den Pasar to Bacau–Dili. During his calls in Jakarta, Mr da Cruz said he had been assured that Indonesia would respect the right of the people of Portuguese Timor to determine their own future. Mr da Cruz dismissed rumours of an Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor.

3. *Mr Feakes* said that he ought to point out that Australia did not see itself as a party principal in the affairs of Portuguese Timor. The Australian Government believed that the future of Portuguese Timor was a matter for resolution between Portugal and the people of Portuguese Timor, with Indonesia occupying an important place as well. Australia's role was limited to facilitating contact and cooperation between all the parties involved. Mr Feakes asked whether Messrs da Cruz and Mousinho had also called on General Ali Murtopo in Jakarta.

4. *Mr da Cruz* confirmed that he had met Ali Murtopo. He went on to argue that Australia had a special obligation to Portuguese Timor, which called for close Australian involvement. He recalled Australia's military involvement in Timor in World War II and the death of 40,000 Timorese in support of the Australians in Timor. Australia, as a consequence, had a debt to repay to the people of Portuguese Timor. Australia should now involve itself in the affairs of Portuguese Timor 'to balance Indonesia'.

5. *Mr Feakes* said that he was pleased to see that Messrs da Cruz and Mousinho had met Ali Murtopo. Within the Indonesian Government he was an important influence in matters relating to Portuguese Timor. Mr Feakes went on to say that, while he recognized the important sacrifice of the Timorese people in World War II, he should point out that the events of that war had less meaning for the present-day Australian community, who would be less inclined to accept the notion of a consequent continuing Australian obligation to Timor.

6. *Mr da Cruz* did not show any sign of acknowledging the latter point. He went on to argue that Australia should urgently take steps to re-open the Australian Consulate in Dili. He said that Timorese could not understand why the Consulate had been closed. People in Dili had been told at the time that Australia did not approve of Portuguese colonialism and was breaking off relations with Portugal. Yet, soon after, Australia opened an Embassy in Lisbon, 'the capital of Portuguese imperialism'. He did not accept Mr Feakes' statement that the consulate had in fact been closed for reasons of economy, saying that a rich country like Australia would afford a consulate as part payment of its debt. He said he saw three reasons for Australia's re-opening the Consulate: as a sign of gratitude; as a balance to Indonesia; and for information-gathering.

7. *Mr Feakes* replied that the Australian Government was not in principle opposed ever to re-opening the Consulate. But it did not believe that this was an appropriate time to do so. He added that Australia's requirements for information from the territory were already being met by regular visits by officers from the Department and from our Embassy in Jakarta. Mr Curtin would be paying a visit to Portuguese Timor in late May or June. There was some discussion of the best timing for Mr Curtin's visit in view of the forthcoming discussions between Portugal and the three parties of the territory on constitutional development.

8. *Mr Feakes* asked Mr da Cruz for UDT's proposals for constitutional development in the territory. *Mr da Cruz* said that UDT would be putting to Portugal a comprehensive set of proposals. These envisaged an initial 'transitional' government. To avoid political squabbles, control of the 'transitional government' would continue to be vested in Portugal. The government would be headed by a Portuguese Commissioner-General, assisted by three Secretaries, all of whom would also be from Portugal. In addition, there would be three Under-Secretaries. They would be drawn from each [of] the political parties in Timor—UDT, FRETILIN and APODETI.

This 'transitional government' would formulate an electoral law for elections for a Constituent Assembly. UDT would be calling for these elections to be held in September 1976. A 'provisional government' would be formed on the basis of the election results. This government would prepare a constitution 'for independence', which would follow after several years of preparation. There was no need for a 'referendum' on independence. It was already self-evident that a majority of the people of the territory already desired independence. One did not have to ask slaves if they wished to be free. He said that journalists, representatives of the United Nations and others should come to Timor to see this for themselves.
[*matter omitted*]²

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, vi]

131 LETTER FROM WOOLCOTT TO FEAKES

Jakarta, 12 May 1975

PERSONAL CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACT

One of the most encouraging aspects of Peacock's visit¹ was the extent to which he himself wanted to defuse Portuguese Timor and withdraw from the somewhat exposed, pro-Fretilin, pro-independence position he had adopted earlier in the year. I discussed Timor with him at some length and I think he now accepts that an independent Timor is unlikely to be in anyone's long-term interests and that Australia's present interests are best served by a less obtrusive Australian stance and a measure of political disengagement from the issue.²

On the question of the Consulate, it seems that no news is good news. If, however, the Government does feel obliged to reopen the Consulate—and I suppose that is more or less inevitable—then might I suggest that any announcement of the reopening of the Consulate in Dili be made simultaneously with decision to open a Consulate in Indonesia and possibly in East Malaysia. This would be useful for presentational reasons. I know we have been thinking of a Consulate in Sarawak or Sabah for some time and we have also been thinking of one here in Surabaya, Bali or Medan.

[NAA: A11443, [6]]

² Omitted paragraphs include a suggestion by da Cruz that Indonesia might attempt to influence a referendum, and another by Mousinho that Portugal had bowed to 'outside pressure' in offering the alternative of integration with Indonesia. Both confirmed that their proposals had been developed independently of the other parties. Feakes expressed concern about Australian Communist Party influence on Fretilin and reports of Chinese links, in part because of Indonesia's 'security preoccupations'. Da Cruz said UDT's 'agents in Indonesia and Taiwan' had confirmed such links.

¹ Peacock visited Jakarta late in April, and met both Soeharto and Malik.

² Feakes replied, on 14 May, that in his view it was 'a major advance that [Peacock] should have modified his views in the way you described'.

132 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 19 May 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

Harry Tjan, CSIS, has told us that the Indonesians were as surprised as we by the proposed visit to Australia by Soares and Araujo of APODETI (JA9502¹). They have been in Jakarta to prepare for the talks between Timor party representatives and the Portuguese Government which are supposed to be held in Macao soon. As no date had been determined yet Soares and Araujo had gone to Bali for sightseeing. There they had decided to go to Australia for talks with the Government.

2. Initially Tjan was reluctant to divulge details of how the arrangements were being made. Subsequently he told us that Wirjono in the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra had been informed and would be discreetly looking after the visit.²

3. Tjan acknowledged that the visit had not been well handled by APODETI. He seemed a little apprehensive about its chances of success.

4. In answer to questions Tjan gave us an idea of the approach APODETI might adopt in talks with the other parties and the Portuguese Government. It would be along the following line. APODETI would agree to a transitional government only if it had more than half the membership. If as of course was likely, Portugal refused APODETI would demand a plebiscite. If the Portuguese agreed APODETI would ask how the plebiscite would be conducted. If the answer were by 'one man one vote' APODETI would object on grounds that the people were not sufficiently educated and politically aware; if by some other means (for instance voting by the chiefs only) APODETI would object on grounds that it would be undemocratic. APODETI would adopt a positive approach aimed at gaining political advantage from the failure to reach agreement. Eventually, Tjan said, there would be a 'rebellion', or something of the sort, in Timor and APODETI would get some 'outside assistance'.

5. Tjan was speaking very informally (at lunch) and his remarks should be treated with caution. But he had spoken with Araujo and Soares (presumably as part of their preparation for the Macao talks) and the scenario he described was specific. It would represent we think at least one of the approaches discussed with APODETI. Tjan replied in the affirmative when asked whether the correct implication of what he had said was that Indonesia and APODETI would not agree to an act of self-determination and that there would not be one.

6. This was the first time in the last few months we have heard that Indonesia might not allow an act of self-determination to be held. Ali Murtopo, Tjan, Lim Bian Kie and others have adopted an optimistic attitude towards the possibility of APODETI winning (of course, with considerable Indonesian help) an act of self-determination. That attitude was consistent with Indonesia's change of tactics: from seeking to impress the Timorese with Indonesia's military strength to wooing them with more attractive propaganda and cooperative attitude.

¹ 15 May. It reported that the Apodeti leaders planned to travel to Australia the following day. Canberra was asked not to reveal to the Indonesian Embassy that it was known to be organising the visit.

² Two and a half lines have been expunged here.

But Tjan's description of APODETI's possible approach in Macao is also consistent with the new tactics. From Tjan's comments it would appear that APODETI will try to adopt a positive and cooperative approach aimed at achieving the opposite effect.

7. We have sent a copy of this memorandum to Lisbon.

A. R. TAYLOR

Counsellor

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

133 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 21 May 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: Call by APODETI Representatives

You have agreed to see Messrs Domingos Pinto Soares and Casimiro de Araujo of APODETI at 4.30 pm on 21 May. Mr Soares is a member of the praesidium of the party, while Mr de Araujo is Chief Editor of the APODETI newspaper in Dili. Their visit, which is also taking in Melbourne and Sydney, follows talks in Jakarta.

2. You saw Ramos Horta of FRETILIN in December 1974 and Mr Morrison, as Acting Minister, saw Lopes da Cruz of UDT in April 1975. FRETILIN and UDT are the two pro-independence parties in Portuguese Timor. APODETI is for integration with Indonesia.

3. The visit comes at a time when the Portuguese are holding discussions in Dili with the three parties in preparation for a further meeting with them, possibly in Macao. The parties, and the Portuguese, are thus deep in a process of examining their programs for the political future of the territory.

4. During a call on the Department on 20 May, Messrs Soares and de Araujo (who have been away from Dili since the current round of discussions began) said that APODETI would agree to a plebiscite as an act of self-determination, but would oppose elections to set up a Constituent Assembly. Elections would be subject to too much 'local intimidation'; opinion could be more freely, clearly and simply expressed through an internationally-supervised plebiscite—and the result would favour integration with Indonesia. APODETI believed that the Portuguese were encouraging UDT and FRETILIN in their demands for independence (an independent Portuguese-speaking state) and were thus regarding UDT/FRETILIN in the same light as the liberation movements in the former African colonies. APODETI would have nothing to do with the UDT/FRETILIN proposal that a 'transitional government', to help prepare for the Constituent Assembly election, be established. APODETI wanted a plebiscite to take place quickly, so as to prevent the Portuguese from toying any further with the UDT/FRETILIN program. (Messrs Soares and de Araujo thus did *not* agree that the process of decolonisation should be a slow and deliberate one.)

5. According to Messrs Soares and de Araujo, APODETI represented the real or the 'native' Portuguese Timor, closely bound by tradition and culture to the rest of Timor and to the other Indonesian islands, while UDT and FRETILIN spoke for the privileged pro-Portuguese (culturally if not politically) class.
6. A paper on the present state of things, including talking points, is attached.

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and Papua New Guinea Division

Attachment

PORTUGUESE TIMOR: APODETI VISIT, 21 MAY 1975

[matter omitted]

Talking Points

General Policy

The APODETI visitors will be aware of press reports (in September 1974) following the Prime Minister's meeting with President Soeharto to the effect that the Prime Minister supported the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. They may seek a reaffirmation of what they believe, on the basis of these reports, to be the Australian Government's position.

In his talks last year with President Soeharto the Prime Minister said that he believed that the best outcome for the region would be the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. He added that this should happen in accordance with the properly-expressed wishes of the people of the territory. The Prime Minister further noted that because of the economic and political backwardness of the territory the people should have time to get their bearings before deciding their future. (There were no political or independence movements in Timor before the April 1974 coup in Lisbon.) The Prime Minister also warned against the forced integration of the territory into Indonesia and the probable effects of such an action on public opinion in Australia. The Prime Minister took a similar line in his talks with the President in Townsville in April this year.

In a sense, therefore, we support the aim of APODETI: integration with Indonesia. We have, however, to distinguish this from support for the APODETI party as such. The process of decolonisation in Portuguese Timor has only just begun and Australia should not seek to influence the political development of the territory, nor appear to give the nod to such political leaders as have emerged in the early stages of free political activity.

[matter omitted]

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, i]

134 MEMORANDUM TO NEW YORK

Canberra, 26 May 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Committee of 24: Briefing for Lisbon Meeting: Portuguese Timor*[matter omitted]*

2. Our preference would be for there to be no Australian reference to Portuguese Timor. Our understanding is that there has so far (since April 1974) been no Committee of Twenty Four discussion on it.

3. We would be grateful if you would report if any members of the Committee (or of the Secretariat) mentioned or seems likely to mention Timor. It is just possible that it will not come up at all; in any event we would not want to be the first to raise it.

4. If a brief reference does prove to be needed, you should say that Australia is firmly wedded to the general principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, and that we would accept (we prefer this to 'welcome' or 'support') whatever decision the people of Portuguese Timor may come to in determining their own future in the most rational and well-prepared manner. The lines of the Timor paragraph included in your statement¹ to the Fourth Committee during the debate on the Portuguese Territories on [1]4 October 1974 could again be followed, although we would like you to say 'accept' rather than 'welcome' (even in relation to 'association with Indonesia'), 'process' rather than 'act', and 'well-prepared' rather than 'internationally acceptable'.

A. J. MELHUISEActing Assistant Secretary
International Organisations Branch

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, i]

135 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 26 May 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Economic Aid for Portuguese TimorPlease refer to your memorandum of 23 April.¹

2. We have discussed the question of Australian aid for Portuguese Timor with the Foreign Ministry (Akosah, Asia and Pacific Directorate), BAKIN (Colonel Abbas) and the CSIS (Tjan), putting the points in your memorandum. Mr Joseph also discussed the question with General Adenan (Asia and Pacific Directorate) and Tjan on 21 May. While there were no actual objections, the prospect of Australian aid to Timor was not viewed enthusiastically.

3. On the basis of these discussions we consider Indonesia would not object to the sort of aid you have in mind, provided it is given to the Government in Portugal and not its Administration in Dili. As you know, the Indonesians are anxious that our aid does not lend

¹ Document 46.¹ Document 129.

weight to arguments in favour of independence. We have stressed that Australia had no intention of seeking to influence political developments in Portuguese Timor, but, of course, we could not guarantee that the parties would not make political capital out of our aid.

4. Indonesian comments suggest that they would not object to commodity aid. They also responded favourably to the idea of third country training in Indonesia and the possibility that part of any commodity aid could be untied for purchases in Indonesia and other ASEAN countries. Tjan, for instance, raised the possibility of purchasing Indonesian kerosene for Portuguese Timor. Another suggestion was that we might consider providing assistance in areas beneficial to both halves of Portuguese Timor; for instance a PAN/Timor² malaria control program was mentioned.

5. We were surprised that the Indonesians have apparently dropped their initial objections to budgetary assistance (JA7640 refers) and it is difficult to explain why. Part of the answer may lie in the change in Indonesia's tactics in Timor to more cooperative measures rather than the aggressive propaganda and so on prevalent when we first discussed the aid question with them. The change may also indicate that the Indonesians are now more confident that they will achieve their objective of integration, and are thus not as worried about the pro-independence arguments. Another reason may be that, following on the talks between Mr Whitlam and President Soeharto in Townsville, the Indonesians are reassured that Australia does not want to interfere in Timorese politics and considers integration the most rational solution to Timor's future. In any case the point is that the Indonesian change of mind on this matter was most probably determined by developments in the Timor situation. Conceivably their attitude could change as dramatically again. We will, therefore, need to keep very closely in touch with them on the question and should be grateful if you would keep us fully informed on the matter.

6. The request that our aid be given on a Government-to-Government basis to Lisbon would not, I would think, cause you any problems. One of your arguments for giving aid is that it might help to keep the Portuguese in Timor for a while. This objective would seem to be furthered by stressing that our aid to Timor would be channelled through the Portuguese Government.

7. Nevertheless we will have to watch the procedures for giving our aid closely. Governor Pires told Mr Taylor in March that he did not want to approve foreign investment contracts because he could provide no guarantee that the terms would be fulfilled. He wanted some form of local approval (he mentioned a transitional government) as well as his own. Pires indicated that he saw foreign aid similarly (paragraph 20 of our Savingram JA8312 refers). Obviously if the approval of some local body purporting to represent the Timorese, especially a transitional government, were required for our aid the Indonesians could claim that we have acquiesced in procedures which supported the idea that Portuguese Timor was an independent entity.

8. I would not want to make too much of this argument at this stage. Taylor did not pursue the question with the Governor who may have since changed his attitude or not reflected an official Portuguese policy. But i[t] is a point we will need to explore with the Portuguese.

9. While I accept that the Government is virtually committed domestically to some form of aid program we should recognise that the provision of aid will result in closer Australian involvement in the Timor issue. As you know, I consider that at this stage Australian interests are best served by decreasing our involvement there.

10. A copy of this memorandum has been sent to Lisbon.

R. A. WOOLCOTT

² Presumably 'pan-Timor' is intended here.

136 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 28 May 1975

O.LB976 UNCLASSIFIED ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Lisbon papers of 28 May report unilateral withdrawal of UDT from the coalition with FRETILIN. UDT communique detailing reasons for withdrawal, states that FRETILIN had systematically and scandalously disrespected the principles on which the coalition was based and had indulged in ideological and even physical aggression. It concluded that FRETILIN's actions could seriously compromise the independence of Timor–Dili.

2. FRETILIN President, Xavier do Amaral, is reported as describing the UDT withdrawal as an act of desperation and of political immaturity.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

137 DISPATCH TO WILLESEE

Jakarta, 2 June 1975

1/75 SECRET AUSTEO

The Portuguese Timor Problem as seen from Jakarta

The decolonisation of Portuguese Timor is likely to have important ramifications for Australia's future relations with Indonesia.

The nub of the issue is that the belief shared to a greater or lesser extent by Indonesia, Australia and Portugal—that Portuguese Timor should be integrated into Indonesia—may prove inconsistent with the policy to which we are all publicly committed, namely that the territory's future should be determined by the wishes of its people. The evidence available to me at present—admittedly inadequate—suggests that a genuine act of self determination in the territory would result in eventual independence.

Indonesian Policy

Indonesians associated with the Timor issue are aware of the present lack of support for APODETI, the party which supports integration with Indonesia. To meet the situation they have three main courses of action available. First, to allow the process of decolonisation to run its course and seek to maintain close and friendly relations with an independent Portuguese Timor, should that be the result; secondly, to integrate the territory by force; or, thirdly, to seek integration through other methods.

The first option appears to have been ruled out. Integration is an Indonesian policy objective. (. . .¹ by the end of 1975. We do not know, however, whether this timetable has been changed.) It results mainly from the fear that an independent Portuguese Timor could threaten the security and stability of Indonesia and the region. This fear has two aspects. First, because

¹ Two lines have been expunged here.

Portuguese Timor has insufficient resources to stand on its own feet, it would attract unwanted foreign interference, particularly from China and, possibly, the Soviet Union. Indonesian resolve that Timor should not upset regional stability has, if possible, been strengthened by recent developments in Indo China. Sensitivity to the possibility of a 'communist beachhead in Indonesia's belly'—as one BAKIN officer described it—has been heightened. Secondly, the Indonesian Government considers that an independent Portuguese Timor could aggravate—by example and possibly also material assistance to separatist groups—fissiparous tendencies in Indonesia.

Whether or not these fears are justified the fact is that they exist and are held by President Soeharto and by other Indonesian leaders, particularly in the powerful military and intelligence communities. Except for the Foreign Minister, Mr Malik, and the Information Minister, Mr Mashuri, senior civilians in the government have no role in policy making on the issue.

I would not wish to suggest that Indonesian policy is immutable. If Portugal were to remain in control of Portuguese Timor for, say, five years at least and if the territory were to develop in a manner completely acceptable to Indonesia, it is possible that Indonesia might come to accept the idea of independence. At present however, I would judge the likelihood of such a change in attitude as extremely unlikely.

Integration by force—the second option mentioned above—cannot be ruled out. As you know the President and other leading Indonesians have given categorical public and private assurances that Indonesia would not invade Portuguese Timor. President Soeharto is justifiably proud of the responsible foreign policy he has built up since 1966. His speeches on foreign policy stress the need for the peaceful solution of disputes and avoidance of the use of force. He told Mr Whitlam that Indonesia, as a country which has endorsed the principles of freedom and democracy would not contemplate the invasion of the territory. The President is also fully aware of the possible damage to Australia/Indonesia relations which would result from an invasion. He will do all he can to avoid the use of force.

Nevertheless, in certain circumstances, I believe that President Soeharto would authorise that course. His most important concern is the security and stability of Indonesia. If it appeared to him that these were seriously threatened by developments in Timor I believe he would judge that the responsible course of action was to remove the threat by the most appropriate means available. It may well be force.

Bearing in mind that the Indonesian Government would consider its security threatened by an independent Portuguese Timor, I would envisage two situations in which the President might authorise the use of force.

First, if Portugal were to decide to hand over sovereignty to the independence parties (much as they have in their African colonies). Portugal's position as outlined to the Indonesians in London on 9 March and as stated publicly would seem inconsistent with this course of action.² Developments in Portugal will be important, of course. Should the communist position in the Government there grow—or appear to the Indonesians to grow—Indonesia may conclude that the communist influence, or what it sees as that influence, will increase and, perhaps, that the early granting of independence was likely.

Secondly, if it became inevitable to the Indonesians that the decolonisation process would result in independence. It is difficult to envisage the circumstances which might lead Indonesia to adopt this attitude. Even so the procedures forming part of this process will be crucial. For instance, two in particular would concern Indonesia. Any recognition, before an act of self-

² See Document 122.

determination, that the territory was independent; and formation of a transitional government in the image of an independent government. On these points the situation should be clearer after the meeting planned to take place in Macao between the Portuguese Government and party representatives. This meeting itself may be deferred because of the present tensions between the UDT and FRETILIN.

In the first situation Indonesia's reaction would probably be sudden and swift. In the second it would probably be gradual, developed covertly in support of an alleged APODETI insurrection. In this situation the second and third options overlap.

Indonesia has adopted the third option, which seems to include two possibilities; to influence an act of self-determination in favour of integration, and to prepare for the sort of insurrection I have already mentioned. At this stage I doubt whether the Indonesians have decided which course to adopt. If the Portuguese agree to circumstances making integration virtually a foregone conclusion Indonesia would accept some act of self-determination. (An important factor for the Indonesians would be time.) If not the second possibility is likely. At present Indonesia's policies could be ad[ap]ted to suit either possibility.

Aware that the non-cooperative approach and scare tactics used early this year were not very helpful to its cause Indonesia has now adopted, in the words of a Foreign Ministry official, more 'elegant' methods. Indonesian publicity will stress the benefits of integration: Indonesian economic activity and tourism in Portuguese Timor will increase. Indonesian tourists will, no doubt, include intelligence operators and para-military personnel. Efforts will be made to wean the pro-independence parties away from strong opposition to integration. Indonesia's covert activities in Portuguese Timor will be stepped up, as will the training of APODETI leaders. 'Refugees' are being prepared at Atambua to return to Portuguese Timor to play their part in persuading the people to support integration. In short Indonesia hopes to repeat the success achieved in the West Irian act of free choice, while building up the capability to adopt even more direct methods should they prove necessary.

Indonesia does not have control of Portuguese Timor, as it did of West Irian, before the act of self-determination. Manipulation of the act would thus be much harder and success less certain. The extent of apparent support for independence evident in Portuguese Timor in February and March suggests that Indonesian persuasion would need to be extensive. There is a distinct possibility that Indonesia will adopt the course of inspiring an insurrection. [matter omitted]³

Australian Policy

Judging from the February/March press coverage, the situation in Australia will be different from that in South East Asian countries and will make it hard for the Australian Government to answer the difficult questions posed by the Timor issue. The Government wants the territory to become part of Indonesia but through some internationally acceptable process of self-determination if this can be brought about. What would we do if it were integrated by force? What is the relative importance we attach to relations with Indonesia and to an act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor?

My following comments on possible Australian policy are based on the premise that our policy is, as the Prime Minister told President Soeharto in Townsville, to be guided by the principle that good relations with Indonesia were of paramount importance to Australia.

³ Four paragraphs dealing with Portugal's policy and four on the policy of regional countries have been omitted. In the former Woolcott predicted Indonesian concern if Portugal appeared to favour independence, and questioned the extent to which Portugal would accept Indonesian activities, covert and overt, in the territory. He predicted little public criticism from regional countries, even if Indonesia resorted to force.

I am not suggesting that Australia give Indonesia 'carte blanche' to do what it likes in Timor. Australia's reputation as a progressive responsible regional country would be tarnished if we did. Indonesia is well aware that the Australian Government would not condone military action in Timor and that such action would adversely affect our relationship with Indonesia to some degree. Indeed I think that Australia would be obliged to condemn any outright aggression. A decision to take overt military action would be made with this knowledge, although some influential Indonesians do not share our assessment of the likely public reaction in Australia.

In public statements the Australian Government has emphasised the need for an internationally-recognised act of self-determination in Timor. True acts of self-determination are rare indeed. Certainly they have not been conducted in Portugal's other colonies. The Indonesians would find it difficult to understand if Australia and others were to insist that something which has not been applied to most other colonies in recent times—and all the other Portuguese—should now be resolutely enforced in the case of Portuguese Timor.

I do not think we should be too fussed about the manner chosen to determine the wishes of the people of Timor. Following the Prime Minister's talks with President Soeharto in Townsville the Indonesians will think that our main concern is that the way in which the future of Timor is decided should not upset the Australian people, thus putting at risk our bilateral relations.

We should continue to encourage Indonesia to go through with some process to determine the will of the people as indeed they are publicly committed to do. On this point I think we have our greatest (perhaps only) chance to influence Indonesian policy on Timor. We can continue to advise against blatant intervention which might stimulate Australian public opinion and lead the Australian Government to criticise Indonesia's actions. We might also advise the Indonesians of the importance to the future stability of the region of working out a solution to the future of Portuguese Timor which does not contain the seeds of further trouble. We should continue to impress upon the Indonesians our opposition to the use of force. But in doing so it would be important to avoid becoming the only or the main country in the region obstructing what Indonesia and its other neighbours could well see as Indonesia's legitimate national interest. There is a real danger that we could become isolated in this respect.

Another theme of our private talks with the Indonesians and the Portuguese has been to persuade the Portuguese to maintain sovereignty in Timor, at least for several more years. This, of course, is a policy objective agreed by the Prime Minister and President Soeharto. When we talk with Timorese political leaders we might continue to emphasise the importance Indonesia will play in their future, regardless of what that might be. We should avoid giving them the impression that we would support them against Indonesia.

Thus I see our policy as being, through quiet and patient diplomacy, to encourage all the parties, that is, the people of Portuguese Timor, Portugal and Indonesia to work out a peaceful solution. If it continued to appear that independence was the predominant wish of the people of Timor, we might continue our low key efforts to convince the Indonesians that they could live with an independent Portuguese Timor, provided it was friendly to Indonesia and looked mainly to Jakarta for guidance and succour. (Admittedly there is very little chance of this happening.)

In the event of the use of force by Indonesia to integrate the territory I would see Australia's interest as being to modify Australian opposition as far as possible and to minimise the impact on the long term need for a close and secure relationship with Indonesia.

One of the main themes of our Timor policy so far has been that Australia is not, and does not, seek to become, a party principal in the Timor issue. I consider our interests lie in maintaining this position and, if anything, decreasing our involvement, while keeping our private contacts with the Indonesians, Portuguese and Portuguese Timor political parties.

There are several reasons for this. First, increased involvement would augment the prospects for a confrontation between our activities and Indonesian interests. As Indonesian interference becomes more evident UDT and FRETILIN will probably see Australia more and more as a balance to Indonesia. Secondly, because integration may not be gained easily the situation in Timor may become messy (whether force is used or not). If so our presence (in whatever form) would be unlikely to assist the people of the territory or Indonesia, but it could prove embarrassing for us and make future good relations with Indonesia even more difficult than they would be in any case.

Finally, there are two specific aspects of Australian policy towards Portuguese Timor on which I should like to comment: the proposed consulate in Dili, and aid.

In retrospect it is regrettable that our consulate was closed. While it may prove inevitable I would recommend against re-opening of the Consulate at this stage. To re-open it now, would be interpreted here as support for the idea of an independent Portuguese Timor even if we were to assert that it did not. Certainly the pro-independence parties, UDT and FRETILIN, would seek to have it seen that way. They would portray our presence as a balance to Indonesia's. Consequently I recommend that we not re-open the consulate. If however it proves necessary for domestic political reasons to do so, we should give the Indonesians as much warning as possible, taking care, both in Indonesia and Timor, to avoid any misunderstandings as to our intentions. There would be advantages in presenting a decision to re-open the consulate if we could combine it with announcements of new consulates we may be opening elsewhere in the region.

We are still exploring the Indonesian attitude towards Australian aid to Portuguese Timor in more detail following the reservations expressed by the Indonesians at the Townsville meeting. Indonesia's concern is that Australian aid should not bolster in any way the arguments for independence. We should try to adopt procedures with which the Indonesians agree. Basically this means giving the aid to the Portuguese Government and avoiding, as far as possible, administrative procedures which give credence to the idea of Portuguese Timor as a separate entity. Also, of course, we should do all we can—including, if necessary, public statements—to ensure that our aid does not become a factor in the internal politics of Timor. Any Indonesian aid certainly will be, and the tendency may be for opponents of integration to use the fact of Australian aid to counter pro-integration arguments.

My comments on aid are based on the assumption that the Government is committed, domestically, to its provision. Undoubtedly an aid program will result in closer Australian involvement in the Timor issue. As mentioned above, I consider that at this stage Australian interests are best served by decreasing our involvement there.

My conclusion is that in relation to the Portuguese Timor issue, the outlook contains the seeds of real difficulties for Australia. Indonesia is bent on integration. While we would prefer that solution we may not like the way in which it now looks as though it will be achieved. If Indonesia decides to use force or crude pressure to achieve its objectives I do not think that Australian opposition would prevent this, once the President had decided that such action was in Indonesia's national interest. In these circumstances our best interests will lie in coming to terms with the realities of the situation.

R. A. WOOLCOTT

Ambassador

138 LETTER FROM FEAKES TO WOOLCOTT

Canberra, 4 June 1975

SECRET

EXTRACT

You may have noticed that there has so far been no reaction from the Minister to your letter of 17 April, in which you mentioned the differences in the approaches to Timor of Senator Willesee and the Prime Minister.¹ I spoke on the same subject to Senator Willesee last week and, although he had not then seen your letter, his office have now brought it to his attention. Neither what I had to say [to] him nor, it seems, your letter is likely to persuade him to take up with the Prime Minister the differences in their approaches to Portuguese Timor—or at least so I judge from the course of the conversation I had with Senator Willesee on the subject. He is alive to the dangers inherent in these differences, particularly that, as a result of them, there may be some miscalculation on the part of the Indonesians or alternatively that, having beaten the drum of self-determination, the Government would seem to lack conviction if it remained silent in the event that there were no act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor. My feeling is that Senator Willesee may already have spoken to the Prime Minister some time ago about the differences in their approach to Portuguese Timor and has concluded that there is no point in taking matters any further. He feels very firmly that the Prime Minister is wrong.

[NAA: A11443, [10]]

139 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 5 June 1975

O.UN3103 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Committee of Twenty-Four: Portuguese Timor

The draft decision by the Committee of Twenty-Four on 'Territories under Portuguese Administration' for adoption in Lisbon just circulated by Chairman Salim contains the following surprise paragraph No 6.

Begins

6. With regard to Timor and dependencies, the only remaining colonial territory under Portuguese administration outside Africa, the Special Committee expresses the hope that the necessary steps will soon be taken to enable the people of the territory to exercise their right to self-determination and independence as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and in conformity with the declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.

Ends

[matter omitted]

¹ Document 127.

3. Having compared notes with Indonesian Ambassador Anwar Sani, it transpires that Salim consulted neither of us before including the draft paragraph on Timor, and this will be taken up with him shortly. We agree with Sani however, that the working paper having been circulated to Committee members, it would be difficult and undesirable to try to have the paragraph on Timor excluded. Sani is reporting to Jakarta on the question. He proposes placing his own interpretation on the paragraph which would include the point that if Timor decided to join Indonesia, it would of course be obtaining its independence in the process. We feel we already have suitable instructions in your memorandum 289 dated 26 May¹ which will be followed carefully.
4. Sani is also tempted to ask in his statement in Lisbon why there should not be a specific reference to Macao.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

140 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA, LISBON AND NEW YORK

Canberra, 6 June 1975

O.CH226998 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Committee of Twenty-Four: Portuguese Timor

Ref O.UN3103¹

Please discuss this matter with the Indonesians and ascertain whether they intend to try to have the phrases 'soon' and 'and independence' deleted from the proposed text of paragraph 6 of Salim's draft. We prefer that Indonesia take the front-running on this matter but would be prepared to support them in private discussions with the Committee chairman.

For Lisbon

2. It would seem to us that the draft proposed by Salim would prejudice the outcome of the Macao talks. This point might be made by the Ambassador when he calls on Alves (LB006). We would hope that the Portuguese might seek to persuade Salim to delete the offending phrases.

For UN New York

3. You should support any approach by the Indonesians to Salim to have the word 'soon' deleted from the proposed draft paragraph 6, as well as the words 'and independence'. You might explain to Salim that Australia has consistently supported the need for a 'measured and deliberate' approach to decolonisation in Portuguese Timor. This is an approach which has been accepted by all the pa[r]ties involved Portugal and Indonesia as well as the Timorese political parties.
4. In supporting a measured approach, we have been very much alive to the fact that the inhabitants of Portuguese Timor displayed virtually no political interests before the April

¹ Document 134.

¹ Document 139.

1974 coup in Portugal. By contrast, the Portuguese colonies in Africa for many years were marked by the existence of politically mature independence movements with long-standing international connexions. (The Government has of course supported the aims of these movements.) The absence of comparable developments in Portuguese Timor suggests a lack of political awareness in the territory and it is for this reason that we believe the Portuguese Government should not be invited to rush the process of decolonisation. Deliberate progress will more effectively prepare all the people of the territory to choose their own future, in full awareness of all alternatives open to them.

5. We would hesitate to accept at face value the claims of the political personalities who have emerged in the first year of political activity in Timor. They have sprung from what appears to have been a political vacuum under the Portuguese. Most appear to represent a small elite class—the educated, the government officials and various other westernised elements. It may be that this group will be able to win the allegiance of the people of the territory, but their claims are as yet untested. There may well be, below the surface, thoroughly indigenous political forces which would carry the inhabitants of Portuguese Timor in directions different from those on which their present leaders are set. It is relevant that only a few months ago most of the Timorese were said to be against independence, favouring instead a long-term association with Portugal. It is also relevant that the UDT–FRETILIN coalition was short-lived. UDT has broken away from FRETILIN. The present situation on the ground is now highly confused.

6. As for the option of integration with Indonesia, it is worth noting that the division of the island of Timor is no more than an accident of Western colonial history. The border was drawn by the Dutch and the Portuguese, powers which were totally alien to the region. Four hundred years of Portuguese domination may have distorted the picture which the people of Portuguese Timor have of themselves, and perhaps obscured for them their ethnic kinship with the people of Indonesia. Time will be required for them to sort themselves out.

7. The experience of decolonisation in many countries has shown that the westernised educated elites do not always best reflect the true interests of their peoples. In most cases they have been supplanted sooner or later by more representative leaders. We are therefore concerned that, at this early stage of political evolution in Portuguese Timor, we do nothing to close off any option for the people of the territory. On the other hand the Australian Government has always supported the right of the Timorese to decide their own future. If the people of Portuguese Timor, after careful consideration, were to choose independence, then we should welcome and support that choice.

8. All of the foregoing could be drawn on in any discussions with Salim.

9. As regards your paragraph 4, we would assume that the Chinese would be hostile to any reference to Macao. We should not wish to encourage the Indonesians to proceed with this course, but recognise that Sani might wish to use the Macao analogy in his discussions with Salim to persuade the latter to accommodate the Indonesians over Timor.

141 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 6 June 1975

O.UN3109 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Committee of Twenty-Four: Portuguese Timor*Ref O.UN3103, O.CH226998¹*

Sani has not yet had any reaction from Jakarta. We have told him that our Embassy will be taking up the matter there.

2. Sani sees a virtue in the deletion of 'soon' but has doubts about deleting the reference to 'independence'. He has argued to Jakarta already that the reference to independence repeats the wording of the decolonisation declaration² and that, on this ground alone, it is awkward to raise objections to it. He also feels that to do so could create an unnecessary debate at this stage. It was for these reasons that he proposed instead to 'interpret' the option of independence as including independence 'within Indonesia'.

3. We note your instruction to Lisbon. It is unlikely that the Portuguese will have received the working paper and in this case it might be premature to raise the question with them so early. There is also a risk that it would become known through them to the Eastern Europeans and others, possibly in a distorted form, that we were seeking to change the draft.

4. Sani leaves New York on Monday and may well not be in a position to have any substantive discussion with Salim before then. There will, however, be ample time and opportunity for Campbell to concert and consult in Lisbon in the second half of next week. The decision on the territories under Portuguese administration will not be adopted before the afternoon of Friday 13 or morning of Saturday 14 at the earliest, and could well be held over till the following week.

HARRY

[NAA: A10463. 801/13/11/1, ix]

142 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 6 June 1975

O.UN3113 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Committee of Twenty-Four: Portuguese Timor*Ref O.UN3103¹*

Campbell arranged 6 June with the Chairman of the Committee of Twenty-Four and the Secretariat to amend paragraph 6 on their own initiative to delete the word 'soon' and add the words 'as appropriate'. The paragraph will now read

¹ Documents 139 and 140.

² That is, UN Resolution 1514. See note 4 to Document 66.

¹ Document 139.

'6. With regard to Timor and dependencies, the only remaining colonial territory under Portuguese administration outside Africa, the Special Committee expresses the hope that the necessary steps will be taken as appropriate to enable the people of the territory to exercise their right to self-determination and independence as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and in conformity with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.'

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

143 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON, NEW YORK AND JAKARTA

Canberra, 7 June 1975

O.CH227116 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Committee of Twenty-Four: Portuguese Timor

Ref O.UN3109¹

We would not of course anticipate Australia acting independently of the Indonesians. If they go along with 'and independence' and Sani's interpretation of it, so should we. We note, moreover, that Salim's draft speaks only of the 'right' to independence.

2. Our policy has been to engage the Portuguese in frank discussions over Timor. We should thus still see value in Lisbon taking up the matter with the Portuguese but perhaps only after Campbell has been able to consult and concert with Sani in Lisbon.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

144 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 9 June 1975

O.LB027 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I saw Alves today. He apologised for having to cancel my appointment last Friday owing to the Angolan crisis (see our immediately following telegram).

2. Alves said that, so far as Portugal was concerned, the London agreement with the Indonesians still stood i.e. 'the three to five years' timetable for decolonisation would be adhered to.

3. On the Macao meeting, the Portuguese were proceeding on the assumption that it would take place as scheduled from 15–18 June. The Portuguese delegation would be led by Alves, accompanied by Almeida Santos and Campinos (Secretary of State for F.A.). If the Timorese

¹ Document 141.

party representatives refused to attend they had been warned that the Portuguese Government would have no alternative but to impose its own decolonisation timetable.

4. In reply to a question, Alves said that the Timorese leaders lacked any real political case. They had a few westernised ideas about freedom and independence but they did not yet have much grass roots support, nor would they necessarily emerge as the territory's future political leaders. (In short Alves' views closely coincided with para 5 of your O.CH226998¹). Hence, Portugal was prepared to soldier on for the next three to five years until a meaningful act of self determination could take place. There was no analogy between Timor and the situation in the African colonies.

5. Alves said the Timor budget was relatively modest—about \$A10 million. Portugal could bear this burden for a few more years but they were hoping for some assistance from countries such as Australia, Indonesia and Japan. In this context I mentioned the inclusion of Jackson in our delegation to Dili later this month, but emphasised that it was no more than a preliminary survey and that any Australian assistance would necessarily be modest.

6. Asked about the Portuguese Government's ideas for the future, Alves said they were thinking in terms of a consultative body consisting of a Portuguese high commissioner, two representatives of the administration, and a representative from each of the three political parties. The high commissioner would however have a casting vote in the event of a deadlock. They would like to establish such a body as soon as possible. They were also thinking in terms of elections for a 'constituent assembly' about next October. This body would consist of about 20 elected representatives (two from each district) and two to be appointed by each of the three political parties and would begin to draft a statute defining the territory's future constitutional status. (Alves was not very specific on this point but the main purpose of such a body would presumably be to develop a local political consciousness.)

Comment

7. From what Alves said it seems clear that, at least for the present, the Portuguese are not going to be stampeded by their own left wing into any hasty decisions about the pace of decolonisation in Timor. I told him that his views were very much in line with our own thinking. In the light of New York's UN3109² I did *not* raise the question of para 6 of the Committee of 24's draft decision on Timor.

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

¹ Document 140.

² Document 141.

145 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 13 June 1975

O.LB039 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Lisbon Meeting of Committee of 24: Portuguese Timor

There were successful consultations between Sani, Salim and Campbell on the Timor question when the Committee of 24 meeting opened on 12 June.

2. Sani had discussed the matter with the Portuguese Foreign Ministry at senior level on 11 June, when it had been confirmed to him that there would be a brief reference to Timor in the Portuguese opening statement. Sani had informed the Portuguese of the interpretation he proposed giving to 'independence' and the Portuguese, while expressing full understanding of this, had not shown any disposition to relieve him of the necessity of doing so.

3. On this basis Sani and Campbell discussed separately with Salim and the Secretariat the possibility of deleting the reference to 'independence' and Sani, drawing on Resolution 1514,¹ proposed the substitution of 'to determine freely their political status'. These discussions brought out clearly, however, the difficulty for the Committee in dealing with a Portuguese territory of some size, of referring to self-determination but *not* independence. Instead therefore of listing any or all of the options open to Timor it was readily agreed to by-pass the problem by referring only to the 'goals' set forth in the Charter and in Resolution 1514.

4. The full paragraph as circulated on the evening of 12 June reads as follows. (We expect the decision on the territories under Portuguese administration to be adopted as early as 13 or 14 June.)

Begins

'With regard to Timor and [its] dependencies, the only remaining colonial territory under Portuguese administration outside Africa, the Special Committee expresses the hope that the necessary steps will be taken as appropriate to enable the people of the [that] territory to attain the goals set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples'.²

Ends

5. In opening the debate on the Portuguese territories, the Portuguese Foreign Minister did not dwell at length on any of the particular territories. Our translation of his substantive reference to Timor was simply that 'a summit meeting will soon be held with a view to the independence of Timor'. In view of the brevity of this reference and the probability that the Foreign Minister has not addressed himself in detail to the issues in Timor, we doubt that too much significance need be attached to this reference to independence.

¹ See note 4 to Document 66.

² The phrase 'the only remaining territory . . . outside Africa' was, of course, incorrect and was deleted from the final version of Paragraph 7 of the Consensus, adopted by the Committee on 14 June. The words after 'Declaration' were also omitted, and words in square brackets indicate other minor changes. [UNGA: A/AC.109/493, 26 June 1975.] Campbell reported (Cablegram LB048, 16 June) that 'for the first time nearly all delegations mentioned Timor by name and it might therefore be expected that the next time round they will have something more substantial to say'. He noted that the Indian Ambassador 'took particular note of Indonesian interests' and that the Goa precedent would help ensure Indian support for integration. In a final statement on 16 June, Santos had 'appeared to maintain a scrupulous impartiality between the three Timorese parties' and had said that an attempt was being made to postpone the Macao meeting in the hope that Fretilin could be persuaded to participate.

6. Sani spoke early in the debate referring extensively to Timor and mentioning that Indonesia was prepared to cooperate with neighbouring countries, particularly Australia, in the process of decolonising the territory. Speaking later in the debate Campbell therefore touched on Timor in accordance with your instructions. The extracts from the Indonesian and Australian statements concerning Timor are contained in our accompanying unclassified telegram. Grateful if Canberra would pass these texts to Jakarta and UN New York as required.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, ix]

146 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 13 June 1975

O.LB040 UNCLASSIFIED ROUTINE

Lisbon Meeting of Committee of 24: Portuguese Timor

Following are extracts from (a) Indonesian Statement and (b) Australian Statement on 12 June dealing with Portuguese Timor.

(A) 'My delegation has taken particular note of that part of the Statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal which referred to the decolonization of what is called Portuguese Timor. Being its closest neighbour, Indonesia is of course most directly interested in the process of decolonization in that territory.

My delegation hopes that the process of decolonization in Portuguese Timor will be carried out with the broadest participation of all segments of the indigenous population on a non-discriminatory basis. All political groupings must be given full and equal opportunity to rally support for their views amongst the population, without threat or coercion, and to participate without restrictions in activities in preparation of the exercise of the right of self-determination through a referendum. It is the responsibility of the administering power to prepare the population in a democratic manner for the act of self-determination in order that they will be able to exercise that right with full awareness of the implications of their decision for their own future.

Some speculations have been expressed on Indonesia's intentions with regard to the territory. Indonesia has stated on many occasions that she does not have territorial ambitions. Indonesia has always respected and upheld the U.N. Declaration on Decolonization (Resolution 1514 (XV))¹ which in principle guarantees the right of every people to exercise freely their right of self-determination. We will certainly continue to do so in the case of Portuguese Timor. It is a fact however that there is a movement among the population of Portuguese Timor for integration with Indonesia. If the population of Portuguese Timor in the free and democratic exercise of their right of self-determination should decide that they wish to become independent through integration with Indonesia, in view of the close ethnical and cultural links existing between the population of Portuguese Timor and Indonesia, especially that of the Indonesian part of Timor, Indonesia is prepared to welcome that territory as an integral part of the Indonesian State with the same rights and obligations as the other parts in accordance with its constitution. The

¹ See note 4 to Document 66.

existing links which have remained undiminished despite centuries of separation imposed by colonialism will undoubtedly contribute to a harmonious process of integration if such were to be the decision of the population of Portuguese Timor.

Mr Chairman,

During the last 8 or 9 years, Indonesia has concentrated on national development, applying its resources and directing its efforts as a matter of priority to economic and social development and to strengthening its capacity to develop, to endure and to defend itself successfully against negative outside influences which is the essence of Indonesia's concept of national resilience. One of the most important factors for the success of its efforts in national development and consequently in strengthening its national resilience, is the existence of stability and security especially in the region of South East Asia and the Pacific to which Indonesia belongs. Indonesia cannot but view the process of decolonization in Portuguese Timor also from these important considerations of regional stability and security.

Indonesia is prepared to co-operate fully with Portugal and with others, especially the neighbouring countries, and in particular with Australia, another close neighbour of that territory, to assist and facilitate the process of decolonization in Portuguese Timor. The population in that territory should be in a position to exercise their right of self-determination through a referendum in peace and tranquility, and in dignity, fully aware of the consequences of whatever decision they may take. My delegation sincerely hopes that their decision will be conducive to their own prosperity and well-being and at the same time that it will be a positive contribution to the stability, security, progress and well-being of the entire region of South East Asia and South West Pacific.'

(B) 'One of the smaller non-African Portuguese territories, Portuguese Timor, has been referred to in the course of our meeting. Australia's attitude towards Portuguese Timor is of course based on the principles of the United Nations. Australia is firmly wedded to the right to self-determination for all colonial people.

We do not seek any special position in Portuguese Timor and the wishes of the people of the territory concerning their emergence into complete freedom should be decisive. Australia will accept whatever decision the people of Portuguese Timor may reach in determining their own future. It has been suggested that they will wish to associate themselves with Indonesia. If this was so, Australia would accept it provided that the decision was based on a well prepared process of self-determination. We believe that the Timorese people should be allowed to proceed deliberately towards the decision about their future.

We do place emphasis on the question of proceeding at a deliberate pace. The rate of progress will depend on what is possible and practical. In particular cases, and Timor may be one of them, the real aspirations of the people may need time to crystallise.'

147 STATEMENT BY WILLESEE

Tokyo, 17 June 1975

EXTRACT

Transcript of Question and Answer Session at the Australian Chamber of Commerce Luncheon¹

Q: What is Australia's present stance concerning the future of Timor and how is this affecting our foreign relations with Indonesia?

A: First, it isn't our business. We have always said that in South East Asia we want to be helpful and we want proper relationships where they exist. We have some very special relationships—the obvious one is where we are now, Japan—there is a very special relationship; there is a very special relationship with Papua New Guinea; there is also a special relationship with Indonesia, our nearest neighbour with 110 million people.

So the future of Portuguese Timor is a matter for the Portuguese and the Timorese. We have made this very clear. But what we have said is that because we are a close neighbour we ought not to be silent on it; we ought to give an opinion on it. And I have said many many times, that we don't intend to interfere by telling them what to do. Their future should be decided by an act of self-determination recognised by the world. Now I know that every country that has been handed over from a colonial situation to freedom hasn't gone through an act of self-determination. It didn't happen in Mozambique. But the situation in Mozambique was vastly different. Frelimo was fighting there for a long long time. They controlled a lot of the country and were almost an opposition—they must have been in opposition almost as long as we were. A body existed to which you could hand over government. It was the same in Guinea-Bissau. The Portuguese are trying to do the same in Angola. But you have got difficulties there because the independence movement is so split between three parties that you cannot get a body to hand over power to.

It is vastly different in Portuguese Timor. They have never thought of freedom for 400 years. They have never thought of being independent. They have never thought of these things. Suddenly there are three bodies emerging. One says, we want to link up with Indonesia. Another says, we want freedom now and another says, independence later. The two pro-independence bodies joined but they are on the point of splitting again. The Indonesians say they agree with all of us. But I don't think there are any doubts—they cannot conceal it very much—that they believe that the nearest solution would be for Portuguese Timor to be incorporated into Indonesia. I think the Portuguese have taken the most sensible attitude of all by saying, well look, there is just no hurry about this thing; we have been here for 400 years, another 5 or 6 isn't going to matter.

I agree completely with that and the proposal to set up a situation where they can form some sort of a body—and they are meeting I think now in Macau—in a week's time or a week back—to talk about this sort of thing. They might bring those three bodies in together and then go into what would be a constituent assembly—a sort of minor parliament. Then they can say, all right you work out what you want in the future.

¹ Willesee visited China, Korea and Japan. He was accompanied by some leading press figures from Australia, but it is not clear whether they attended the luncheon. Cablegram CH232367 (see note 2) states that the questions were asked by members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Now the arguments they put in favour of Indonesia taking it over are that it certainly would be the neatest, simplest solution. But, you know, you cannot always do the neat and simple thing in life and come out with the best. I say it is a matter for the Timorese. The reasons that those advocates of Indonesia give is that if we have a very weak and small country on our doorstep then you might have big power rivalries; you might have the communist movement versus the Western movement and the thing would blow up. I just don't believe this. Look, we live in Australia beside very weak countries—Nauru, which has a lot of money and is 8 miles long with 11,000 people; the Cook Islands with about 185,000; Tonga with, I think, about 90,000. These are all weak countries. They are never going to be great economic forces but they haven't been the scenes of rivalries. I mean, Australia should be the most nervous country in the world if you follow these arguments and after all if that does happen, Indonesia is right on the border.

But maybe that is what will come about. However as far as Australia is concerned we would accept any choice of the people. If they want to go with Portugal, it is fine with us. If they want independence, that is fine with us. If they want to go on to Indonesia, that is fine with us. What we have said is that we would help. There is talk about aid. If Portugal were to discontinue the 18 million dollars (I think) it puts in there the question of Australia picking up that bill is just not on. You just don't go in and do this. But we would extend our aid to the things which we do pretty well, for example having foreign students come down and study both in the technical and the tertiary fields.

But that is where the thing stands. On this question I have talked to both Soares and Santos—the two main Portuguese Ministers then concerned. I have just told them to keep in touch with us and keep in touch with Indonesia. Not that we want to interfere, but I think it is for everybody's benefit if we all know what one another is doing in this field and we have given a figure of aid now to Portugal to encourage them to stay in for this extra time.

This story goes on and on, but you have got to come back to Portugal where suddenly there has been a swing to the left in their Government. If they suddenly said, well blast it, why should we spend \$18 million over there; we've got no interest in it. That would create a situation and then we would be involved in aid and that type of thing. So what we have tried to do, what I have tried to do in talking to them is to tell the Indonesians to play it very cool—not to let these stories get around that they are thinking of invading—that was running pretty rampant in about January of this year—and to urge the Portuguese to keep talking to the Indonesians and explain what they are doing; that they are not going to walk out; and that they are going to try and have an orderly handover. So it comes back to the fact that we want to help but we certainly are not going to be involved in other people's troubles and wars.²

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxiv]

² This text, together with that of a question and answer referring to Papua New Guinea, was cabled to Canberra as Cablegram TK5734 (20 June) and repeated to Jakarta as Cablegram CH232367. It was thought they 'may generate some interest in the Australian media' (unlike questions on China and Korea which 'were answered in familiar terms'). In the event there seems to have been no significant press interest.

148 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN CURTIN, TAYLOR AND TJAN

Jakarta, 18 June 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

Tjan said that the Portuguese proposal for consideration at the Macao meeting was essentially a variation of the FRETILIN/UDT Coalition program. It was unacceptable to APODETI and to Indonesia. He discussed APODETI's possible tactics at the meeting (which he thought would be held soon, despite the objections of FRETILIN) in familiar terms although a slight variation of the 'worst case' scenario was offered. *Tjan* said if APODETI did not get its way in Macao, it would, through one of the kings or chiefs in the border region, establish a 'government', and seek support from Indonesia. Indonesia would refuse support, but would allow 'volunteers' to assist the new government. There would of course be plenty of them.

2. In general, *Tjan* said that things were now going reasonably well for APODETI. Because of the attitude adopted by FRETILIN, APODETI appeared to be constructive and helpful, whereas FRETILIN was the negative element in the situation.

3. In answer to a question *Tjan* said that there may have been solutions other than integration acceptable to Indonesia, but it was now too late. A decision that there must be integration had been taken early in the piece, and it was now not possible to change. *Tjan* was categorical in saying that there was no other solution now.¹

4. *Tjan* said that 'Australia' had helped push Indonesia in the direction of a decision on integration after the April 25 revolution in Portugal. A large range of Australian journalists and academics thought that the most logical solution was integration.

5. Asked about possible overseas reaction to the use of force by Indonesia in Portuguese Timor, *Tjan* said that Indonesia expected quite a hostile reaction from most African countries. These countries did not know anything about the situation and saw it in terms of 'anti-colonialism' and the struggle of the black man against the white man. Indonesia, unfortunately was the white man. Many African representatives at the United Nations took no notice of instructions from their governments, even if they got them, and would hardly be likely to sympathise with the Indonesian position. There was thus little point in Indonesia applying pressure on the governments. In any event, *Tjan* did not think that Indonesia would have much success in persuading African governments to its point of view. *Tjan*, however, appeared not to be at all concerned about this; in any event he appeared not to have thought very much about the detail of how the United Nations might enter itself in the matter.

6. *Tjan* said that the ASEAN countries would prove to be no problem if Indonesia were to integrate Portuguese Timor by force, nor would India. He doubted too, whether the United States would be very concerned. He pointed to the lack of United States reaction to the North

¹ In a conversation the same day Akosah told Curtin that the Foreign Ministry had considered several possibilities, including an arrangement whereby Indonesia would be responsible for Portuguese Timor's defence and foreign affairs, with the territory remaining independent in all other respects. No alternative had been satisfactory, the critical point being the Indonesian constitution, under which Portuguese Timor could not have a special position. Akosah told Curtin that Soeharto had 'recently' issued a directive that all efforts should be made to avoid use of force. Curtin surmised this to be the directive reported much earlier. In Cablegram JA8928 (20 June) reporting these conversations Taylor commented that there was no suggestion in either conversation that Indonesian action was imminent or that there had been a change in tactics: 'Indonesia is still looking for ways of achieving their objective without too much fuss. The Macao meeting is seen as important in this context'.

Vietnamese 'invasion' of South Viet-Nam. Tjan said that if the Americans and others got too upset, the Indonesian[s] could always turn elsewhere for what they wanted. (But at another point in the conversation, when Tjan referred to Indonesia's move towards adopting a more 'non-aligned' foreign policy, he said that there was no possibility that Indonesia would turn to the USSR.) The only country the Indonesian Government was slightly concerned about was Australia. While General Ali and his group understood the pressures that might be applied to the Australian Government publicly to condemn Indonesian action, other forces in the Indonesian Government would not. (Tjan was implying quite clearly that some sections of the Indonesian Government would favour a less close relationship with Australia if Australia were to be too adversely critical of Indonesian actions.)

M. S. [G.] CURTIN

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, x]

149 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 25 June 1975

O.JA0259 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Colonel Sigit, former Indonesian Attache in Canberra and presently Assistant for Operations at Defence Area Command No. 2 which covers Timor told the Naval Attache recently that the Indonesians were concerned that if Portugal retained sovereignty over Portuguese Timor there was an inherent danger that the Soviet Union would use Portugal as a cover to channel Soviet aid and influence into the territory. This could leave Indonesia with a 'Cuba' at its back door. 2. This Indonesian concern is not new, but it is significant in the light of an indication we have had recently that Indonesia may now prefer to see Portugal *not* retain control over Portuguese Timor in the foreseeable future.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, x]

GROWING DISILLUSIONMENT: JUNE 1975

It was at this time that the Australian Government again became concerned about the Indonesian attitude towards Portuguese Timor. In a submission to Willesee of 27 June it was rather cryptically noted: 'after the lull of the last two to three months, it is possible that we are again about to enter a difficult period in regard to Portuguese Timor. But there is no suggestion either in intelligence reports or in reports of our Embassy in Jakarta that decisive Indonesian action in Timor is imminent'. The reference here, as also in the last paragraph of Document 149, is to a growing Indonesian impatience with the gradualist approach to decolonisation, and, in particular, to suggestions that President Soeharto had abandoned the gradualist position he had taken during the Townsville talks. In a letter dated 23 June Dan

reported a conversation in which Alex Alatas, then private secretary to Malik, indicated that Soeharto believed that 'all problems would be solved by Portuguese Timor's early incorporation into Indonesia. Difficulties would grow daily if this outcome was not concluded early'. The Indonesians had been concerned that the Australian record of the Townsville talks did not accurately reflect the President's view. In a letter dated 30 June Lance Joseph explained to Dan that the record the Indonesians had seen was most likely 'the sanitised version [of a summary of the record] . . . for presentational purposes it was felt important in the sanitised version to highlight Australia's commitment to self-determination in a way which is not reflected in the exhaustive record'. However, he accepted that there were grounds for some concern: 'I detect in what Alex has said to you a growing Indonesian disillusionment with gradualist policies of winning over the territory by persuasion. . . . we could be moving to the position where we differ with Indonesia on the question of the time to be allowed for the process of decolonisation to work itself out. It would be unfortunate indeed if the Indonesians were to convince themselves of the desirability of early incorporation, for we see no peaceful or acceptable means whereby Indonesia might achieve this aim'.

150 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

New York, 27 June 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACT

Committee of 24: Meetings in Lisbon, June 1975

24. We should offer one point of explanation concerning the Australian statement. Our instructions were to the effect that, with several modifications requested by the Department, we could if necessary substantially repeat the Australian statement in the Fourth Committee of UNGA 29.¹ These modifications did not require any change to our reference last year to 'independence'; this had read ' . . . the wishes of the people of the territory concerning independence should be decisive'. In the light, however, of the exchange of telegrams at the time of the Lisbon meeting, and of the text of the draft consensus on Timor as finally agreed, we drew carefully on the language of Resolution 1514² and substituted for 'independence' the formulation 'their emergence into complete freedom'. For the purposes of some future Government statement you might in fact like to look at the possibility of employing the full wording of the penultimate preambular paragraph of the Declaration on Decolonisation which proclaims the ' . . . inalienable right (of all peoples) to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory'. This wording could be construed to contain something of a useful ambiguity in relation to the issues of independence and integration with Indonesia.³

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14, i]

¹ Document 46.

² See note 4 to Document 66.

³ The memorandum was signed by Campbell.

151 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 3 July 1975

O.LB081 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Following comments may be helpful in context of next week's ASEAN Heads of Mission meeting.

A major area of potential disagreement between Indonesia and Portugal is the London 'understanding' on Indonesian assistance to APODETI.

2. Lisbon's agreement to 'discreet' measures by Indonesia probably does not coincide with Jakarta's understanding that they will be permitted to create circumstances which will make integration 'a foregone conclusion'. Any testing of this understanding by the Indonesians could have important implications.

3. Lisbon would accept integration if the people choose it. Indonesian help for APODETI, in a discreet way, would be tolerated e.g. probably financial support, training in Indonesia etc. The Portuguese Government however has built up a myth about the purity and idealism of its decolonisation and a thinly disguised or overt Indonesian operation within Timor's borders would not be condoned (even though, at the same time, an open invasion would not be resisted militarily).

4. In their relations with Indonesia, the Portuguese are torn between their new-found 'affinity and brotherhood' with the Third World and their ideological progressivism. Ideologically, the two military regimes are poles apart and any Indonesian testing of the London agreement by overt action would be likely to bring the latter sentiment to the fore. If pushed in this way by the Indonesians, a pro-independence position would be very difficult for the Portuguese to avoid. Political pressures in Lisbon would then be for independence. If in addition pressure came from black Africa, especially the former Portuguese territories, the Portuguese would not want to see the whole of their decolonisation policy compromised by events in Timor. (Portugal's relations with Africa have a greater priority than relations with Indonesia.)

5. For the time being, however, policy-making on Timor is in the hands of moderates (Santos, Alves, Campinos—the more radical Major Mota being at the moment in the minority). If the decolonisation process they have designed proceeds without any problems, this is likely to remain the case. You should be aware, however, that Timor is one of the few policy areas that remains in the hands of moderates in Lisbon. The trend is against the moderates and any change in policy-makers on Timor could only be for the worse from the Indonesian point of view. (This is something the Indonesian Chargé has mentioned to us.) You should also be aware that Almeida Santos' Ministry (and presumably his own position) will be dissolved at the end of the year after Angolan independence. Timor and other residual issues will then pass to the Foreign Ministry.

Conclusion

If events proceed smoothly Portugal will probably be prepared to stay in Timor for at least another three years. Earlier suggestions of up to eight years no longer seem realistic. (This appears to have been born[e] out by reports of the new draft law on Timor.) The actual time, despite whatever timetable is now agreed on, will probably depend on the gravity of Portugal's

economic situation and the amount of assistance it receives in Timor from third countries. Timor policy is likely to remain in the hands of the moderates for the foreseeable future, unless decolonisation ceases to proceed smoothly, or unless overt action by Indonesia projects the issue into more prominence in Lisbon.¹

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, x]

152 LETTER FROM WILLESEE TO WOOLCOTT

Canberra, 7 July 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Thank you for your despatch No. 1/75 on the subject of Portuguese Timor.¹ I was glad also to have your personal letter to me of 17 April.²

The description in your despatch of Indonesian policy accords with the Department's own assessments. Despite the private and public assurances we have received, we recognize that the military option remains very much alive in Indonesian planning—although, like you, I should expect that any Indonesian military move would likely be coupled with an Indonesian-inspired local insurrection within Timor. Even so, it would be difficult for the Indonesians to mask their true intentions. Whatever the public reaction in other countries of the region may be—and we are inclined to agree with you that it would be muted—public reaction in Australia would be sharp, with pressure quickly developing for the Government to take its distance from the Indonesian Government and to review its policies towards Indonesia.

For the present, the Indonesians appear to see the goal of integration being achieved through an Indonesian-influenced act of self-determination. They appear to believe that they have won Portugal's agreement to facilitate Indonesia's covert efforts to this end. But we think that there is evidence, including Santos's most recent statements, to suggest the contrary. Certainly the Portuguese authorities on the ground in Timor seem not to have received any message to collaborate with the Indonesians. One result is that we must expect that Indonesian interference in Portuguese Timor will become widely known as it becomes more blatant. In turn, it will attract the attention of the many groups in Australia sympathetic to Portuguese Timorese independence.

I acknowledge that much of what Indonesia is doing, or plans to do, falls within what might be regarded, or at least presented as, a legitimate effort by one country to attract the interest and sympathy of the population of another, neighbouring country. Indonesia has opened its borders to two-way trade with Portuguese Timor, it has stepped-up (while moderating the tone of) radio broadcasts from neighbouring Indonesian Timor, and it is now making efforts to project a favourable and benevolent image to the people of Portuguese Timor. As you suggest, however, temptations and openings also exist for more clandestine operations and high-pressure tactics that would cross the grey line separating legitimate and illegitimate activities. The

¹ In a marginal note Woolcott instructed Dan to pass on the substance of this cablegram personally to Tjan.

¹ Document 137. In submitting a draft of this letter to Willesee, Feakes noted that normal practice was for Heads of relevant Divisions to reply to dispatches from Heads of Mission, but in view of the importance of the content of Woolcott's dispatch, and because he had also written to Willesee on the subject, the Minister might wish to reply personally.

² Document 127.

training of 'refugees' currently being undertaken in Indonesian Timor is clearly a case in point. It is probably fair to say, nevertheless, that the Australian Government would be prepared to live with this—indeed we have no alternative—as long as the Indonesian campaign remained in low key and unobtrusive. But it may be difficult to avoid being drawn into public comment at the point where Indonesian interference becomes so blatant as to stimulate Australian public opinion. I see no way out of this dilemma.

I recognise that all this constitutes an unwelcome complication in terms of our objective of maintaining a sound relationship with Indonesia. I recognise, too, that the trend of events seems inexorably to be leading to a period of difficulty in that relationship. But the 'realities' you speak of in the last sentence of your dispatch would also have to apply to the domestic situation here in Australia.

I take the point, of course, that, whatever happens, Australia will still have to go on living with Indonesia. I agree that, whatever government might be in power in Indonesia and, indeed, whatever government might be in power in Australia, the price of a hostile Indonesia for Australia would be high. Accordingly, even if Indonesia were openly to move against Portuguese Timor, we would have to do our best to contain the damage to the long-term Australian–Indonesian relationship. But I would also have to say that I would not be wholly confident of success, although I am not sure I would myself go quite as far as Mr Barnard did in his letter to me on this matter of 11 February,³ a copy of which has been sent to the Embassy in Jakarta.

Personally, I still have some hopes that time will act as a soothing agent in the Timor problem. At present, the Indonesians appear unable to accept the thought of an independent Portuguese Timor. But most of their fears seem exaggerated, and even wholly unfounded. We should continue our efforts to persuade the Indonesians that an independent Timor, if that is what it is to be, need not be detrimental to their interests, and that, in any event, the risks they perceive would best be contained by a policy of good neighbourliness towards Portuguese Timor. It is perhaps fortunate that the Indonesians have their own reasons for currently favouring a protracted period for Portuguese disengagement from the territory. This may also provide time for Indonesia to adjust to and come to accept the notion of independence for Portuguese Timor.

With the Timorese themselves, we will, as you suggest, continue to emphasise the importance we see Indonesia playing in their future. We must be most careful to avoid giving any impression to the Timorese of any promise of support against Indonesia in any showdown. Some of them continue to have unrealistic expectations of the extent to which we would, or could, help them in this situation.

Our public support for self-determination is premised upon the general philosophy of the ALP and the stance that this Government has consistently taken at the United Nations and elsewhere. It is also relevant that, by standing by the principle of self-determination, we have effectively been able to deflect pressure that the Government declare itself in favour of independence: a by-product of our support for self-determination is that it provides a safeguard that other options for the future of Timor, other than independence—and including that of integration with Indonesia—may be left open.

An Indonesian military move or blatant subversive campaign to forestall self-determination would confront us with enormous problems. But these problems would exist whether or not the Government had spoken in favour of self-determination beforehand. In other words, I am not sure that I should agree that we are 'impaling ourselves on a hook' by stressing self-determination.

³ Document 81.

But it would be wrong to think we are wedded to a particular manner of self-determination. If in the past we have spoken of an 'act', this is as much because we are concerned that the Portuguese might be inclined to a Mozambique-type solution in Portuguese Timor as because of Australian attachment to self-determination *per se*. Perhaps in future it may be better to speak of 'arrangements which, in due course, will allow the people of the territory to decide their own future'. This is a more elastic phrase that would cover the process that the Prime Minister would have had in mind in his discussions with President Soeharto in Townsville.

I should add, however, that the potential problem with the Portuguese remains. It is true that our latest reports from Mr Cooper are reassuring, suggesting that Lisbon still stands by the agreement reached with the Indonesians in March for a protracted timetable for decolonisation in Timor. There is always the possibility, however, that the Portuguese will seek to expedite their disengagement from Timor simply by handing over power to the pro-independence groups. This course would risk provoking a pre-emptive Indonesian military reaction. But it is a course which may still be favoured by some in the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement, including the local chapter of the AFM in Dili. Clearly, we must continue to try to forestall such a development by continuing to impress on the Portuguese the need for a deliberate and measured approach to decolonisation. Our decision to provide some Australia[n] aid to Portuguese Timor was aimed partly at trying to influence the Portuguese to fulfill their responsibilities in the territory.

On the question of aid, I am keenly aware of the need to take account of Indonesia's sensitivities. Our aid program to Portuguese Timor will be modest, amounting to no more than \$1 million for the coming financial year and perhaps building up to \$2-\$3 million later. As you know, the Prime Minister and I have re-affirmed the early decision not to re-establish the Australian Consulate in Dili at least for the time being.

In general, I agree that we have to guard against over-involvement in Portuguese Timor. I recognise in this regard that there are domestic forces which we have to take into account and which will possibly further nudge us more deeply into the problems of the territory than our interests require. In considering the Government's position, the importance of the Australian long-term interest in maintaining a close, cooperative relationship with Indonesia is a foremost factor to be borne in mind. But any Indonesian action which appears to subvert a process of self-determination will make it difficult to further pursue this aim in the short run.⁴

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, i]

⁴ The last sentence was added to the departmental draft by Willesee. [See copy on file NAA: A1838, 3038/2/1, vi.]

153 REPORT BY TAYLOR AND CURTINJuly, 1975¹

SECRET

EXTRACT

Prospects and Conclusions

46. Our conclusions flow from impressions and observations formed very close to a very unusual and uncertain political situation. We are aware that there may be some differences between the views of the Administration in Dili and the Government in Lisbon, but we believe that an understanding of the approach of the Administration in Dili, as the authority putting the decolonisation program into effect, is important. The Administration is in close contact with the policies and mood of the Armed Forces Movement in Lisbon.

47. Our main conclusion is that there are at present no good grounds for belief that the Timor problem will be resolved smoothly. Indonesia is in no way resigned to acceptance of an independent East Timor, yet the Macao program and the general trend of Timorese political development is clearly moving in just that direction.

48. But there is a long way to go and there are many uncertainties. How will relations between FRETELIN and UDT be sorted out? How might APODETI, perhaps working from within the decolonisation machinery, become obstructive? How will Portuguese/Indonesian relations develop? What of political and budgetary developments in Lisbon? When and how will it dawn on the people that the Portuguese are going?

49. The Timorese can hardly be expected to come quickly and calmly to terms with what to them is an astounding turnabout in Portuguese policy. There are many other questions yet to be asked and answered. Nobody in the Administration believes that the Macao program is going to be a straightforward one. The decolonisation process, even if it takes only three to five years, and so long as it is not cut short by Indonesia, will almost certainly be a tortuous and difficult one. There will be many alarms and excursions along the way. The lines of the program are now being firmly set, but the point-of-no-return (towards independence) has not yet been reached.

50. The Portuguese government can say that it has adopted a very correct position on the process of decolonisation (not the same as for the African colonies), ensuring that there is no formal commitment in advance to 'independence' as the result of the people's decision on self-determination, and that APODETI has, on paper at least, the same opportunities as the other recognised parties. The Portuguese say that they want Indonesia also to adopt a correct line; a more constructive and less underhand approach. Nevertheless, the Portuguese believe that even such an approach would be most unlikely, on its own, to produce a majority in favour of joining Indonesia. (We should add that even if the degree of understanding between

¹ The cited copy of the report is undated. Curtin and Taylor visited Portuguese Timor from 25 June to 9 July. They interviewed key figures in the Administration, representatives of the three parties, members of the military and village chiefs. They visited Aileu, Maubisse, Ossu, Ermera and Manatuto as well as Dili. In paragraph 2 of the introduction they reported their 'firm impression that the way ahead is going to be very difficult . . . There is, in particular, a reluctance to come to terms with the views of the Indonesian Government. It is not appreciated how determined Indonesia is to achieve "integration"'. They noted that other visitors at the same time included the NZ and Italian Ambassadors from Jakarta, the newly appointed British Consul (resident in Jakarta) and a project officer from UNESCO.

the Portuguese and Indonesian governments is a little stronger than appears in Dili, we were able to detect very few signs that the Portuguese were doing anything on the ground to inform the people that one possible legitimate outcome of a process of self-determination would be a decision to join Indonesia. The Portuguese, arguing that they cannot be expected to hand the territory over to the Indonesians 'on a plate', believe it to be their responsibility to give the Timorese every opportunity to choose to be independent.)

51. Short of the use of force (not necessarily an outright invasion) by Indonesia, there seem to be two ways in which 'integration' could be achieved. First, by the Portuguese providing considerable assistance: for instance, by making it absolutely clear that they were leaving Timor, by telling the people that 'integration' would be the best guarantee of the future political and economic security of the territory, and by allowing the Indonesians a fairly free organisational hand in the territory. At this stage this does not seem likely. The other way would be through a serious breakdown in the political process and a collapse of Timorese morale leading to a reluctant acceptance that there was no realistic alternative to joining Indonesia. The seeds of such a breakdown certainly exist, but at this stage there are no sound grounds for saying that one will occur. Much will depend on FRETILIN's attitude towards participating in the decolonisation process, and on whether and how APODETI (and possibly FRETILIN) seeks to disrupt it. Indonesia's actions, of course, will be very important; and Portuguese reactions also.

52. In the event of a breakdown in the decolonisation process, especially if this were in some way inspired by Indonesia, the Portuguese might well decide to hand responsibility for the territory over to the United Nations. This is a possibility which the Portuguese believe should act as a deterrent to Indonesian interference.

53. One element of uncertainty is whether Indonesia could find it possible to acquiesce in an independent East Timor governed by essentially moderate and conservative political forces (for example, UDT and even the less 'radical' arm of FRETILIN) which were prepared to offer reasonably firm assurances of regional good-will and cooperation. Could East Timor come under the protective wing of the countries of the region, and blend in with the region? The Portuguese are clearly hoping that the Indonesians will give serious thought to this.

54. While there is no doubt that Portuguese Timor is sorely in need of economic assistance, we have some doubts, in present circumstances, about the wisdom of more than a very small Australian aid program. Australian aid would very probably be exploited by the pro-independence parties in support of their platforms.

55. We recommend that visits by Jakarta and Canberra-based officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs should continue. There is no doubt that the best information about events in Portuguese Timor can only be gained on the spot. Such visits should be short and not more frequent than once every ten to twelve weeks.

56. It is our firm recommendation that Australia should remain as uninvolved as possible.

154 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 10 July 1975

O.JA0533 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Indonesian Policy on Portuguese Timor*Please pass to Woolcott¹*

In an extremely frank account Harry Tjan, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, has given us the following. As you will be aware, most of it is not new but it brings together points which he and others have been making in recent months.

2. The Indonesian Government has decided that Portuguese Timor will be incorporated into Indonesia. This was the final policy decision. The ultimate objective having been set, the only matters that remained were procedural, that is, when and how this objective would be achieved.

3. All events had to be seen in the context of Indonesia's overriding objective of incorporating Portuguese Timor. This was how the Indonesian Government interpreted every development in relation to Portuguese Timor. Indonesian initiatives concerning Portuguese Timor also had to be seen in this light.

4. The blueprint of Indonesia's plan for Portuguese Timor's incorporation had been worked out. At one end of the spectrum of alternative approaches was Portuguese Timor's voluntary decision to join Indonesia. At the other extreme was armed intervention in Portuguese Timor by Indonesia—the use of force without provocation.

5. If these options were marked on a scale, no. 1 would be Portuguese Timor's voluntary decision to join Indonesia. No. 6 would be Indonesian intervention without pretext. It was Indonesian policy to start through gentle diplomacy with the alternatives that were more internationally acceptable. Indonesia would actively seek to stay as close as possible to position no. 1. At the same time external circumstances and events over which it had little or no control would influence the position at the other end of the scale.

6. The approved plan was to work simultaneously at both ends of the scale. Indonesia realised that the first alternative—the most desirable one—was not feasible. The very last alternative could also now be ruled out *inter alia* because of Fretilin's provocative stance, its anti-democratic attitudes and its physical attacks on Apodeti supporters. These matters alone could provide a justification for Indonesian intervention.

7. Indonesian efforts at keeping as close as possible to the first position would include for example, seeking to influence the inhabitants of Portuguese Timor and discrediting the groups in Portuguese Timor opposing incorporation with Indonesia. There was a major pro-Apodeti campaign by Indonesia. The basic objective was to portray Apodeti as the only democratic party in Portuguese Timor and the other parties as obstructionist, repressive and anti-democratic. Apodeti alone of the parties had called for a referendum. This was the fair, democratic way. The referendum had been refused. It was fortunate for Apodeti and Indonesia that there would be no referendum. UDT would have won. Apodeti would have done poorly. But Indonesia would continue to claim that Apodeti would have won. Apodeti had freely participated at the Macao meeting on constitutional law. Apodeti had been helpful and constructive. On the other hand, Fretilin had boycotted the meeting. It had been undemocratic and obstructionist.

¹ Woolcott was in Canberra for a meeting, from 7 to 9 July, of Heads of Mission in South-East Asian countries.

8. Should the democratic Apodeti be persecuted by Fretilin/UDT/Portuguese administration and call to its 'brothers across the border' to come to its aid, Indonesia would have no alternative but to respond.

9. At the other end of the scale of alternative approaches the 'external' factors would have a very significant effect. These factors include the following:

- (a) If Soviet/Chinese/any other influences in Portuguese Timor posed a threat to Indonesian security, it would be incumbent upon the Indonesian Government to intervene in Portuguese Timor.
- (b) Portugal was left-leaning and influenced by the Soviet Union. Indonesia had a legitimate fear that the Soviet Union would take advantage of Portugal's continuing presence in Portuguese Timor. For this among other reasons there was a 'move in the direction of a policy shift' by Indonesia concerning the desirability of Portugal's presence in Portuguese Timor.
- (c) The Chinese business community in Portuguese Timor was a potential ally of Peking which could use them for its own ends, including infiltration into Indonesia.

10. In this exercise Indonesia had to take into account Indonesia's international standing. The latter was important to Indonesia. But a nation's security was of overriding importance and if it were decided that developments in Portuguese Timor posed a threat to Indonesia, there would be no alternative but to take the necessary measures.

11. Indonesia had undertaken a study of likely international reaction to Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor. (This was on the basis of a situation in which Indonesia had a 'legitimate reason' to intervene.) It had been concluded that the other ASEAN countries would not protest. There would be no significant reaction from the United States or the Soviet Union. Relations with Portugal were not important to Indonesia. Any reference of the matter to the United Nations would be handled by Indonesia satisfactorily. The Black African countries would react but this would not be serious for Indonesia. Only two countries would protest vigorously—China and Australia. In China's case, the protest would be routine and stereotyped ('an obligatory reaction'). As for Australia, certain groups and the press would create a commotion. The Australian Government would feel compelled to protest. This would be regretted by Indonesia. But it would all die down in due course.

12. The timing of Portuguese Timor's incorporation into Indonesia would be decided by a combination of factors. Present indications were that it would not happen until sometime in 1976.

155 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 15 July 1975

O.CH242446 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

Indonesian Policy on Portuguese Timor*Ref O.JA0533¹*

As you have noted, there was little new in what Tjan had to say. It is worrying nevertheless. How far Tjan is speaking for the Indonesian Government or for all sections of it is, as ever, unclear. Our previous experience with him suggests that he sometimes takes up only one of several alternative lines of policy under discussion in Jakarta and that he occasionally paints rather too vivid a picture of Indonesian intentions. While we have to take seriously what he says, we should be interested to know how his presentation compares with that of other Indonesians concerned with policy towards Portuguese Timor, and Woolcott, with whom we have discussed your telegram and this reply, will be pursuing this point on his return.

2. The Embassy should reiterate to Tjan and other relevant Indonesians that, if Indonesia acts as Tjan forecasts, she will precipitate serious problems in relations with Australia. The Australian Government could not condone the use of force in any form. The reaction here to an immoderate Indonesian policy would not be temporary or perfunctory as Tjan seems to suggest; it could be sharp and of an intensity that would risk setting relations back for a considerable time. It could substantially undo the work of both countries over the past four or five years aimed at developing a close and cooperative relationship between them.

3. The Portuguese have said that they would react to disruptive action by Indonesia by immediately referring the whole matter to the United Nations. Tjan seems to be assuming, rather too readily in our view, that Indonesia could handle problems arising in the United Nations. The United Nations aspects, however, would create an even greater problem for Australia with implications for Australian–Indonesian relations.

4. Apart from all this, the Indonesians, in our view, continue to take an unnecessarily gloomy view of an independent Timor. We should have hoped that the Indonesians would have been exploring very seriously the possibility of developing a close cooperative relationship with an independent Timor. As you know, some thought has been given here to the possibility that such a relationship might be formalized in such a way that some of the dangers which Indonesia fears in an independent Timor would be much reduced and perhaps eliminated. The firm impressions gained by Curtin and Taylor during their recent visit to Timor, was that UDT is now emerging as the strongest party and that the prospects of Timor's becoming independent under a 'radical' Fretilin leadership is thus diminishing. We also feel that the Portuguese are encouraging this [t]rend, with a view to assuaging Indonesian fears. The Portuguese, moreover, have given way to Apodeti and the Indonesians on several points in the Macao program, and Apodeti is well placed to be very much a part of the decolonization machinery.

5. In this situation, the risks that the Indonesians continue to perceive from an independent Timor would seem best contained by a policy of cooperation and good-neighbourliness. The kind of policy that Tjan outlines, on the other hand, is likely to be counter-productive, driving the Timorese into a position of rigid opposition to Indonesia, such as was evident earlier this year.

¹ Document 154.

6. In speaking to Tjan and other Indonesians, you may find it useful to draw on the agreed 'talking points' which were sent to Jakarta under cover of our memorandum 219 of 3 March.² We need to make it plain to the Indonesians that the Australian Government is quite serious about this matter. It would be most undesirable for them to consider their policy choices without hav[ing] a clear understanding of Australian attitudes.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, x]

156 LETTER FROM FEAKES TO WOOLCOTT

Canberra, 16 July 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

In the event, it was not until Tuesday 15 July that we sent out a reply¹ to the telegram about Harry Tjan's account of Indonesian intentions towards Portuguese Timor.² The Secretary took the view that our outwards telegram should be approved by the Minister because of possible reactions from the Prime Minister, and it was not until Tuesday that we could get the Minister's approval.

After he approved the telegram, the Minister rang me up about Portuguese Timor and I have recorded in the attached minute what he said on that subject and also on defence assistance to South-East Asia. I should be glad if you would safeguard carefully the information, particularly in paragraph 2 of the minute, which is very delicate. I do not myself think that any government in Australia could afford to take the lead in the United Nations in moves against Indonesia over Portuguese Timor. In the paper we are preparing about international reactions to an Indonesian move against Portuguese Timor, we shall try to bring this latter point out.

Attachment

SECRET AUSTEO

PORTUGUESE TIMOR: DEFENCE ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH-EAST ASIA

The Minister telephoned me on 15 July to talk about Portuguese Timor against the background of the recent telegram from Jakarta conveying Harry Tjan's account of Indonesian intentions. He had before him the draft reply prepared by SEA Branch (which, incidentally, he described as 'excellent').

2. The Minister was interested in international reactions, including reactions in the United Nations and, in particular, American reactions, to an Indonesian move against Portuguese Timor of the sort that Tjan had described. I said that we had already made some informal soundings of our posts abroad on this question and that we could do an information paper for the Minister on the basis of which a further assessment could be made if the Minister wished—although we did not think that at this stage we should be talking to other Governments on the

² Document 100.

¹ Document 155.

² Document 154.

question, except perhaps to the United States (because, virtually alone among other countries, it shares some of the same problems with us in relation to Portuguese Timor). Within the Department, I said, there was a range of views on the question of international reactions to the Indonesian move against Portuguese Timor. I thought that most people working on the issue felt that the international reactions would not be very strong. The Minister made it clear that he doubted this latter view. But he was more concerned with the problems which would arise for Australia once the issue of Portuguese Timor got into the United Nations. It was clear that he felt that it would be impossible and, indeed, undesirable, for us to avoid taking anti-Indonesian attitudes in the United Nations and that the same went for the United States. He wondered whether we might not ask Mr Woolcott to mention to the Indonesians, in the context of a discussion about Portuguese Timor, that we had voted to exclude the South Africans from the United Nations. I did not pursue this point with the Minister: my impression is that he is not suggesting that we would find ourselves in a position of voting to exclude the Indonesians from the United Nations, but rather that we needed to bring home to the Indonesians that we took the obligations of membership of the United Nations very seriously.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xi]

157 LETTER FROM DAN TO JOSEPH

Jakarta, 21 July 1975

SECRET

[*matter omitted*]

You wish to be sure that what Tjan says to us is Indonesian Government policy. So do we. You know that one of the toughest tasks of an Australian diplomat is to discover the sources and content of Indonesian Government policy (on any subject). As an Embassy I do not think our record is too bad on that score. As for Tjan, with his connections with Ali Murtopo, Yoga Sugama, Benny Moerdani and Mashuri, I have no doubt that he speaks with great authority on Portuguese Timor. You know that Ali and Yoga are the central figures in the operation. Tjan is a close adviser and confidant of Ali's. (One of Ali's main offices in Jakarta is just down the corridor from Tjan's office in the Centre—which is Ali's, and to a certain degree the President's, 'think tank'.) Tjan and Lim Bian Kie, Ali's private secretary, are as close as brothers. Yoga is the effective Chairman of the Special Committee on Portuguese Timor and Ali is his deputy in Bakin (on paper at least). Ali heads the OPSUS operation which has the special tasks [and] responsibilities for Portuguese Timor. Lim Bian Kie is a main OPSUS operational man and Tjan is a leading adviser.¹

¹ In a minute to Dan on 16 July, Taylor had listed points demonstrating Tjan's value as a source on Indonesian policy. The points included the fact that he had been designated by Soeharto as the channel for non-official relations with Australia; that he had been sent to Australia to discuss the Portuguese Timor issue before the Whitlam–Soeharto talks in September; 'his crucial role in OPSUS policy', flowing from his relationship to Murtopo and the role of CSIS as an OPSUS 'think tank'; and that other sources with the same information on Timor, such as Moerdani and Murtopo, were 'either too senior or too official to speak to us as frankly as Tjan has done'. [On file NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, x.]

What further evidence can one provide of Tjan's *bona fides*? Tjan does not always speak from memory. He frequently reads to us from the actual records of secret meetings on Portuguese Timor. He has in his possession classified documents on the subject. He sometimes receives phone calls from leading personalities (Ali, Yoga) while we are in his office. Just before I arrived in his office on that day last February² he had received a phone call from Yoga about the newspaper reports of the secret military plan for Portuguese Timor.

You may ask why he tells us so much. In the first place there is the remarkable relationship that the Embassy has built up over the years. This has taken time, and much effort by many of our people. Tjan respects us, and is confident in us. He speaks to us as he speaks to no one else. This does not mean that we accept everything he says as gospel or necessarily as Indonesian Government policy. Much has to depend on our own interpretation and judgement. We do our best to cross-check the particular subject elsewhere—in Bakin, the Foreign Ministry and, depending on the subject, in Hankam. With regard to Portuguese Timor we have enough evidence from other³ sources to know that what Tjan is telling us is accurate. (The⁴ sources are fascinating. I have suggested that someone in Australia might compile a report exclusively from these sources.)

There is a very clear implication in your message⁵ that Tjan is not fully seized of the implications for Australia/Indonesia relations of armed intervention by Indonesia in Portuguese Timor. The implication follows that we have been remiss in telling Tjan of the Australian Government's serious concerns. You will have noticed it reported in our telegram⁶ that of all the countries in the world only two had been singled out as likely to express the greatest concern in the event of Indonesian military action. One of these was Australia. Had Tjan not mentioned Australia in this context, or if he had dismissed Australia as unlikely to protest too loudly you would have been justified in spelling out, as you did, all the points you wanted conveyed to Tjan. But he has already acknowledged that Australia would be their greatest problem. What more can we do? We tell him—and others—at every opportunity of our worries and our fears. We shall continue to preach to the converted but in this respect we cannot get a better result than the one already achieved.

Incidentally, Portuguese Timor is becoming almost a taboo subject for key Embassies here—Singapore and the other ASEAN countries, the United States and Netherlands. Few Embassies now even bother to raise the subject with us. The British Embassy's views are also interesting which you shall soon see. They know what is inevitable, and they attach a higher importance to their long term interests in Indonesia. They want to stand at a comfortable distance. At the same time Australia seems to be getting more and more active and increasingly involved as a party principal. Are we trapping ourselves in a corner?

[NAA: A1838, 3006/4/3, v]

² Presumably a reference to Document 95.

³ Less than half a line has been expunged here.

⁴ Less than half a line has been expunged here.

⁵ Document 155

⁶ Document 154.

158 LETTER FROM JOSEPH TO DAN

Canberra, 23 July 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Thanks for your letter of 21 July on Portuguese Timor.¹

I had hoped that Dick [Woolcott] would have talked to you about our outwards telegram.² The telegram was very much for the Minister's own benefit. Earlier in the week, at the South East Asian Heads of Mission meeting, he kept saying that we had to convince the Indonesians that we were 'serious'. Your telegram arrived within 24 hours of his trying to hammer home that message. We really could not do less than ask you to go back to Tjan in the manner suggested.

But Dick had earlier discussed Timor with the Prime Minister during which the Prime Minister had rehearsed *his* position on the territory. My understanding was that Dick would have tempered the instructions in the outwards telegram accordingly. This was certainly the reason for the inclusion of the last sentence in the first paragraph of the outwards telegram.

I do not disagree with anything you have said about Harry. But we do sometimes get the impression here that Harry is being deliberately outrageous.

Finally, may I assure you that our telegram was not meant to reflect a criticism of the Embassy's performance. As you say the Embassy does an excellent job. The Department cannot fault its performance.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

159 MINUTE FROM FEAKES TO ROWLAND AND PARKINSON

Canberra, 31 July 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

On several occasions lately, the Minister for Defence has expressed his displeasure about the terms of our telegram CH242446 to Jakarta.¹ In discussion of the telegram, I suggest that it is important to bear the following considerations in mind:—

- (a) If we had failed to react to Mr Tjan's account of Indonesian intention towards Portuguese Timor as set out in Jakarta telegram JA0533,² the Indonesians may have formed the impression that we would acquiesce in their intentions. Moreover, the historical record would have looked bad.
- (b) In some instances in the past, we have had the impression that in conversations with us, Mr Tjan has, in fact, been trailing his coat, that is to say, he has put forward rather provocative proposals precisely to see how we should react to them.

¹ Document 157.

² Document 155.

¹ Document 155.

² Document 154.

- (c) The line of the reply to Tjan follows fairly closely the line of the Prime Minister's letter to President Soeharto of February 1975,³ although we were able in the telegram to be somewhat more direct in expression than the Prime Minister would have wished to be in writing to President Soeharto.
- (d) The telegram was carefully considered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and approved by him.

2. We have [had] no expression of Defence views on Portuguese Timor for some time and none since the present Minister for Defence assumed office. The views conveyed to Senator Willesee by Mr Barnard when he was Minister for Defence dwelt on the damage to Indonesian–Australian relations and the increase in regional tensions and instability which would result from an Indonesian move against Portuguese Timor.⁴ It would seem that these views are not shared by Mr Barnard's successor. But we do need to have this confirmed formally in some tactful way.

3. One approach which you may care to consider is that we should send to the Department of Defence—and, for that matter, the Joint Intelligence Organisation—a copy of Mr Woolcott's recent despatch on Portuguese Timor,⁵ together with Senator Willesee's reply.⁶ We could ask for Defence views on the issues discussed in the despatch and in the reply. It is for consideration whether we should do this now while Mr Morrison and Sir Arthur Tange are away,⁷ or whether we should wait until they come back. On the whole, I should favour sending the despatch and the Minister's reply over to the Department of Defence now, while indicating that we should like their comments in reply to reflect their Minister's views. I have drafted the attached letter as from our Acting Secretary to the Acting Secretary of the Department of Defence.⁸

[NAA: A1838, 3006/4/3, vi]

160 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TJAN AND TAYLOR

Jakarta, 1 August 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor: China: Sabah

Portuguese Timor

5. I commented that, as Tjan would be aware, the Australian Government might be forced to react quite sharply if Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor became too blatant. I recalled what the Prime Minister had told the President, that we hoped the means for integration

³ Document 98.

⁴ Document 81.

⁵ Document 137.

⁶ Document 152.

⁷ Morrison and Tange visited the United States and Britain between 29 July and 13 August 1975.

⁸ A letter was sent to the Acting Secretary of Defence, Bruce White, on 6 August, enclosing copies of Documents 137 and 152. It noted that Willesee attached 'considerable importance to the need for continued efforts to persuade Indonesia that an independent Timor need not be detrimental to its interests' and to persuading them that their present policies 'could lead to serious problems' in Australian–Indonesian relations.

would be such as not to upset the Australian people. If they did, there could be unfortunate results for Indonesian/Australian relations, which, of course, were of great importance to us.

6. Tjan wondered whether the reaction in Australia would be as great as we seemed to consider. Indonesia would not be unduly upset by strong protest from Australia. There were plenty examples of countries disagreeing on certain issues, and maintaining good relations on other issues. Indonesia and Australia could differ on Timor but continue their good relations in other fields. I said that I did not think that it would be so simple, as there was in some quarters in Australia a latent anti-Indonesian feeling which, as Tjan would know, was strong during the period of confrontation. It would be extremely difficult for an Australian Government to isolate differences with Indonesia over an issue like Timor from other contacts between the two countries.

7. Tjan asked what could Australia do besides protest? I said that in the hypothetical situation we were talking about, that is if there was a strong reaction in Australia to Indonesia intervention in Timor, the Government could be under pressure to go further than merely protest, and, for instance, cut aid. Tjan would know of the various political pressures within Australia on relations with Indonesia and on Timor. Mr Whitlam had referred to them in his talks in Townsville with President Soeharto. There had, for example, been evidence in February and March of the strong feelings that could be aroused in certain quarters in Australia on the Timor issue. He would know of the importance the Australian Government gave to the need to ascertain the wishes of the Timorese.

8. Tjan repeated that he doubted that the reaction would in Australia be as strong as I was suggesting. If Australia had to cut off aid, the President would certainly regret it, but Tjan considered the President would see it as a passing problem which would not last too long. Tjan then said that in any case the Liberal Party would win the next election in Australia which he thought would be held next year. Ideologically the Liberals were closer to the Indonesian Government than was the present Government and would do nothing about Timor. Tjan said, however, that he did not think the situation would arise, and repeated what he had said about Indonesian actions being carried out in a way which would not lead to too much criticism. I emphasised that the situation we were discussing was a hypothetical one. Nevertheless, it was important for us that Timor did not become an issue which could threaten the present good state of Australian/Indonesian relations.¹

[NAA: A1838, 3006/4/3, vii]

161 MEMORANDUM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 6 August 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

I am attaching a copy of a recent Memorandum No. 2157,¹ received from our Mission in New York which *inter alia* discusses the prospects of a debate on Portuguese Timor in the Fourth Committee this year.

¹ Joseph noted in the margin to Feakes: 'You will be interested to read, I think, that Mr Taylor has made the points we wished. Let's hope they have been taken by Tjan despite the bravado of his responses'.

¹ 22 July.

2. The Department cannot quarrel with the logic of New York's argument—namely that the spotlight may be turned on Timor this year if only because the other Portuguese territories may all have been 'liberated' and thus removed from Fourth Committee scrutiny.² It is indeed probable that the Portuguese, who set the ball rolling at the June session of the Committee of Twenty Four, will want a Timor debate. And it is probable that they will want a resolution. The whole exercise may, of course, be a theoretical, even arcane, one, not well understood outside New York. But any debate and subsequent resolution on Portuguese Timor this year could be an important step towards major United Nations involvement.

3. Our Mission canvasses the idea of a separate draft resolution or consensus statement on Timor. It is suggested that such a statement might build on the consensus adopted in Lisbon by the Committee of Twenty Four.³ New York believes it may be better for those countries most closely involved—Portugal, Indonesia and Australia—to seize the initiative rather than risk being confronted with a more unpalatable draft at a later stage.⁴ The problem we see with this approach is that it assumes an identity or similarity of purpose on the part of Portugal and Indonesia over Timor which probably does not exist. There is indeed every reason to believe that the Indonesians and Portuguese are on an eventual collision course over Timor.⁵

4. To the Portuguese a resolution in the Fourth Committee would probably be seen as a means of securing international endorsement for the decolonisation program laid down at Macau. They may also see it as an implicit rebuff of Indonesian pretensions to intervene in that decolonisation process. The Indonesians, on the other hand, may be expected to resist any explicit endorsement of the Macau program, which they must regard as having placed Timor too firmly on the road to independence. Portugal, as New York suggests, would probably want any resolution to draw attention to the serious underdevelopment of Timor and its need for international assistance. But as we know from earlier discussions with the Indonesians, the latter are concerned that external economic assistance will simply encourage the pro-independence forces in Timor.

5. In general, the Indonesians are likely to regard any United Nations development as unhelpful to their position and will no doubt want to resist it. However, our Mission in New York may well be correct in their assessment that the Indonesians would be wise to bow to the inevitable and try to prepare their own draft, to be sponsored by a group of ASEAN countries. In this way they may be able to pre-empt the emergence of a less palatable text at an inconvenient and perhaps late stage in the Timor debate.

6. We should like the Embassy to have a brief exploratory talk with the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on these matters. What do they expect to happen at UNGA 30? Is Indonesia resting on the hope that they will be able to defer any consideration of Timor by the General Assembly this year? If not, would they intend to launch their own draft resolution? How far beyond the June 1975 Committee of Twenty Four 'consensus' would Indonesia be prepared to see a text stray? What reference to the Portuguese decolonisation program could Indonesia accept? How would Indonesia regard a Portuguese-inspired appeal for United Nations and bilateral aid; or for a visiting United Nations Mission? How would the Indonesians expect the Portuguese to play things? We should be interested in your own comments on the degree of preparedness and realism displayed by the Indonesians, and in the role which they might be disposed to propose that we play? If asked about our role, you should say that we have not yet

² Woolcott noted in the margin: 'What about Macau?'

³ See Document 145 and note 2 thereto.

⁴ Woolcott noted in the margin here: 'I do *not* think we should regard ourselves as this "closely involved"'.

⁵ This last sentence is ticked, probably by Woolcott.

really had time to think the matter over, but that, like Indonesia, we would be hoping that any debate would be short and uncontentious.

7. In fact, as you would expect, we see some traps in too close an Australian identification with Indonesian policy at the United Nations over Timor. We are willing to offer discreet support to the Indonesians as our delegation did in Lisbon during the Committee of Twenty Four deliberations. In particular, we believe we are on solid grounds in defending the principle of self-determination as including the option of integration with Indonesia. But we should find it very difficult to support in the United Nations an Indonesian policy which was patently at odds with self-determination or even with the decolonisation program that the Portuguese have now introduced.

8. We imagine that Australia would wish to assist in the search for compromise texts and indeed we should very much hope that any resolution developed on Timor would be one which would find acceptance with both Portugal and Indonesia. But in practice the Indonesian and Portuguese positions might be very difficult to bridge, and Indonesia might find itself under strong pressure in the Fourth Committee to drop its reservations to a predominantly Portuguese-influenced text. If in this process Australia had adopted too forward a position, we could find ourselves held partly responsible by the Indonesians for what they might regard as a failure. We thus feel we should not get into the position of giving too much advice and we may not be very forthcoming in response to Indonesian (or Portuguese) invitations to co-sponsor texts.

9. In the light of the foregoing, we wish to approach this question very cautiously. But we think there would be no objections to talking things over with the Indonesians at this stage, particularly in the light of the assessment of our Mission in New York that some debate on Portuguese Timor this year may prove inescapable.

10. Copies of this memorandum have been sent to United Nations, New York, and Lisbon.

LANCE JOSEPH

Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia Branch

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xi]

162 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON AND JAKARTA

Canberra, 6 August 1975

O.CH251452 SECRET ROUTINE

Portugal: Political Considerations

We understand the obscurities of the present constantly-shifting political situation and your problems in identifying developments and personnel changes upon which you can hazard even the most qualified and partial forecasts of future trends. This said, however, it would be very helpful to us to have your own and Jakarta's thoughts on the sort of political developments in Lisbon which might precipitate:

- (a) A Governmental decision to grant immediate independence to Portuguese Timor and disclaim any further responsibilities for its political future, regardless of the consequences;
- (b) A decision by the Indonesian Government that the Portuguese Government had lurched so far to the left that, whether or not it retained control of Portuguese Timor in the short term, the territory would be used as a base for the sort of interference in the affairs of neighbouring countries that so concerns the Indonesian Government.¹

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xi]

163 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA AND LISBON

Canberra, 11 August 1975, 9.38 a.m.

O.CH252701 UNCLASSIFIED IMMEDIATE/PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Air Traffic Operations in Bacau radioed the control tower in Darwin 0500 EST today (11 August) to the effect that there had been a coup in Portuguese Timor and that Bacau airport was being closed. No further details were communicated.

2. Is there any confirmation/details available in Lisbon?

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xi]

THE UDT SHOW OF FORCE: FIRST REPORTS

Details of the situation trickled in slowly. Australian telecommunication (OTC) could get no response from Dili. Wellington (Cablegram WL3621, received 8.50 a.m.) reported local media requests for comment on a report of a coup, apparently based on civil aviation sources in Darwin. Curtin received a telephone call from the Portuguese Ambassador at 1.25 p.m., conveying information from Macao that 'late last night UDT in a show of force in Portuguese Timor moved against the Dili police headquarters, taking the commandant prisoner and capturing some armaments'. They had also surrounded the military headquarters and taken

¹ Lisbon replied on 14 August, that is, after the UDT 'show of force', that since the decolonisation process had run into difficulties Timor had come into greater prominence, and the Santos scheme was likely to be bypassed, since co-operation between the parties was necessary to make the plan workable. Regardless of the nature of government in Lisbon, the speed of decolonisation was likely to quicken, but neither military faction was likely to participate in Indonesian plans. All saw decolonisation 'basically in terms of independence' and were 'very sensitive to any charge of neocolonialism' (Cablegram LB191). Jakarta had responded on 8 August that while the political complexion of government in Lisbon had no bearing on Indonesia's 'basic decision' for integration, it would affect consideration of how and when integration should occur. At that time 'the Indonesians seem to be in no hurry and there is no Presidential decision on the methods to be used'. Indonesia seemed content with elections for a Constituent Assembly in October 1976 and the Portuguese commitment to remain at least until October 1978. Concern would develop if Lisbon were to grant immediate independence or if communist influence in Timor were to increase.

control of the airport, harbour, telecommunications and radio, but there had been no bloodshed and 'reasonable freedom of movement around Dili' remained. UDT had said it wanted 'dialogue'; Fretilin was 'so far not involved'. Jakarta reported (Cablegram JA1107, received 6.25 p.m.) that Indonesian sources had no information, but that the head of KOPKAMTIB, Admiral Sudomo, was reported to have stated that if the situation warranted, 'Indonesia would take appropriate action'. Woolcott was visiting Bali, and not due to return until 13 August. Cooper, also, was absent from Lisbon; he returned, earlier than planned, on 14 August. Lisbon reported (Cablegram LB166, received 7.35 p.m.) a statement by the Portuguese President denying there had been a coup or that European troops had been involved in combat. The Governor was negotiating with UDT and Fretilin, the situation was under control and security of metropolitan Portuguese guaranteed. Hong Kong confirmed the gist of Matias's information (Cablegram HK8162, received 7.45 a.m., 12 August), adding that the police force, apart from the commandant, supported UDT. The Governor's position was uncertain and he seemed free to communicate only with Macao.

At 5.05 p.m. 11 August Canberra dispatched Cablegram CH253112 to Jakarta reporting the information received from Matias and suggesting UDT might be acting 'to ram home its current advantage over Fretilin and to remind the Portuguese that they (UDT) are the main party in Portuguese Timor. The action may have been precipitated by recent events in Lisbon and the rumoured impending arrival of Portuguese troop reinforcements'. It seemed consistent with the way UDT had been moving over the past two months, the move was presumably directed at Fretilin 'and the prospect of a Fretilin-style independence'. Fretilin's reaction would be very important.

164 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 12 August 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

The Portuguese Timor situation is still obscure. It appears that the Portuguese Administration in Dili is still functioning but that UDT is in control of most of Timor's communication links with the outside world.

[matter omitted]¹

4. The Portuguese Ambassador has also speculated that the events in Dili might have been precipitated by developments in Lisbon. He believes that the exclusion of moderate officers in the Armed Forces Movement, from the new Portuguese Government and the Revolutionary Council might have led to fears on the part of UDT that Governor Pires was about to be replaced with a radical officer who would be sympathetic to FRETILIN. The Ambassador adds that UDT fears could have been heightened by a message sent to Lisbon last week by the student wing of FRETILIN demanding the removal of Pires from office.

5. If the Ambassador is right, then it seems UDT stage[d] its move in order to pre-empt what it believed might be a Lisbon-supported FRETILIN bid for power. It is clear from other reports we have received that UDT was disturbed by events in Portugal. The exclusion of

¹ Omitted paragraphs repeat information from Matias described in the editorial note preceding this document.

Majors Antunes and Alvez from the new Government, and the earlier resignations of Drs Soares and Almeida Santos, meant that most of those previously associated with Portugal's moderate line on Timor had been removed from power in Lisbon.

6. The Indonesian reaction to the events in Dili is ambivalent. There seems to be genuine surprise in the Indonesian Foreign Ministry. Harry Tjan also appears to have been taken unawares. But other very delicate sources (which are being brought to your attention separately) suggest that UDT acted with at least some fore-knowledge of the State Intelligence Coordination Body (BAKIN).

UDT Appeals for South East Asian help

7. In this connexion, too, we should record that broadcasts from the UDT-controlled radio in Dili have appealed to 'all nations of the South East Asian region' to send help to UDT, including armed forces and weapons. According to the broadcasts, this help is needed to forestall any counter move by the Portuguese Majors Mota and Jonatas, who have been described in the broadcasts as aiming to 'deliver Timor to the Marxist FRETILIN'.

8. The broadcasts provide the pretext for Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor. All this stops well short of proof of Indonesian collusion with UDT. But if the Indonesians were intending to intervene, they could have hardly stage-managed the scene any better.

[matter omitted]²

Conclusions and Recommendations

15. (a) On the political front we can do no more at present than keep in touch with the evolving situation in Portuguese Timor.
- (b) We believe that approval should be sought from the Minister for Labor and Immigration to admit evacuees from Timor in response to a Portuguese request and provided that the Portuguese give the necessary assurances regarding the costs of looking after the evacuees in Australia and eventually repatriating them either back to Timor or to Portugal.³
- (c) In regard to Australian citizens in Timor, we should continue to discuss with the Departments of Defence and Transport planning for a possible evacuation operation

² Omitted paragraphs deal with the situation of Australian citizens, of which there were some dozen permanent residents and perhaps thirty tourists, and Portuguese evacuees. 'Contingency discussions' with the Departments of Defence and Transport had begun in case rapid evacuation of Australians should be necessary, and Matias had undertaken to obtain assurances from Lisbon and Dili that their safety would be given high priority. A radio message from a Panamanian-registered ship *Macdili* had requested permission to bring 200–300 Portuguese from Dili to Darwin. The Governor had sought Lisbon's agreement for evacuation of dependents of Portuguese expatriates, but Matias suggested Canberra delay responding to the *Macdili* since 'the prospects of a return to normality appeared bright'. The submission noted the probability that the media would learn of the Governor's wish, and of dangers, on the one hand, that Australia could seem 'more sympathetic to the plight of white evacuees from Timor than to brown refugees from Indo-China', and on the other, that accepting them even temporarily could establish a precedent for 'the much more substantial problem of providing refuge to the 9000-strong Chinese community in Timor'. There were nevertheless strong humanitarian reasons to permit the refugees to enter Australia en route to Lisbon or Macao. If the situation were serious enough to demand evacuation of Portuguese dependants, the evacuation of Australians should be brought forward.

³ A handwritten note in the margin by Oxley records advice from Matias to DFA that the *Macdili* had already left Dili and was due in Darwin on 14 August. The evacuees were expected to travel on to Lisbon after a few days. Joseph advised that further meetings with Defence and Transport would be held. A further submission on 13 August advised that the 249 Portuguese would be accommodated on board the *Patris* moored in Darwin harbour. Departmental officers would be sent to Darwin in advance of the arrival, and that it was hoped they might also fly to Dili, by commercial charter, to investigate the situation generally and the position of Australian citizens, fifteen of whom were in fact on the *Macdili*.

with the timing of any evacuation to be decided upon in the light of both developments on the ground in Timor and any decision taken by the Portuguese to evacuate their own citizens.

- (d) Finally we agree that it would be appropriate for the Government to issue a short press release underlining its concern about the situation in Portuguese Timor. The attached draft release *is recommended* for your approval.⁴

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, i]

165 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 13 August 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

Although the situation remains very fluid, the trend of events in Portuguese Timor is a little clearer. The administration, the military and UDT in Dili seem to have established something of a stand-off situation while negotiations proceed. The possibility of a reaction by FRETILIN or by the Timorese military to the recent events remains the main threat to calm.

UDT and the Portuguese

2. Lisbon in telegram LB177 has reported that UDT has asked the Portuguese to grant independence and to imprison FRETILIN leaders. The Portuguese in both Dili and Lisbon have said that is unacceptable. But it may be that UDT's position is not as extreme as these earlier reports suggest. The Portuguese Ambassador in Canberra says, for example, that he understands from the Governor in Timor that UDT's call for independence means 'something less than independence', and indeed is to be regarded more as a bid for a 'special place' in the negotiating process with the Portuguese, and especially more special than the place accorded to FRETILIN.

3. We agree with the assessment that UDT does not really want independence yet. Indeed a UDT 'press release' picked up in Darwin this morning lists UDT demands as follows:—

- (a) Immediate departure from Timor of 'communist' members of the administration and 'communist' members of FRETILIN.
- (b) Continuation in office of Governor Pires.
- (c) Meeting with moderate members of FRETILIN 'to work together to constitute a movement for independence'.

⁴ A marginal note by Oxley records Willesee's agreement with the recommendations on 12 August. The submission was subsequently endorsed by Whitlam. It was transmitted as Cablegram CH253802 to Jakarta and Lisbon. Lisbon was instructed (Cablegram CH253803) to emphasise concern for the safety and welfare of Australian citizens, and Jakarta to report any Indonesian public reaction to the broadcasts described in paragraph 7. A reply on 13 August (Cablegram JA1155) reported none so far.

- (d) Access to Dili to be controlled by UDT.
- (e) 'After movement for independence has been created, the Governor is to continue his plan of work in Timor without any more confrontation with the Timorese people so that Indonesia clearly understands our intentions.'

4. The press release is signed by Joao Carrascalao as 'UDT Operations Commander'. Previous messages have been in the name of Lopes da Cruz, the UDT President, and the appearance of Carrascalao, one of the more impressive politicians in Dili, may indicate that a calm and very capable hand has come upon the scene. The press release points the way towards a restoration of order, under the Portuguese, and also towards renewed contacts between FRETILIN and UDT. The demands that 'communists' (which we take to mean half a dozen FRETILIN activists and a similar number of prominent AFM personalities, including Majors Mota and Jonatas) be removed may be difficult, but the tone of the UDT messages is clearly much calmer now. The reference to the Governor is interesting: clearly UDT had feared that Lisbon might be thinking of replacing him.

Portuguese Special Emissary

5. The other major development is the report from Lisbon that a Major Antonio Joao Soares from President Gomes' office is to be sent to Dili as a special Presidential emissary. He is likely to leave Lisbon on 13 August, presumably arriving (if possible, via Darwin) on 14 or 15 August. Major Soares has told our Embassy in Lisbon that the greatest danger at the moment lies in the possibility of conflict between UDT and FRETILIN though he was hopeful that cooperation between moderates of both parties might be possible. Soares said that he would have an 'open mandate' from the President to 'report and recommend'; the Macao decolonisation program could be regarded as flexible. No decisions would be taken until his return.¹

6. The Portuguese Ambassador in Canberra believes that UDT will welcome Soares' visit. The Ambassador made the point that Soares came from the President's office and thus would not be regarded by UDT as being tied to what they regard as the 'communist' government of the Prime Minister. The Ambassador has several times emphasised to us the importance of the position of the President in decolonisation policy, including Timor.

7. The Ambassador offered some further comments on the apparent shakiness of the Portuguese military position in Dili at the time of the UDT action: the Timorese military have very recently suffered a pay cut (in line with Lisbon economy measures) and the Governor was awaiting the arrival of a contingent of replacement Portuguese military. He was thus rather doubtful about the loyalty of the Timorese military and the Portuguese military were short-staffed. Hence the order for evacuation of dependents and non-involvement of the military in Dili.

Indonesian reactions

8. Our reports on Indonesian reactions remain uneven, but the overall picture still seems to be one of uncertainty as to how to handle the situation. We do know that there has been renewed activity along the border, though not in any large-scale sense. The situation remains one of which Indonesia could well be tempted to consider taking advantage in some way. It may be worth noting that 17 August is the anniversary of the proclamation of Indonesian independence and some celebrations had been planned by APODETI.

9. Jakarta in telegram JA1139 has reported that General Yoga has decided to send a 'special team' to 'the area' to investigate, arriving 13 August. The President has agreed that the situation

¹ In the event, Soares was unable to reach Dili. See note 1 to Document 176.

would be reviewed when the team returns. We assume that the team will travel to Atambua near the border with Portuguese Timor from where the Indonesians have remained in close touch with events in Portuguese Timor especially in the border areas. Our impression is that the Indonesians have not received as much information on events in Dili as they would have wished.

10. High Indonesian officials have commented to our Embassy that the 'undemocratic and opportunistic['] UDT action has left APODETI as the only 'responsible and democratic' group in Portuguese Timor; but we do not believe that the Indonesians are under any illusions about the strength of APODETI throughout the country, though its strength in some areas may be increasing.

[*matter omitted*]²

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, i]

166 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 14 August 1975

O.JA1201 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I spent an hour with Head of BAKIN, General Yoga Sugama, today 14 August.

2. Yoga began by saying he wanted to speak frankly about Timor. He wanted to make it plain that the UDT action had come as 'a complete surprise' to him. BAKIN had received intelligence indications of possible action by FRETILIN and—he added somewhat ingeniously—by APODETI. He wanted to stress that what was happening in Timor at present had 'nothing to do with Indonesian forces'. Yoga referred to a recent editorial in the *Canberra Times* which had stated that Indonesia was directly involved in the reported coup as a result of the recent visit of the UDT leaders to Jakarta. He also said that the Front for an Independent East Timor had alleged that Indonesian forces were involved in the coup and that Ramos Horta had been quoted as saying the UDT action was a 'CIA/BAKIN plot'. None of these allegations were true, Yoga said, adding 'I hope you will believe me'.

3. The UDT could have only staged a coup with the acquiescence of the Army and Police. He considered Majors Mota and Jonatas were behind the coup. They wanted to get the Army out of Timor. The refugees on their way by ship to Darwin were mainly army dependants.

4. Yoga said that it was inconceivable that an unarmed group of politicians could take over from the Administration, the Police and the Army without the backing of groups within the Administration and the Army itself.

5. UDT had now broken the Macao Agreement. FRETILIN and APODETI must be expected to react to UDT's move and a chaotic situation would probably arise.

² Omitted paragraphs provide information on a range of matters, including assistance to refugees and Australian citizens, and a warning from Tjan that Indonesia would hold the Australian Government accountable if Australian arms, by whatever means, reached Timor.

6. Yoga said that it was his assessment that 'the situation was going to get worse' unless the Portuguese Government reacted promptly to stop 'this UDT provocation'. The Portuguese Government was unlikely to do so because of its own domestic problems. All it had done so far was to send Major Soares to Timor.

7. Yoga said that he believed UDT's next move would be to attempt to 'proclaim some sort of independence'.

UDT did not want to share power and while its main hostility was towards FRETILIN it was also hostile towards APODETI. Yoga said 'I hope we do not have to act but if we do act we must do so before it is too late and we shall do so'. In these circumstances 'Indonesia would want Australia's understanding'.

8. Yoga then put to me a series of his rhetorical questions. 'What would Indonesia do if it got worse? What if UDT proclaimed independence? What if this unilateral declaration of independence was recognised by the Soviet Union and some of its friends? How would Australia react then? How would we advise the Indonesian Government to behave?' Yoga said that the situation was 'far too close for comfort'. Timor was surrounded by Indonesia. If it were to flare up now, would we really 'think it was right for Indonesia to do nothing', especially after Indonesia's prolonged and continuing struggle for national unity and stability.

9. I outlined Australian policy as best I could, given the new situation and differences in emphasis in Government attitudes. I told Yoga that latent fears of Indonesia in Australia would be stirred up by Indonesian intervention and that, as the Prime Minister had told the President, Australia could not condone the use of force in Timor.

10. Yoga said that Indonesia did not want to use force and did not want to act. The majority of the people in Timor should decide its future. But events in Portugal itself and the latest developments in Dili seemed now to preclude this. If Indonesia had wanted Portuguese Timor it could have taken it years ago. The present situation had been forced on Indonesia by events in Portugal and in Timor. It was now highly unlikely that the Portuguese Government could stay long enough to allow the decolonisation process to develop properly.

11. I asked Yoga if, hypothetically, it came to a choice between an assessment by the President and his key advisers on the one hand that Indonesia's national interest required intervention on Indonesia's part in Timor and, on the other, their concern about Indonesia's international image, its support for the principle of self-determination and concern about the likely reactions in Australia, the United Nations and, possibly, in some other countries to Indonesian action, which would prevail? Yoga repeated that Indonesia did not want to interfere in Timor but if it came to that choice, the answer would unquestionably be that Indonesia would put its assessment of its national security first.

12. At this stage Yoga said 'I hope we do not have to act, but if we do have to and decide we must do so before it is too late, then we shall do so. We want the understanding of our friends, especially Australia, but would go ahead without it if we had to.'

13. Yoga added that if we saw a majority of the people accepted a UDT administration, then Indonesia would also accept it, even if UDT proclaimed independence. (Yoga was speaking rather tongue in cheek at this stage, since his other remarks made it clear that he did not envisage a situation in which APODETI or FRETILIN would accept a unilaterally declared UDT independence.)

14. I asked Yoga what the Indonesians really knew about the present situation. Yoga said that the Indonesian Consul was cut off and the airport was closed. The last communication they had received from the Consul was that the Administration was unable to give any assurance of

protection and that a number of APODETI supporters had sought refuge at the Consulate. However, Yoga said that BAKIN was getting intelligence information out now and had three men on the ground in the border area who were in touch with BAKIN.

15. I said that when Minister¹ had asked for an appointment with him on my return from Bali, he had been told that Yoga also wanted to see me. Was he talking to other representatives in these terms? Yoga told me he would brief the ASEAN and Japanese Ambassadors in broadly similar terms, but less frankly. In Australia's case, they wanted understanding and advice from a good friend. They did not expect reactions from the ASEAN countries or Japan, whatever course Indonesia adopted. Yoga said he had also talked to Janes, the Head of the New Zealand JIB, who happened to be visiting Jakarta and he intended also to brief the American Ambassador.

16. I said that, speaking frankly, this range of people suggested that Indonesia was, in fact, preparing the ground for some possible future action. Yoga smiled and said 'not for the time being' but added that 'if chaos develops we will move to pre-empt it and we will look to Australia for understanding'.

17. I then asked Yoga if he could tell me frankly under what conditions Indonesia would intervene in Timor. Yoga said that Indonesia will intervene if there was a breakdown in law and order and the victimisation of APODETI supporters. Indonesia would also intervene if it appeared that the Soviet Union was about to recognise an independent UDT regime. Indonesia would also intervene if it came to the conclusion that the OPM and/or the RMS movements were going to involve themselves in the situation in Timor.

18. Yoga added there is 'too much at stake for us'. We cannot permit 'an Angola situation on our doorstep'. A breakdown in Timor, killings and the efflux of refugees could put Indonesia in the sort of situation that India had found itself in in respect of refugees from Bangladesh. If the Soviet Union involved itself in the issue Indonesia would also be in a position not unlike that which Kennedy had found himself in at the time of the Cuba crisis. I questioned both these analogies, especially the latter. Yoga said he was only using them as illustrations. What he meant by the reference to Cuba was that the Soviet subversive and political activities in Timor could be almost as dangerous to Indonesia in the political field as Soviet missiles in Cuba had been seen to be to the United States in the military field.

19. I suggested to Yoga that he was exaggerating the likelihood of Soviet involvement. I also suggested that the Soviet Union would give much more weight to the importance of its relations with Indonesia than to the possible advantages to it of interfering in Portuguese Timor. Yoga contested this. He said that the Soviet Union would attach very considerable importance to establishing a strategic foothold in Portuguese Timor. UDT, while originally essentially Catholic, conservative and pro-Portuguese, had a pro-Soviet left wing element in it which was strongly opposed to FRETILIN which it regarded as under Maoist influence. Yoga added that if Indonesia were to intervene in Timor it would need to do so before the Soviet Union recognised its 'independence', otherwise Indonesia could be branded as an aggressor by the Soviet bloc.

20. (You might consider it worthwhile seeking the comments of our Ambassador in Moscow on this assessment of Yoga's.)

21. I asked Yoga whether he was briefing me with the authority of the President. He said that he had discussed the Timor question fully with the President on Tuesday and he and General Panggabean would be seeing the President again later today. He would keep in touch with me. He was sure that because of the relations of confidence between the President and the Prime Minister the President would both want to know Mr Whitlam's views on the situation and to have 'the benefit of his advice'. He would also want to keep him informed of Indonesia's

¹ That is, Dan.

attitude. That was one of the reasons he was seeing me now. I said that it seemed we could be moving into troubled and uncharted waters and we would certainly want to be kept informed, even if our assessments and approaches to the problem differed.

Comment

22. I have reported Yoga's views at length and where I can recall them verbatim because of the importance of the issue and the fact that Yoga is in effective charge of Indonesian policy on Timor.

23. I think we must make the assumption that if the situation in Timor continues to deteriorate—and BAKIN's present assessment is that it will—then Indonesia will intervene.

24. The President will, of course, make any final decision on Indonesian intervention and he will, as I have said, be reluctant to take it, although it is clear to me that BAKIN and probably HANKAM now favour this course.

25. We could therefore face a testing time in our relations with Indonesia and the way we respond to Indonesian intervention in Timor, if it occurs, will prove an important test of the maturity of our foreign policy.

26. This situation has come to a head due to unanticipated events in Lisbon and in Timor itself. I think we need to accept that our efforts to persuade Indonesia that an independent Timor need not be detrimental to their interests have been overtaken by these events. There would also seem little chance now of a protracted period of Portuguese disengagement from the territory which will permit orderly arrangements for the people of Timor to decide their own future.

27. Indonesia will, of course, seek to minimise opposition, especially in Australia and the United Nations, to intervention on its part. But it will not be deterred by such opposition. If Indonesia does intervene I think we should do our best to contain the damage to the Australian/Indonesia relationship and act to limit a recrudescence of latent hostility to Indonesia in Australia. As we agreed at the Heads of Mission meeting in Canberra last month, even if Indonesia were openly to move against Portuguese Timor we would need to do our best to minimise the damage to the long-term Australian/Indonesian relationship. This should continue to be the foremost consideration in our policy making.

28. We should also seek to emphasise the point publicly that we are not a party principal and that it is not in Australia's interests to become deeply involved in this matter. While it is not for us to be apologists for Indonesia it is certainly not in our interests to be in the vanguard of Indonesia's critics. There are also no inherent reasons why integration with Indonesia might not prove more workable for the Timorese inhabitants than independence or continuing factional friction.

29. I am fully aware of our consistent and public support for self-determination which is both enshrined in the Government's platform and in our general stance at the United Nations. But Portuguese Timor is now a complex and unclear situation and in the final analysis we need to make a pragmatic, practical, hard-headed assessment of our real long-term interests. There is no doubt in my mind that our relations with Indonesia in the long-term are more important to us than the future of Portuguese Timor, especially when the situation in the latter is as confused as it is, and the Portuguese seem to be losing control of the situation. I know I am suggesting that our principles should be tempered by the proximity of Indonesia and its importance to us and by the relative unimportance of Portuguese Timor but, in my view, this is where our national interest lies.²

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xi]

² Whitlam noted in the margin, on 16 August: '§§28, 29 Woolcott is right'. [On file NAA: A1838, 3038/13/2/1, i.]

167 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 15 August 1975

OJA1233 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I had a very frank and interesting discussion lasting over an hour with Malik this morning, 15 August.

2. Malik told me that he had spent several hours yesterday afternoon discussing Timor with the Minister for Defence, General Panggabean, and the Head of BAKIN, General Yoga Sugama (Yoga's views were fully reported in our OJA1201).¹ Malik said that following these discussions he, General Panggabean, General Yoga and General Ali Murtopo (and possibly others whom he did not mention) discussed the Timor situation with President Soeharto this morning. Malik said that HANKAM and BAKIN (Yoga, but not Ali) had argued for Indonesian intervention in Timor. He, Malik, had argued strongly against it. Malik said that the President had agreed with him that Indonesia should not repeat not intervene, at least for the time being. This confirms what we have known for some time, namely that Ali Murtopo is a 'dove' on Timor. It would have been Ali rather than Malik who would have been more likely to have influenced the President in coming to this decision.

3. Malik said that he had argued while the UDT action was a 'provocation' it would be wrong for Indonesia to 'stop one provocation by another provocation of its own'.

4. Malik said that he had persuaded the President that Indonesia's first step must be to persuade the Portuguese Government in Lisbon to assert its control in Timor. The UDT did not have sufficient support to stand against Portugal if the Governor and the local Administration backed up a Government decision in Lisbon to reassert its authority.

5. Malik said that they would be putting these views strongly to Major Soares in Jakarta today where he is en route to Dili. I asked Malik how he would get to Dili in present circumstances. Malik said that they would take him as far as the border and if necessary provide transport for him to make his way to Dili.

6. I said there seemed to be some evidence that the Administration and the Army has stood aside and virtually allowed UDT to take control in Dili. Could they now be persuaded to dislodge UDT and assert their strength? Malik said that UDT really only controlled Dili and, in any case, Indonesia had to succeed in persuading Portugal to do so. He had reports that the left-wing group of FRETILIN was already preparing in the hills near Dili for counteraction and APODETI was also preparing in the border area for counteraction. These developments had to be arrested. If the Portuguese Government was unable to reassert its control Indonesia should offer to assist the Administration to do so. Malik also said at this point that it would be in Australia's interest to see Portuguese control reasserted and said that, if asked, we should consider helping also. I said that I had no very recent policy guidance from Canberra but I did not believe we would wish to become involved to this extent. Malik also said that it was most important that Timor be isolated from external influences and that there should be naval patrols—possibly joint naval patrols with Australia—to prevent arms being smuggled into Portuguese Timor by sea. (He did not respond to my question as to who might seek to smuggle arms into Timor.)

¹ Document 166.

7. Malik asked me what Australia's attitude to the situation was, as Yoga had done yesterday, and I would suspect that there is a tendency for the disputing parties to suggest to the President, either that friendly regional countries would or would not object to Indonesian intervention depending on their own attitudes. So I told Malik that, as far as I knew, our policy had not been redefined in the new circumstances which had arisen. However, I was sure that while we would not want to be involved ourselves we would not want to see wide-spread disorder develop in Timor. Nor would we want to see the people of Timor denied the opportunity of working out arrangements to determine their own future, if such arrangements could still be worked out. I also said that I did not believe the Australian Government could condone the use of force in the present changed circumstances. Malik said he was pleased to hear this because the HANKAM people (I have not seen General Panggabean since my return from Bali) were strongly urging the President to sanction intervention. Malik also said that it had been planned that APODETI should declare its own independence and wish to merge with Indonesia on August 17 and that army intervention would be used if necessary from Indonesian Timor to back this up. Malik said that he had argued strongly against this course of action and the President had instructed that this plan not repeat not be followed. Malik said he had been in touch with APODETI leaders and they had agreed not to take this action.

8. Malik said that he had argued to the President that if Indonesia were to use force at this stage it would create hostility towards Indonesia within Timor itself and it would inevitably do some damage to Indonesia's standing overseas. The people of Timor were not ready yet for independence or for integration with Indonesia.

9. I said that I had formed the impression in recent months that it was decided Indonesian policy to achieve the incorporation of Indonesian Timor within Indonesia, despite public support for the principle of self-determination. Since we were speaking frankly, was this so? Malik said 'yes', but added that integration should and could in his view be achieved on the basis of the Macao Agreement (that is through elections in 1976).

10. I said to Malik that BAKIN believed there was a danger that the UDT would declare independence unilaterally and the Soviet Union would recognise it. I added that I had told Yoga that I found this improbable. Malik said he did too adding that this aspect of the situation had been discussed between him and Yoga with the President this morning. Malik said that he had strongly asserted, partly on the basis of previous discussions with the Soviet Ambassador, that the Soviet Union would attach much more importance to its continuing relations with Jakarta than with involvement with an unstable, self-proclaimed government of a mini-state. He believed the President had agreed with him rather than Yoga on this matter although Yoga had stuck to his guns.

Comment

11. Malik has sometimes in the past proved an unreliable source so I questioned him as closely as possible. He repeated categorically that the President agreed with his presentation after what Malik described as a fairly intense session, during which Yoga and Panggabean had put strongly the case for early intervention.

12. On this occasion I am inclined to accept Malik's presentation. This would mean that the situation is less potentially explosive than it appeared after my discussion with Yoga yesterday. However, the danger remains, especially if Portugal is unwilling or unable to reassert its authority and if there is a breakdown of law and order or wide-spread strife in Timor. Moreover, Malik is leaving the country on 19 August to go to Lima² and the General Assembly.

² To a meeting of non-aligned nations, 25-29 August.

13. As I said in paragraph 24 of my O.JA1201, the President will make any final decision on intervention. He is a thoughtful, subtle, cautious man but quite capable of taking decisive action once he has made up his mind. For the time being he seems—if Malik's account is accurate—to have decided on pressing Portugal to reassert its authority and wait to see how events in Timor unfold. This does give a breathing space and you might well consider the merits of our also urging on Lisbon the need to reassert Portuguese control over the situation in Dili. If Malik has conveyed the situation to me accurately, and I will do my best to check this with Yoga or Ali, then it seems that the immediate danger of intervention has receded. But much will still depend on events in Lisbon and in Timor itself.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xi]

168 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON

Canberra, 16 August 1975

O.CH255533 SECRET ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.JA1201, O.JA1233¹

For Ambassador

You will appreciate the importance of the information reported in the reference telegrams from Jakarta. The Minister is currently considering the desirability of the Prime Minister sending a message to President Suharto which would underscore the value the Australian Government attaches to a cautious approach toward the evolving situation in Portuguese Timor.

2. Meanwhile, we take the point made by Adam Malik to Woolcott that the Portuguese should be encouraged to reassert their control in Timor. We recognise in this regard that Governor Pires has been able to take some of the heat out of the situation as a result of his talk with UDT leaders. We are hopeful that these discussions can be carried forward with the arrival of Major Soares in Dili. But it may be useful, as opportunity permits, to let the Portuguese know that we fully support their efforts to regain full control of the situation in Timor.

3. You might say that Australia had been greatly encouraged by the outcome of the Macau talks which promised both the measured and deliberate approach to decolonisation which we have always urged on the Portuguese, as well as a means by which the people of the territory would eventually be able to decide their own future. We should hope that despite the event[s] in Timor (and the debacle in Angola) the Portuguese would try to preserve as much as possible of the Macau program including the timetable for decolonisation laid down at Macau.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xi]

¹ Documents 166 and 167.

169 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 17 August 1975

O.JA1240 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*For Secretary from Woolcott**[matter omitted]*¹

2. It is of course a decision for the Minister and the Prime Minister but I am somewhat concerned about the proposal that the Prime Minister might send a message to the President.

3. As I stressed in Canberra last month we are dealing with a settled Indonesian policy to incorporate Timor, as even Malik admitted to me on Friday (para 9 of our O.JA1233² refers). I believe the Indonesians are well aware of our attitudes to Timor at all levels.

4. Indonesia is simply not prepared to accept the risks they see to them in an independent Timor and I do not believe that we will be able to change their minds on this. We have in fact tried to do so. What Indonesia now looks to from Australia in the present situation is some understanding of their attitude and possible action to assist public understanding in Australia rather than action on our part which could contribute to criticism of Indonesia. They believe they will get this understanding elsewhere in the region, including from Japan and New Zealand.

5. The Department seems to have attached more weight to my discussion with Malik than to the previous discussion with Yoga. This is probably right but only in relation to Indonesia's immediate intentions. In the longer run, I consider that the comments in paras 22–29 in our O.JA1201³ are more relevant to the longer term situation we are likely to face. The 'doves', like Malik, hope that the incorporation of Timor can be effected in a reasonably presentable manner over a period of time. The 'hawks' do not believe Portugal will be able to control the situation or be willing to maintain a 'measured and deliberate approach to decolonisation' which would 'eventually' enable the people to decide their own future. Events in Angola and Portugal itself of course strengthen their hand. They maintain that the situation both in Lisbon and in Timor will deteriorate and that if it does it is better to move earlier rather than later.

6. In considering whether or not there should be another message from the Prime Minister to the President we should also bear in mind that the President has not formally answered the Prime Minister's March letter although it could be argued that he did so orally in Townsville.

7. I am sure that the President would not welcome another letter on this subject at this stage, especially after what he said publicly in Parliament only yesterday (our O.JA1237 refers).⁴ Soeharto will be looking to Australia for understanding of what he, after very careful consideration, decides to do rather than what he might regard as a lecture or even a friendly caution.

8. The Minister and Prime Minister may feel that domestic pressure puts Australia under an obligation to act. One answer to this would be that Australia has already made more

¹ The paragraph omitted refers to Woolcott's decision to continue a planned visit to Sumatra.

² Document 167.

³ Document 166.

⁴ Soeharto welcomed Portugal's decision to decolonise, particularly in regard to Timor. He also welcomed any move by the people of Portuguese Timor to integrate with Indonesia if they wished. The right of people to decide their own future was unquestionable, but he hoped the decolonisation would proceed smoothly without disturbances 'which inevitably might affect Indonesian stability and that of South East Asia as well'. He reasserted that 'absolutely we do not have any territorial ambitions whatsoever'.

representations to the Indonesian Government and been more active in making its serious concerns known to the Indonesians, than any other country. The upshot of this is that Australia has been singled out by the Indonesians in their planning discussions as the country (along with China) that will be the most vocal in the event of Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor. They know that reaction in Australia—unlike other ASEAN countries and New Zealand—will probably be their main problem. I doubt whether we can expect a better result than that.

9. Other alternatives to a message—although I would also not recommend them—would be an answer to a question in the House or a statement, possibly at a press conference. These could assert that Australia cannot condone the use of force in Timor, nor could we accept the principle that a country can intervene in a neighbouring territory because of concern, however well based that concern might be, over the situation there. At the same time such an answer to a question in Parliament or from the press could concede that Indonesia has had a prolonged struggle for national unity and could not be expected to take lightly a breakdown in law and order in Portuguese Timor, especially when the colony is surrounded by and geographically very much part of the Indonesian Archipelago.

10. While the situation in Portuguese Timor is not likely to get as bad as that in Angola it is going to be a mess for some time. From here I would suggest that our policies should be based on disengaging ourselves as far as possible from the Timor question; getting Australians presently there out of Timor; leave events to take their course; and if and when Indonesia does intervene act in a way which would be designed to minimise the public impact in Australia and show privately understanding to Indonesia of their problems. Perhaps we should also make an effort to secure through Parliament and the media greater understanding of our policy, and Indonesia's, although we do not want to become apologists for Indonesia.

11. The United States might have some influence on Indonesia at present as Indonesia really wants and needs United States assistance in its military re-equipment programme. But Ambassador Newsom told me last night that he is under instructions from Kissinger personally not to involve himself in discussions on Timor with the Indonesians on the grounds that the United States is involved in enough problems of greater importance overseas at present. The State Department has, we understand, instructed the Embassy to cut down its reporting on Timor.

12. I will be seeing Newsom on Monday but his present attitude is that United States should keep out of the Portuguese Timor situation and allow events to take their course. His somewhat cynical comment to me was that if Indonesia were to intervene the United States would hope they would do so 'effectively, quickly and not use our equipment'.

13. We are all aware of the Australian defence interest in the Portuguese Timor situation but I wonder whether the Department has ascertained the interest of the Minister or the Department of Minerals and Energy in the Timor situation. It would seem to me that this Department might well have an interest in closing the present gap in the agreed sea border and that this could be much more readily negotiated with Indonesia by closing the present gap than with Portugal or independent Portuguese Timor.

14. I know I am recommending a pragmatic rather than a principled stand but this is what national interest and foreign policy is all about, as even those countries with ideological bases for their foreign policies, like China and the Soviet Union, have acknowledged.

15. I am sorry to raise all these issues again with you personally but I do have serious doubts about the wisdom of another Prime Ministerial message at this stage. You may wish to show this to Minister and Prime Minister and to repeat it to Cooper in Lisbon.

WOOLCOTT

170 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 18 August 1975

O.LB211 SECRET PRIORITY

Call on President*Our 1085¹*

I was received by President Costa Gomes at 3.15 this afternoon. The interview lasted for 45 minutes.

Timor

2. I said that I wished to convey to the President the Australian Government's latest thinking on Timor. We were concerned by recent developments which posed a threat to the Portuguese Government's declared policy of a measured and deliberate approach to decolonisation—a policy which had the full support of the Australian Government. Accordingly, we had also supported the time table agreed on in Macao.

3. I went on to express the hope that the Portuguese Government would not be deterred by threats or pressure from any faction or group in Timor and would take early steps to reassert its authority in the territory. I appreciated that any final decisions must presumably await the return to Lisbon of Major Soares, but suggested that a public statement to the effect that the Portuguese Government had no intention of abandoning its responsibilities in Timor, or of being stampeded into granting premature independence to any group, would do much to reassure all parties interested in an orderly and deliberate progress towards self-determination in Timor. I was sure that such a statement would be publicly welcomed in Canberra and, I believed, equally in Jakarta.

4. The President said that they had always accepted that any solution for Timor would only be viable if it had the support of the Australian and Indonesian Governments. In their decolonisation policy the Portuguese Government had no wish to create new problems for the countries of the region. He agreed on the need for a statement along the lines suggested, and indicated that, after the return of Majors Mota and Soares, when the whole problem of Timor would be re-examined, he would publicly declare that Portugal would honour its commitments in Timor.

5. The President then went on to review some of the problems they faced in Timor: the problem of distance; the difficulty of reinforcing Portuguese forces in Timor (which at present amounted to only about 400 headquarters staff); the problem of maintaining law and order in a situation where they were almost entirely dependent on local troops, some of whom appeared to be supporting UDT whilst others supported FRETILIN; the complication posed by Indonesian support for APODETI and the intentions of the Indonesian Government which was under pressure from its Generals.

6. When the President complained about the difficulty of finding out what was going on in Timor, I suggested that Governor Pires appeared to have had some success in reasserting his authority and a statement from Lisbon fully backing him might go a long way towards retaining the loyalty of the local troops who, like some of the politicians in Timor, had presumably been

¹ Cablegram LB204 (18 August). The reference here is to its post serial number. Cooper advised that he proposed to seek an appointment with President Gomes to convey the point in Document 168 at the highest level, adding, however, that he shared Yoga's pessimism (reported in paragraph 6 of Document 166) about 'resolute Portuguese action in present circumstances'.

influenced by recent developments in Lisbon. The President took the point, but remained sceptical about Portugal's ability to reassert its authority. However, pressed to say whether the Macao time table still represented Portuguese policy, the President affirmed that it did, although he pointed out that there was room for some 'flexibility' in this policy. The President accepted the point that at present it was impossible to say who really represented the Timorese people although in the context of 'flexibility' he suggested that it was possible for a small group to mobilise public opinion in a relatively short time.

Portugal

7. On events in Portugal itself, I said that the Australian Government was following developments closely. It would obviously be improper for me to comment on those developments, but we earnestly hoped that the present crisis would be resolved in a manner which accorded with the aspirations of the great majority of the Portuguese people and not those of a small minority.

8. As expected, the President made no comment on paragraph 7, but his smile indicated that the point had been well taken.

Comment

9. Taken at face value the President's statements on Timor are reassuring, but I am far from sanguine about his ability to carry his Government (such as it is) along with him. He is I think personally convinced of the wisdom of trying to adhere to the Macao time table but it would be out of character for him to assert his views too strongly if he runs into stiff opposition (as well he might). My present view is that resolute action in Timor will depend on whether the moderates in the AFM are able to wield sufficient influence to prevent the radicals from abandoning Timor altogether, and the prospect for this is not bright. The President does accept that Timor is *sui generis* and not to be compared with the African territories, but when it comes to exercising leadership (as distinct from merely holding the ring) Gomes does not inspire confidence.

10. My assessment of the interview is that it was a worthwhile exercise to register our views at the highest level and to a relatively sympathetic listener, but it remains to be seen to what extent the President's professed views on Timor will prevail in the present highly volatile situation within the Portuguese Government itself. (This is relevant to paragraph 8 of O.JA1262.)²

COOPER

[NAA: A10005, 202/1/3, ix]

² 18 August. It reported Girao's view that Gomes and Soares both wanted the army out of Timor and would probably accept a UDT 'government'. He thought there was virtually no chance that Portugal would re-establish firm control or remain long enough to permit an eventual decision by the people on their future. Even before the UDT action Gomes had regarded the Macao timetable as 'flexible'. Woolcott sought Cooper's comment on this.

PORTUGUESE POLITICS IN CHAOS: AUGUST 1975

The 'present crisis' to which Cooper alluded in Document 170 had its roots in late July, when the General Assembly of the AFM withdrew its support from the Fourth Provisional Government, vesting all power in a military triumvirate constructed around the President. Their aim was to ensure the continuing domination of Portuguese politics by those AFM members committed to radical and pro-communist populism. In reaction to this, the moderate civilian members of the Government resigned, and the Government collapsed shortly after. On 31 July, President Gomes announced that the pro-communist General Gonçalves would continue as Prime Minister and form a new Government. There were, however, deep divisions within the AFM, and on 8 August nine leading moderate AFM members issued a manifesto calling for a return to the program of democratic pluralism of the previous Government. They were supported by an anti-communist coalition of the Socialist and Popular Democratic Parties and the Church, and by a wave of anti-communist violence throughout the country. The manifesto quickly became a rallying point for moderates within the AFM and by 13 August Gonçalves was becoming increasingly isolated. On 18 August Gomes began negotiations to reach some accommodation with the political parties, but Gonçalves remained defiant. By 20 August Gomes had made it clear that the Prime Minister no longer had his support, but was too weak to dismiss him. The crisis dragged on throughout August with both sides manoeuvring for position and the President continuing to prevaricate, effectively crippling government in Portugal.

171 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 19 August 1975

O.CH256607 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

For Dan

Would you please advise Woolcott that the Prime Minister and Minister last night, 18 August, discussed the question of a message to President Soeharto. They had before them O.JA1240.¹ The Prime Minister wishes Woolcott to be advised that he agrees generally with paragraphs 28 and 29 of Jakarta telegram O.JA1201.²

2. As an alternative to sending a message from the Prime Minister to President Soeharto, the Prime Minister and the Minister also discussed the possibility of sending Woolcott instructions setting out the Prime Minister's views on the current situation in Portuguese Timor. The idea was that he and other senior members of the Embassy would be able to draw on the Prime Minister's views in discussions with the Indonesians, including Yoga Sugama.

3. No decision has yet been reached between the two possible courses of action (instructions to Woolcott or message to President Soeharto) or on the contents of the instructions or the

¹ Document 169.

² Document 166.

message. The two Ministers had two main considerations in mind in the discussions. First they noted that in paragraph 21 of O.JA1201 Yoga Sugama was reported as saying that, because of the relations of confidence between President Soeharto and Mr Whitlam, the President would both want to know Mr Whitlam's views on the situation (in Portuguese Timor) and to have the benefit of his advice. Mr Whitlam and Senator Willesee considered that a failure to respond to this invitation might well be misinterpreted by the Indonesians. The second consideration which the Ministers discussed was the need, in dealing with the question of Portuguese Timor, to take into account the likely unfavourable Australian domestic reactions to Indonesian intervention there. There would be a considerable risk in failing to make Australian views on Portuguese Timor known to the Indonesians at this juncture. It would seem natural that the heads of two friendly governments should be in touch about the recent developments, but clearly caution should inform the nature of any approach we make.

4. It was agreed between the Prime Minister and the Minister that in the light of these considerations, Woolcott should be asked whether he had any ideas on the best way of responding to Yoga Sugama's request for Mr Whitlam's views and on the content of what might be included in those views. The two Ministers understood that unless developments led to his early return to Jakarta Woolcott would be away in Sumatra until 3 September and that his absence would serve to explain to the Indonesians why Sugama's remarks had for the time being not been followed up.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xi]

172 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 20 August 1975¹

SECRET

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor: Report of Mr Fisher

Mr Denis Fisher of the Department's Indonesia Section returned to Darwin last night 18 August after spending two days in Portuguese Timor helping with evacuation plans and looking into the political situation.²

2. Fisher sent a brief telegram from Darwin last night summarising some of his impressions and will be putting together a more detailed message later today. He will return to Canberra on 21 August. In his telegram . . . Fisher invites our attention to an appeal which he was asked to convey from the Governor that the Australian Government 'make some sort of international approach' to try to forestall the civil war situation which Governor Pires believes to be shaping up in Timor.

¹ The cited copy bears two dates: '19 August' is handwritten below Feakes's signature; '20 August' is written in a different hand on the heading and on other marginalia. It was presumably seen by Willesee on 20 August.

² Fisher was in Portuguese Timor from 16 to 19 August. He was accompanied by V. A. Rebikoff, who, as a Portuguese speaker, concentrated on locating Australians by means which included daily radio broadcasts. Fisher contacted political leaders to assess the political situation and make evacuation arrangements.

3. The following is based on Fisher's telegram and on telephone conversation with him from Darwin.

General Impressions

4. The situation in Dili is still one of stand-off with the Portuguese co-existing with UDT, which is in effective control of the city. Talks between the Governor and UDT leaders continue, but are making little progress. Fisher's freedom of movement in Dili and his air travel to Baucau and Same were guaranteed by UDT. The Governor also guaranteed his freedom of movement in Dili but it was the UDT guarantee that was the important one: it is clear that outside of Dili the Governor's writ no longer runs.

5. Fisher's impression was that the situation may be somewhat worse than we had thought. Dili is reasonably quiet, but events in the mountains are not at all reassuring: FRETILIN and UDT are clearly engaging in a good deal of rather wild blood-letting and there has been burning of villages in many areas. (Fisher was not aware of FRETILIN-APODETI clashes, though we know that there have been some fairly serious ones.) While flying to Same (three-quarters of the way across the island south of Dili) Fisher saw many houses and one entire village burning. The Portuguese have neither the manpower nor the authority to undertake any police or military action in the mountains (or, for that matter, in Dili where the police have sided with UDT). The Governor thus has to sit in Dili while UDT and FRETILIN sort themselves out. Fisher believes, however, that UDT is very much on top (except in the Aileu area) and that FRETILIN resistance can be no more than sporadic and of short duration. The Governor's fears of 'civil war' may thus be a little overstated. FRETILIN is clearly in a state approaching eclipse.

6. The mood of the Governor is best summed up in his last minute summoning of Fisher to ask the Australian Government 'to make some sort of international approach to try to forestall a civil war'. Fisher's impression is that the Governor, marooned in Dili and far from Lisbon, is now clutching at straws.

7. It appears that FRETILIN and UDT are in the process of wooing Timorese army units. No clear picture of army preferences has yet emerged though Fisher's impression is that the trend, here also, is towards UDT rather than FRETILIN. The 300 Portuguese military men are holding on in Dili and Baucau but the Governor is not inclined to risk trying to make use of the army. UDT's 'take-over' of the police in Dili means that UDT has at its disposal all of the police weaponry and ammunition; FRETILIN, according to the Governor, has virtually no arms.³

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii]

³ The submission also included a summary of UDT demands, and noted that Fisher had brought six Australians back with him to Darwin. Another eleven were to return on the RAAF aircraft that day as well as seven foreign nationals. Fisher reported that twelve Australians remained in Portuguese Timor. Seven had chosen to stay: five others, including two infants, could not be contacted.

173 NOTE FROM WILLESEE TO WHITLAM

Canberra, 20 August 1975

I note that Woolcott has reported that President Suharto has decided Indonesia should not intervene militarily in Portuguese Timor. Woolcott stated that one of the reasons Suharto has made this decision is concern about Australia's reaction to such a move (I attach the telegram concerned¹ in case you have not seen it).

2. I am still concerned that we should respond to what I read to be General Sugama's request for the Australian Government's views about Indonesia's thinking on the situation in Portuguese Timor. As I have argued to you I am concerned that the Government would find itself in an embarrassing and politically indefensible position if Indonesia takes military action and it becomes known that we were forewarned of this possibility by a senior Indonesian official and did not respond to the invitation to state our views. I am also concerned that a failure to provide our views at this juncture may limit the range of reactions to any Indonesian military action available to us since the Indonesians would be able to argue to us that we were forewarned of their thinking and did not demur.

3. If, as Woolcott suggests, we do have some influence on President Suharto's thinking, I believe we should attempt to trade on that influence and dissuade the Indonesians further from trying to integrate Portuguese Timor forcefully.

4. I appreciate we have asked Woolcott for his opinion on the need to reply to General Sugama but I do not expect to hear from Woolcott before the weekend since he is on tour in Sumatra.²

5. Unconfirmed reports I have received this evening highlight the prospect of disorder in the colony and in my opinion add a dimension of urgency to the need for urging restraint on the Indonesians. The Governor of Portuguese Timor has advised the Portuguese Ambassador that two Timorese Army units in Dili have mutinied and the airport control tower in Dili has reported to the Darwin airport control that Fretilin have launched armed attacks on Dili.

6. I strongly recommend therefore that we should send instructions to the Embassy in Jakarta that the points proposed in the note we discussed last Monday evening be conveyed to senior Indonesian officials as the considered reaction of the Australian Government to General Sugama's comments to Woolcott.³

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iii]

¹ In Cablegram JA1262 (18 August), sent before his departure for Sumatra, Woolcott reported that, to the irritation of HANKAM and Yoga, Soeharto was 'at present firm in his attitude that Indonesia should not intervene militarily in Portuguese Timor at this stage'. Factors contributing to this attitude included concern about Australia's reaction, the non-aligned meeting in Lima, the forthcoming session of UNGA and his wish to concentrate Indonesian resources on Repelita II. Woolcott warned that this did not mean Soeharto had backed away from his decision to incorporate Timor, but it did mean there was no immediate danger of intervention without a real breakdown of law and order there.

² See Document 171.

³ No record of Whitlam's response has been found.

174 MINUTE FROM MILLER TO FEAKES AND PIPER

Canberra, 20 August 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor and the United Nations

I am not sure there could not be a role for the UN in Timor, *if* the Portuguese and Indonesians could agree first, as the Dutch and Indonesians did re UNTEA.¹ (UNTEA involved the SG but not the Security Council, some UN military observers drawn from existing operations, and all costs were met by the Dutch and Indonesians; since then however I think the Russians may have had their doctrine of Security Council primacy in anything involved with/like peacekeeping more explicitly accepted.)²

2. The main problems probably are political:

- (a) while Portugal's 'free-form' decolonisation has come to grief in Angola Indonesia does not have the kind of government the present Portuguese regime would like to transfer even interim authority to.³
- (b) Indonesia would not want to mortgage its national security interests in Timor to a shaky and leftist regime in Portugal.

3. However, a UNTEA-type operation, with an eventual essentially fake 'act of choice' manipulated by Indonesia, could have some political advantages for our government, in comparison with Indonesian forces simply walking in and unilaterally asserting their right to maintain law and order in a neighbouring territory.

4. But is this a correct assessment of Australian opinion? An UNTEA-type cloak might be fastened on by elements in Caucus but would it be welcomed by the public, or derided as a replay of the manipulated West Irian ascertainment.

5. And how serious are the public opinion repercussions against the Government of an undisguised Indonesian take over of Timor likely to be? The Minister clearly thinks they could be serious, is worried, and wants cover. If he is correct, it might be worthwhile from the Government's point of view our trying to promote very discreetly, or at least investigate the possibility of, some kind of UN 'cloaking' operation. But if he is not, the balance of

¹ On 1 September 1962 the UN Temporary Executive Agency took over from the Dutch the administration of the province of West Irian, which had remained under Dutch control after Indonesian independence. UNTEA was to serve as an interim administration before sovereignty was transferred to the Republic of Indonesia nine months later. There was then to be a plebiscite on the province's future to be held some time before 1969. The 'Act of Free Choice' took place in July–August 1969 following a concerted 'hearts and minds' campaign by Ali Murtopo and OPSUS and the suppression of the local opponents of integration, the Free Papua Movement. The decision to accept integration was made, without a formal vote, by a meeting of just over one thousand local tribal leaders and representatives.

² The USSR had insisted since 1956 that all peace-keeping measures should be sanctioned by the Security Council, so preserving the principle of Great Power unanimity enshrined in the UN Charter. This had in fact been the case with all peace-keeping missions since 1967.

³ Portuguese decolonisation policy in Africa had been to transfer power quickly into the hands of the most prominent regional independence movements (PAIGC in Guinea, FRELIMO in Mozambique). In Angola the anti-colonial movement was split three ways between the Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the US-backed National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), a breakaway from the FNLA, making it almost impossible for the Portuguese to acknowledge a single successor. The problem was compounded by the intervention of surrounding nations, notably Zaire.

advantage seems clearly to be against getting into the complications and uncertainties it would necessarily involve.

6. So, from the point of view of our advising the Government as to its policy options it seems to me a basic aspect i[s] our assessment of Australian public opinion on this question.

[NAA: A1838, 935/17/3, xvi]

175 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 21 August 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: 'Internationalisation'

Attached is a Departmental paper which examines the range of possible actions in the United Nations over Portuguese Timor.

2. Our overall impression is that international interest in the territory is only marginal and that it is unlikely that there would be firm international censure of Indonesia in the event that it were to resort to military force or otherwise to seek to bring about the collapse of the Portuguese decolonisation program. Censure would be even less likely if Indonesia were to intervene in a situation of widespread disorder involving the breakdown of effective administration. There are, of course, many uncertainties and unknowns, and the direction which a United Nations debate might take is not easy to predict.

3. The paper examines what might happen in the United Nations as a result of Indonesian military action or a breakdown in the Portuguese decolonisation program. In the event of a clear act of aggression, Indonesia might be very much on the defensive, but in the case of a breakdown in the decolonisation process or of the administration in Portuguese Timor it might be well placed to put its views quite effectively, even if the breakdown were partly contrived by it.

4. There is also the possibility that Portugal, under pressure from Indonesia, might request the United Nations to lend its name to a program which amounted to an endorsement of Indonesia's interests in Timor in a West Irian style arrangement. Thus there would be a United Nations cover, perhaps involving the establishment (as in West Irian) of a United Nations Temporary Executive Authority, for a transfer of power to an Indonesia committed to allowing an act of self-determination (act of free choice). There is no doubt that this would produce a far easier United Nations debate than if Portugal felt obliged to take an initiative directed squarely against the sort of outcome sought by Indonesia. A degree of cooperation between Indonesia and Portugal to resolve the problem would be welcomed by most members of the international community.

5. Another possibility, perhaps more remote, is that Indonesia, arguing that Portugal is discriminating against APODETI in the decolonisation process, would take the initiative. This could only happen in the event that the territory was on the point of being declared or becoming

independent, and that the Indonesian Government had decided that it could not intervene. The United Nations might thus be a last resort for Indonesia. But this seems unlikely.

6. In the paper, we discount the possibility of a United Nations initiative by another country, but it is not inconceivable that, perhaps even inadvertently, a 'third country' (perhaps African) might set off a substantial debate on Portuguese Timor which has already been the subject of some discussion in the Committee of Twenty-four. Such an initiative could be taken if it seemed that Portugal was avoiding UN action. We also do not pursue the question of international reaction in circumstances where the United Nations is simply not called into play, for instance, if Portugal simply allows Indonesian interference or military action to proceed, even to the point of an unopposed take-over. There might be expressions of objection from some fairly distant quarters but it is difficult to imagine more than very token international action outside the United Nations context. Governments disposed to reprimanding Indonesia would be less effective, and less enthusiastic, than if the United Nations were involved. Indonesia, of course, will be carrying out its own assessment of possible reactions, including Australian and United States (especially Congressional) attitudes.

Portuguese position

7. If the Portuguese were to go all out against the Indonesians they might be able to rally support from a number of quarters. They now have good credentials in Africa and might be able to coax or embarrass the East Europeans into supporting them. The Chinese (and Vietnamese) position could also be important.

8. But the Portuguese might not decide to push very hard in New York. Having gone through the motions of drawing United Nations attention to Indonesian invasion or subversion, they may, in the end, be prepared to allow Indonesia to have the territory. The United Nations might thus be turned to as a little more than a gesture to enable Portuguese hands to be kept clean, even in the event of an outright invasion. A combination of domestic uncertainty, the Angola experience and a desire not to be seen making a fuss about a territory as small and internationally unknown as Timor, might be enough to persuade the Portuguese that a United Nations debate should be kept at low key.

Indonesian attitudes

9. Indonesian officials to whom we have spoken acknowledge that Indonesia could find the going difficult in the United Nations, but they believe that most of Indonesia's friends would at least remain silent and that Indonesia would be able to find its way through such traps as may be encountered in debates or resolutions. If the Indonesians were to decide to intervene in Timor they would be fully prepared to battle it out in New York. Some officials are almost scornful in their assessment of what the United Nations might do: 'they will talk, but we will have acted'. Indeed the Indonesians tend to take the view that countries which are well disposed towards Indonesia will not make a fuss, whilst most which are not can be disregarded. Indonesians may, of course, be miscalculating the strength of their international position. They might be hard pressed, if the going were to get rough, to find anyone to speak up for them in the United Nations. Their international standing is not as good as it should be: Indonesia's credentials with both the West and the non-aligned are slightly uncertain. And its Islamic ties are not as sound as they might be. The Indonesians would thus be relying essentially on a silent, embarrassed majority to pull them through.

10. The Indonesians must take United Nations, and especially Third World, opinion into account, and this can be seen as a restraining influence on them. In the last resort, however, if the prospect of an independent East Timor looms as very imminent, or if there are widespread disorders in Timor with effective administration breaking down, Indonesia may be prepared to put its rather strong views on national and regional security before the possibility of adverse reaction in distant conference halls.

Australia

11. The initiative for taking the matter to the UN rests clearly with Portugal, or with Portugal and Indonesia together,—not with Australia—and there may initially be scope at most for no more than a ‘good offices’ role for Australia to play in helping Portugal and Indonesia to establish the sort of understanding required to produce a satisfactory approach to a UN exercise. Once the matter, as a result of Portuguese or joint Portuguese–Indonesian initiative, has attracted UN attention, our policy will have to be determined in the light of the circumstances obtaining at the time, which it is not possible to predict. But our interest will be best served by our remaining as uninvolved in the United Nations as is compatible with domestic political factors and our international ties and responsibilities.

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, ii]

176 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 21 August 1975

O.LB217 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I saw the Foreign Minister, Dr Mario Ruivo, at 1900 hours this evening.

2. The Minister said he and the President had just been briefed by Majors Mota and Jonatas who had returned to Lisbon this afternoon. (Soares returned yesterday without reaching Timor.)¹ Ruivo said that the situation in Timor was deteriorating rapidly and that to cope with the immediate problem certain emergency measures were necessary. Although foreign nationals did not repeat did not appear to be in imminent danger, fighting was widespread around Dili and in the country and Portugal did not have the means to control it. Hence evacuation measures would have to be considered. Could Australia help? Ruivo thought that all told it would involve about 500 people—that is assuming that most foreign nationals and their families would accept that the time had come to leave. They also had in mind to evacuate some

¹ Major Soares had arrived in Jakarta on 14 August, intending to travel on to Dili via Kupang several days later. He was allowed to travel as far as Bali, where he was held up by Indonesian immigration officials. At 2 a.m. on 19 August his visa was withdrawn and he was forced to abandon his mission. The Indonesians claimed that there were irregularities in his travel papers; Soares insisted that he was a victim of ‘Indonesian obstructionism’ from the time of his arrival in Jakarta.

Portuguese civilians and military personnel. A particular problem was about 50 Portuguese troops who were at present besieged in the mountains (he did not say where) and their one and only helicopter had been commandeered by Fretilin. The Portuguese Government hoped that Australia would agree to provide the necessary facilities to assist those who wanted to leave to do so. The Minister said he would be making a similar appeal to the Indonesian Ambassador whom he would be seeing shortly. They were also alerting the IRC Headquarters in Geneva.

3. The Minister then turned to the political problem. He said that with the best will in the world he saw little possibility of being able to resurrect the Macao timetable for decolonization. Their intention was to leave Governor Pires in Dili with a small staff of about 70 with instructions to try to negotiate some sort of *modus vivendi* with the political parties. Thus Portugal would retain a 'symbolic' presence in Timor whilst trying to salvage what they could from a situation that was getting out of control. They were also considering possible international political assistance. He mentioned in particular the possibility of a good offices committee (in which they envisage Australia and Indonesia playing a major role) or perhaps referring the question to the Committee of 24. In any event they intended to consult with Waldheim and invite his views. Ruivo would greatly value the Australian Government's views on the situation with which we were now faced.²

4. I told the Minister that in the light of the Portuguese Government's assessment of the security situation, I was confident that you would be sympathetic to their appeal for evacuation assistance. However, I saw a problem if Australia were asked to evacuate military personnel. If necessary could they be provided with civilian clothes? Ruivo thought that this would not be a problem. (I made no comment on the request for a helicopter to evacuate the 50 military personnel to Dili.)

5. I said that I was under urgent instructions to seek the Portuguese Government's assistance in establishing the whereabouts of Messrs Grady and Berry³ and we hoped that Governor Pires could intercede with Fretilin and secure their evacuation to Dili. I gave the Minister an aide mémoire setting out the facts as we knew them (your O.CH257131). Ruivo said that the Director of Political Affairs, Magalhaes Cruz, had already been instructed to send a cable to Pires asking him to do what he could to secure their release (I had previously left a copy of the aide mémoire with Cruz).

² Canberra replied (Cablegram CH258274, 22 August) that there were risks in taking the problem to the United Nations with the attitudes of the parties principal unknown, given the uncertainty of the outcome of any UN consideration. If Portugal decided on internationalisation it should seek to act in agreement with Indonesia: prospects of resolving the problem would be greatly improved with 'agreement or at least . . . a degree of understanding . . . on what would be both workable and in the best interests of the people of Portuguese Timor' beforehand. It thought present circumstances might offer some prospect of international recognition of Indonesia's status, while yet preserving the rights of the Timorese to decide their own future. Australia, as a non-party principal, was not prepared to serve on a Good-Offices Committee with Portugal and Indonesia alone. Similar reservations applied to the idea of an ASEAN plus Australia and New Zealand committee, but it would be more difficult to refuse, since Australian interests were certainly greater than some others. UN involvement should preferably be to endorse agreement by Portugal and Indonesia on, say, a Committee of Good Offices. Policy in the event of agreement proving impossible, or of the issue being referred to the UN some other way, required further consideration. The Jakarta Embassy was instructed to convey these views to the Indonesians, along with Australia's belief that the Portuguese were serious in their intention to take the matter to the UN and that Indonesia 'would be wise to consider mending . . . fences with the Portuguese at least to the extent of exploring the possibilities of arriving at some form of understanding . . .'

³ Professor Grady and Ron Berry, geologists from Flinders University, Adelaide, had been taken prisoner by Fretilin in the Maubisse region where they were undertaking preparatory work for a seismological survey. The two men had been evacuated to Darwin by 31 August 1975.

6. On the political problem, I said that I was sure that you would be gravely disturbed by the Portuguese Government's seeming inability to reassert its authority in Timor. It appeared that Portugal had abandoned any hope of meaningful arrangements to determine the wishes of the Timorese people. Did this mean that Portugal had ruled out the possibility of reinforcing its military presence in Timor? Ruivo referred to the current demands on Portuguese forces both at home and in Angola and said that in present circumstances Portugal could not hope to retain more than a symbolic presence in Timor. They must accept the facts of the situation and try to do the best they could. If Australia had any ideas as to how Portugal could handle the problem, he (Ruivo) would be grateful to have them.

7. On the proposal to internationalise the problem, I pointed out that reference to the UN would have unpredictable consequences. Delegations would take up positions in accordance with their ideological predilections towards the various contending groups in Timor, and the outcome could conceivably bear little relation to what the majority of the Timorese wanted. It was impossible to say at present who the true representatives of the Timorese people were. Ruivo accepted all this but pointed out that their decolonisation policy had worked tolerably well in Africa (Angola excepted). I replied that as the President had acknowledged to me on Monday, Timor could not be equated with the African territories.

8. I concluded by saying that I would convey the Minister's views to you and would let him have your response as quickly as possible.

Comment

9. It is now clear that our pessimism about the Portuguese Government's resolution has proved to be all too well founded. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Portuguese have decided to write off the Timor problem since the retention of a symbolic presence in Timor is unlikely to impress anyone. My initial reaction is that the prospect of early Indonesian intervention is now very real indeed especially since the Portuguese have themselves abandoned any hope of self-determination in Timor. This, coupled with the deteriorating security situation could provide Indonesia with sufficient grounds for action.

10. You will of course wish to make your own assessment as to whether the security situation is as bad as Ruivo painted it. I have the impression he may have exaggerated it in order to secure an immediate response for evacuation assistance. In any event I would be grateful for your views on this more immediate problem whilst you are considering the longer term aspects.

COOPER

177 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 22 August 1975

O.JA1389 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*Ref O.CH256607¹**[matter omitted]*

7. In these circumstances I do not think that a failure to respond quickly to Yoga would be misinterpreted. What Yoga was looking for on 14 August was a particular response—namely—and as he put it clearly to me—a response which would indicate Australian ‘understanding’ of Indonesia’s intervention if this were to be decided. We would not have been prepared to give this then and Yoga would, in Javanese way, have taken absence of an immediate reply to reflect this inability. Moreover, events overtook Yoga’s plan which, in retrospect, I believe was to secure the agreement, or at least agreement not to object to Indonesian intervention, of Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the United States and the other ASEAN countries. Yoga had in any case retreated somewhat from the position he had adopted with me and the Japanese Ambassador by the time he saw U.S. Ambassador Newsom.

8. You have asked me for my ideas on the best way of responding to Yoga’s request for Mr Whitlam’s views and on what might be included in those views.

9. I believe we have three policy options open to us. The first is to stand aside and let events take their course, apart from assisting refugees to leave Portuguese Timor.

10. The second option would be once again to urge caution on Indonesia either in a very carefully worded message from the Prime Minister to the President or in talks with senior advisers of the President, but not to involve ourselves beyond this.

11. The third option would be to seek to take some initiative in the situation on the grounds that neither Australia nor Indonesia wish to see instability in Portuguese Timor and that we should seek to take positive steps to prevent it. Possibilities here would include first, an offer of our good offices to try to bring the disputing parties to the conference table, possibly in Australia; second, to propose an observer group to ascertain what is going on in Timor if conditions would permit this, especially as one serious problem in considering the issue is that we do not really know what is happening on the ground in Timor; third, we could consider calling for a cease fire and offering to participate in some good offices or peace-keeping arrangement through the United Nations.

12. We could also consider naval patrols to try and prevent arms reaching Portuguese Timor by sea, as Malik has suggested.

13. My own preference would be a combination of the first and part of the second option in paragraphs 9 and 10 above.

14. If Prime Minister does decide to urge caution on the Indonesians, then I would suggest his views could be put to Yoga, the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mochtar, General Ali and Minister Sudomono, by me or by Dan, if I resume Sumatra visit, in West Sumatra as scheduled. This would I think be preferable to a direct message and it would also ensure Prime Minister’s views reached the President.

¹ Document 171.

15. As I have reported, we know President Soeharto is going to make any final decision on intervention. So far he has shown considerable strength in standing up to the 'Hawks' in HANKAM and BAKIN. If the Prime Minister does decide to send a message to him, then I think this would be acceptable if the message were both encouraging and understanding. I also consider that it is important to keep in mind that we have already had a considerable influence on Indonesian policy and I do not think there would be a risk 'in failing to make Australian views on Portuguese Timor known to the Indonesians', even at this juncture, as is suggested in paragraph 3 of your O.CH256607.

16. I would not myself recommend at this stage any of the possible initiatives mentioned in paragraph 11, although I would not rule out proposing an observer group to ascertain what is going on, if conditions would permit such a group to operate and if Portugal and Indonesia were both in agreement with this course.

17. In the present situation, as it has evolved, I stand by the broad policy recommendations made in my O.JA1201, O.JA1233 and O.JA1240.² I have always thought that this situation would become complicated, protracted and messy. I did not believe that the Portuguese could be relied on to remain for long in Timor and I doubt very much if, now, we can expect Portugal and Indonesia to co-operate closely in a settlement. The Portuguese seem simply to want to wash their hands of Timor and get out.

18. I still believe that Indonesia will let events take their course, provided Fretilin does not defeat the UDT and provided there were not serious and continued attacks on Apodeti. In fact in present situation it could even suit Indonesia to let UDT and Fretilin fight it out for a while provided latter was not the victor and Apodeti was not directly involved.

19. In either case Indonesia would have a better case for intervention than before. Also I do not believe Indonesia would march across the border but would, I imagine, start off by allowing 'refugees' from Portuguese Timor to return in response to a call for help.

21. But, I repeat, the President will want to keep his word to the Prime Minister, as given in Townsville, and will have to be convinced that Indonesia's national interests are very seriously threatened before sanctioning direct intervention. If he reaches this point I believe our best course is to show, privately at least, understanding of his position and, as I have already recommended, to seek to limit as far as we can any recrudescence of latent hostility to Indonesia in Australia.

22. I have arranged to see Ali Murtopo tomorrow 23 August and shall report any new developments.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xi]

² Documents 166, 167, 169.

178 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 22 August 1975

O.UN3620 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*Ref O.CH258274¹*

At first sight, difficulties in the way of the possible internationalisation of the Timor situation tend to present themselves rather than possible courses of action. Accepting this, an operation on humanitarian grounds appears at least theoretically to offer the best prospect of obtaining recognition of Indonesia's standing in Portuguese Timor, while avoiding apparent prejudice to the rights of the Timorese to choose their own future. Could Indonesia capitalise on the evacuation by making available the personnel to administer on the ground a United Nations relief effort?

2. The Secretary-General would almost certainly feel that he needed some form of political mandate for a United Nations undertaking in relation to the territory. Pressures on him in relation to Angola, as well as other problems stemming from the former Portuguese territories, will make him even more anxious on this score.

3. For any sort of physical undertaking by the United Nations in Timor the mandate would probably need to be provided by the General Assembly or the Security Council. The Committee of Twenty-four is not in this sort of business although it could of course be used, and I think fairly reliably controlled, to frame a recommendation for action by the Council, the Assembly, or some other body. It is doubtful, however, that it could itself do much more on the ground than to provide a visiting mission in the normal way. Such a mission, either led by Anwar Sani or despatched when and if he takes over as chairman of the Committee in late January/early February 1976, would not really seem to get Indonesia very far into the act.

4. Conventional United Nations undertakings would probably be limited to either a peace-keeping force or an emergency relief operation.

5. For either of these two purposes Indonesia's standing or presence would presumably depend on its ability to contribute and deploy resources in the territory.

6. A peace-keeping force does, however, seem an unlikely idea. It smacks of a Congo operation, it would certainly raise the question of following suit in Angola, and would mean elevating the whole affair to a full-scale Security Council exercise. This would probably prove far too constraining for Indonesian purposes and would in fact limit the room to manoeuvre generally as well as risking great power [and] non-aligned interference where little or none exists so far. On the other hand the Indonesians would probably find that a military force was the resource which [they] could most easily deploy.

7. The possibility of a United Nations relief force (perhaps on an extended rather than an emergency basis) might be more promising. Presumably Indonesia would not find it easy to contribute large amounts in cash or kind, but could it instead think of offering the administrative apparatus? With the exodus of Portuguese and other foreign nationals a case could no doubt be made for the United Nations introducing on an emergency basis what would amount to a substitute civilian administration in Portuguese Timor at least for the limited purpose of ensuring the maintenance of essential services and supplies. For linguistic and other reasons the

¹ See note 2 to Document 176.

Indonesians, with some Portuguese support, would probably be in a unique position to make a substantial contribution of personnel. Would it be realistic to look to a contribution from India (Goa) bearing in mind the helpful position India took on Timor in the Committee of Twenty-four in June?

8. I regret the general woolliness of this response but without having some clearer idea of what the Portuguese and Indonesians might be able to agree on before beginning an exercise in the United Nations (and such prior agreement would seem essential) it is difficult to say anything very meaningful about the prospects of obtaining a United Nations mandate or recognition of an Indonesian role under it.

9. The Indonesian Mission was approached by the Portuguese yesterday along what appear to be generally similar lines to the approach to Cooper reported in O.LB217.² The Indonesians contacted us but have, however, wished only to discuss the question of provision of evacuation assistance. They were given a copy of O.CH258311³ and were very anxious and relieved to establish that Australia had also been approached by Portugal. They were reluctant to discuss what the Portuguese might mean by 'internationalisation' and I did not press.

10. Anwar Sani has decided to return to New York from Lima over the weekend.

CAMPBELL

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

179 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 23 August 1975

O.LB235 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Thanks your O.CH258350. I have conveyed paras 4 and 5 thereof, together with information in O.CH258355 to Director General of Political Affairs (Cruz) who was grateful for an up to date report on evacuation arrangements.¹

2. I had previously spoken to Indonesian Ambassador who confirmed Jakarta's earlier advice that he had on instructions informed the Portuguese that Indonesia would respond to a request from Portugal to participate in a security operation to restore order in Timor. Indonesia was concerned with the 'whole problem' of Timor, not just the evacuation arrangements. The latter would only take care of about 1000 foreigners and some military personnel. But what about the 600,000 indigenous people of Timor who were caught up in the fighting? Indonesia had

² Document 176.

³ 22 August. It repeated a media release stating that Whitlam was carefully considering a Portuguese request for assistance with evacuations. (Willesee had departed that morning for Lima.)

¹ Paragraphs 4 and 5 of CH258350 (23 August) reported that efforts to assist the Portuguese Ambassador in chartering commercial vessels had been successful and evacuations might be completed that day. A chartered Norwegian ship, *Lloyd Bakke* was already off Dili, the *Macdili* would reach there that evening if required, and a third vessel from Fremantle was nearing Darwin. Reception arrangements had been made for 1400 in Darwin. The Ambassador was seeking authority to charter 747s for onward movement to Lisbon. Wide press reporting had been given to official statements, approved by the Prime Minister, that navy destroyers might be used if necessary.

close ties with these people and compared with their fate the evacuation of foreigners was only a 'minor problem'.

3. Ruivo's response to the above was to say that he would consult the President immediately. Ruivo subsequently informed the Indonesian Ambassador (Say) that Portugal was exploring the possibility of establishing a good offices committee to mediate and to try to negotiate a settlement.

4. I asked Say how Indonesia felt about a good offices committee. He did not reply directly but repeated that Indonesia was looking at the whole problem. The important thing was the restoration of law and order which would take care not only of foreigners in Timor but also the indigenous population.

Comment

5. It was implicit in what Say told me that Indonesia does not regard a good offices committee as adequate to cope with the present situation even if it could be established immediately. You will note that a scenario is being developed in which Indonesia could reasonably claim that it offered to help restore the status quo in Timor, that the Portuguese Government failed to respond to Jakarta's offer, and that therefore Indonesia had no alternative but to take the necessary steps itself to stop the fighting and restore order. It is perhaps significant that when I asked Cruz this morning if they had had any response from Indonesia he said only that 'Indonesia had offered to send a ship for evacuation purposes but had not responded to request for their views on political aspects'.

COOPER

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, vii]

180 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 23 August 1975

O.UN3624 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

*Ref O.UN3620*¹

Almeida Santos saw Salim late last night 22 August. Santos reviewed the situation in Timor his main emphasis being on the plight of the thousand or more expatriates to be evacuated. He referred to the appeals for assistance with evacuation already made to Australia, Indonesia and the ICRC. He was gravely concerned with the danger to those grouped in the Dili harbour area and at the demoralization of the 400 Portuguese troops with them. The local Timorese soldiers had all gone their own ways according to their political inclinations.

2. Santos sought an appeal by the Secretary-General and/or Salim to strengthen those already made by the Portuguese Government concerning the humanitarian need for emergency assistance with the present problem. Salim did not commit himself on this point but suggested that the Secretary-General would have no difficulty in making an immediate unofficial appeal

¹ Document 178.

to neighbouring countries. My impression is that Salim may have been a little surprised to find Santos concentrating so much on the problem of the expatriates although he fully understands their plight.

3. There was apparently very little discussion between Santos and Salim of possible longer term or political moves. Without any precise purpose having been discussed Salim indicated that an extra-session meeting of the Committee of Twenty-Four could of course be considered if required. Santos speculated that the political crisis would probably not worsen for the moment while UDT remained in general control but seemed convinced that the Indonesians would move in if Fretilin were to take over. He emphasised that Portugal had to all intents and purposes lost control on the ground and was most anxious to establish some form of international accountability for the territory. He raised the question of a possible United Nations committee of good offices.

4. Salim and the Secretariat officer present (Tanaka) emphasised that such an initiative would need most careful preparation and that any precise terms of reference for a committee of good offices would need the sanction of either the Security Council or the General Assembly. Recommendations could of course be made by the Committee of Twenty-Four but it was very doubtful that the Committee could make a contribution beyond that. The only exception was that the Committee could perhaps agree to ask the Secretary-General, in consultations with itself and the administering power, to *establish* a committee of good offices leaving the mandate or terms of reference for determination by the Assembly or Security Council. All in all they told Santos that it would be necessary to proceed very cautiously and the discussion was left quite open with no commitment made by Salim for any precise action to be taken by the Committee. Santos was told that the Bureau would be informed and he noted particularly that this included Australian and Indonesian representatives. He also noted that Sani was returning to New York.

5. Santos mentioned the Philippines, Thailand and New Zealand as being possible members of a committee of good offices additional to countries represented in the Committee of Twenty-Four.

[matter omitted]²

8. Anwar Sani has just telephoned on returning to New York. He was with Malik in Buenos Aires when it was decided that he should return rather than proceed to Lima because of the situation in Timor. Sani was worried about a report just received that Fretilin had occupied the Indonesian Consulate in Dili.³ Indonesia, he said, must continue to hold the Portuguese responsible. Even in relation to emergency assistance with evacuation Sani thought that Jakarta would be reluctant to jump in for fear of creating the wrong impression. The danger of some armed incident could not be excluded and any act of self defence by an Indonesian party in such circumstances would almost certainly be misinterpreted. Sani was nevertheless well aware of the opportunities open to Indonesia to exercise a constructive role at this stage and to receive international recognition for doing so. He was convinced however that the Indonesians would want to have Australia alongside them as 'cover'. Sani made a point of saying that the President had been emphatic to him in Jakarta on his last visit that there was no question of any Indonesian claim to the territory and that he would not sanction the use of force. I encouraged Sani to contact Santos and he said he proposed doing so.

² Omitted paragraphs refer to Angola.

³ The Indonesian Ambassador in Lisbon rang Cooper the same day to say that the Indonesian Government regarded occupation of the Consulate as 'most serious'. Cooper added that this, coupled with Portuguese radio reports of Fretilin mortar attacks on Dili 'resulting in hundreds of deaths' suggested that pressure on the Indonesians to act 'is becoming almost overwhelming' (Cablegram LB236, 23 August).

[*matter omitted*]⁴

12. Santos did not know whether the 400 paratroopers would remain in Dili. They were low in morale and probably not inclined to fight against the UDT or Fretilin forces. He proposed however to recommend to Lisbon this afternoon that they should be retained in Dili as some semblance of Portuguese sovereignty. By implication if they leave the Portuguese will regard themselves as being virtually powerless in relation to the territory.

13. Turning to the political problem Santos was under the impression that Australia would ultimately be prepared to serve on a United Nations committee of good offices which he seemed to see as being essentially a visiting mission. He had in mind that this would be composed of Portugal, Indonesia, Australia and perhaps one or two other neighbouring countries. Its purpose, if agreed, would be to visit the territory in the very near future on a fact-finding basis but also with a view to making recommendations regarding to whom and by what means the Portuguese should transfer sovereignty. He said he understood that this proposal would be considered urgently within the Bureau of the Committee of Twenty-Four. I made no commitment in this regard. The Secretary-General had indicated that the establishment of a committee of good offices would *not* be within his competence.

14. Santos proposes returning to Lisbon on Monday 25 August and then travelling next week to Timor if conditions there permit. In any event he said he would like to visit Canberra and Jakarta next week for urgent consultations on both the immediate and longer term problems of the territory and especially to pursue consideration of the idea of a committee of good offices.

15. Santos proposed seeing Anwar Sani later today.

CAMPBELL

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

181 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 24 August 1975

O.CH258375 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Humanitarian Concerns

Following represents Departmental views only.

2. With evacuation of Portuguese and others possibly to be completed today 24 August we expect attention to shift to security and humanitarian situations on Portuguese Timor. Governor's accounts of the deteriorating situation and appeals for help have been prominently reported and Portuguese Foreign Minister's letter handed to UN Secretary-General 23 August refers to Portugal's appeal to Indonesia and Australia 'asking for their support and assistance in the humanitarian tasks which must receive primary emphasis under the present circumstances'.

3. We think that plight of local population will be in Ministers' minds.

4. As with evacuation, while not giving the Indonesians a veto on what we do we should want to approach this question in consultation with them (though not on basis which takes

⁴ Omitted paragraphs report Campbell's informing both the Secretary-General and Santos that evacuation was well under way. See note 1 to Document 179.

further the process, implicit in the Portuguese Foreign Minister's letter, of establishing us as a party principal).

5. We are also of course aware that possibilities referred to in the last paragraph of your O.JA1399¹ are relevant to relief operations.

6. It occurs to us that visit of Pasquier of ICRC to Jakarta expected for tomorrow may give some scope for useful discussion. In particular we would like to know his reaction to suggestion that, despite its earlier rejection of Portuguese *evacuation* request, ICRC might organise, administer, or at very least lend its name to a *relief* operation through which national contributions, both governmental and non-governmental, could be made if practical difficulties of giving of effective assistance in the Timor situation could be overcome.

7. We would also like you to discuss Pasquier's visit with Indonesians, and try to establish their reaction to a proposition on lines of preceding paragraph.²

8. Foregoing is exploratory only, and in particular question of available funds, which are as you know very tight, has not yet been discussed with ADAA or Treasury.³

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxviii]

182 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 24 August 1975

O.JA1401 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.JA1399¹

It might be helpful if I attempt to summarize main aspects of Timor situation as of Sunday midday as seen from here.

2. Indonesia, in particular President Soeharto, has behaved with restraint and prudence in the situation so far.

¹ 24 August. The last paragraph conceded that pressures on Indonesia to intervene in Portuguese Timor were growing, although there was general agreement that Indonesia would not move without a Portuguese invitation. See also note 1 to Document 182.

² Cablegram CH258808 (25 August) corrected the foregoing information. Pasquier was proceeding directly to Darwin on 27 August. Cablegram GE13662 (25 August) reported that the ICRC was treating Portugal's request with caution, as previous requests for Angola and Mozambique had been considered exaggerated and alarmist. One possibility was that the Australian Red Cross would be asked to assist with inspections and/or medical supplies and personnel.

³ On 25 August Matias informed DFA that Pires had requested Lisbon to make an international appeal for nurses and medical teams, principally to prevent epidemics. Whitlam's view had been that Australia must make a humanitarian contribution, but the practical implications of the situation on the ground must be considered. Matias had been asked for more information about conditions and interdepartmental discussions were planned for 26 August (Cablegram CH258808, 25 August).

¹ 24 August. Woolcott reported discussions with Yoga, Lim Bian Kie and Adenan, none of whom appeared to attach as much importance to the occupation of the Indonesian Consulate in Dili as had Cooper (see note 3 to Document 180) as it was situated in an 'insecure area' and staff had moved to the port area. The Consul had been instructed to remain at his post, but this had become impossible. Yoga stated that an Indonesian ship, plus naval escort, was proceeding to Dili to evacuate refugees. All three said the main issue was now Portugal's response to an Indonesian offer to assist in restoring peace and order. See also note 1 to Document 181.

3. As of this morning, 24 August, President still does not want to authorise Indonesian intervention unless Portuguese Government, in the circumstances of its own inability to restore peace and order, agrees with this course. Another factor would be the acceptance that it is already too late for the UN to take effective action. Additional restraining factors, apart from possible Australian, American and international reactions to unrequested, unilateral Indonesian intervention, is that Indonesian forces could be involved in action against both FRETILIN and UDT forces, which would inevitably involve Indonesian casualties in present charged situation.

4. I have also now spoken to Lieutenant-General Benny Moerdani—one of the few significant figures in the situation here whom I have previously not contacted and he—although a well-known ‘hawk’—repeated that the President would not authorize intervention without Portugal’s response to Indonesia’s offer to restore peace and order. Benny Moerdani also enquired about Radio Australia report this morning that Governor Pires had called on ‘international forces to intervene’ adding that virtually the only international forces in a position to do so promptly, would be Indonesian.

5. Indonesia probably cannot stand by for very long while killing continues unabated and especially if it starts to involve APODETI and its supporters, particularly indigenous Timorese supporters of integration. If Indonesia does intervene, even without a Portuguese request for assistance,—and we could be moving towards that situation if Portugal does not respond soon—they will be able to make a number of points to justify this, namely:—

- (a) APODETI has so far tried to stay out of the conflict;
- (b) although it was rejected and Indonesia probably knew it would be—APODETI did propose a referendum in Portuguese Timor at the Macao meeting;
- (c) FRETILIN boycotted the Macao meeting and is apparently largely responsible for the present mortaring and shelling in Dili;
- (d) UDT precipitated the coup and the consequent problems while APODETI and Indonesia have held their own hands;
- (e) Indonesia has offered to assist the Portuguese in restoring law and order and has shown restraint during the present critical period, while awaiting Portugal’s response;
- (f) Indonesia’s public position in support of arrangements for the people of Timor to determine their own future—and, as far as the President is concerned, his private position also—should stand up quite well internationally;
- (g) the present situation is due not so much to Indonesia or APODETI (despite some excesses in February and March, especially on the part of APODETI, which were curtailed partly as the result of Australian influence) as it is to a failure of Portuguese control in the face of precipitate action by UDT and FRETILIN, the leaderships of both of which are largely non-indigenous.

6. Sudharmono and Benny Moerdani have both given me the assurance, for what it is worth in this rapidly evolving situation, that if Indonesia does decide to ‘move’ then ‘Australia will be informed in advance’. Moerdani said that we should get at least 2 hours’ notice.

7. The current situation raises again the question of whether the Prime Minister wants any views communicated to the President, either directly or indirectly. We would also appreciate guidance on Australian reaction to Indonesian intervention on the one hand, in response to Portuguese agreement that they should do so in an attempt to restore law and order if this is forthcoming and, on the other hand, stand-by guidance in the event that Indonesia does feel obliged to intervene without a Portuguese request or acquiescence. As of now I still do not expect this latter contingency but much will depend on what happens in Portugal and on the ground in Timor.

8. If the Prime Minister does decide on some personal message to the President in the situation as it is now, I would suggest that he be guided in part by paragraphs 15 and 21 of my O.JA1389.² We come back I think to the following essential factors;

- (a) it is Indonesia's policy to incorporate Timor. Indonesia had hoped this could be achieved over a period of time in an internationally accepted manner;
- (b) the present situation, which is not really Indonesia's fault, despite tendencies to blame them in some quarters, seems to render improbable Portuguese reassertion of its authority or effective action by the United Nations;
- (c) the President will even at this stage only decide to intervene with considerable reluctance and, if he does so, we should not place ourselves in the vanguard of Indonesia's critics. Rather we should show as much understanding as we can of Indonesia's position and we should do what we can to assist in the humanitarian field in the restoration of peace and order; and finally
- (d) we should keep in mind that there is no inherent reason why integration with Indonesia would in the long run be any less in the interests of the Timorese inhabitants than a highly unstable independence or continuing factional fighting.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/2/1, i]

183 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 24 August 1975

O.JA1408 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.JA1401,¹ O.JA1403²

Tjan sought an urgent meeting with Ambassador and Dan this afternoon, 24 August. He apologised for the short notice but said that Benny Moerdani (and others) would be meeting with the President tonight. Moerdani had asked Tjan to speak urgently to us in the hope that they might have by tonight an indication of Australia's reaction to Governor Pires' reported appeal for international forces to intervene in Timor to restore peace and order. We informed Tjan that we had asked for guidance but doubted we would receive anything definitive before Monday. Ambassador subsequently told Moerdani this.

2. Tjan said that two days ago Indonesia had instructed their Ambassador in Lisbon to ask the Portuguese Government whether Portugal would wish Indonesia to intervene in Portuguese Timor and restore law and order. They had received an interim reply from the Portuguese Foreign Minister which in effect said that while he was grateful for Indonesia's offer he was in

² Document 177.

¹ Document 182.

² 24 August. It reported an urgent Indonesian request for Australia's reaction to Pires's call for international forces to restore peace and order, suggesting that what the Indonesians really wanted to know was what Australia's reaction would be to an Indonesian response.

no position to give an authoritative response. Tjan said that Indonesia was now anxiously awaiting Portugal's final reply (paragraph 4 of JA1393³ refers).

3. He said that communications between Jakarta and their Ambassador in Lisbon were difficult, and he wondered whether our Ambassador in Lisbon could contact the Indonesian Ambassador and stress the urgency of the matter. Given the political situation in Portugal however, Indonesia would not be surprised if no reply was received at all.

4. He went on to say that President Soeharto would authorise Indonesian intervention if Portugal requested Indonesia to do so. Failing that Tjan believed the President would act if Mr Whitlam indicated that he (the Prime Minister) believed that intervention by Indonesia to restore law and order in Portuguese Timor would now be helpful, given the present circumstances. It could in fact prove the only way to stop the slaughter.⁴

5. It would be clearly understood, Tjan said, that Indonesia would intervene only to restore law and order and that the Indonesian presence would be withdrawn as soon as the wishes of the people of Portuguese Timor had been ascertained (through such means as a plebiscite).

6. Tjan said that their present assessment was that there was now a real possibility of a unilateral declaration of independence by Fretilin. If this were followed by recognition by some countries, the situation for Indonesia would be very serious indeed. It was therefore essential to have urgently Mr Whitlam's views on Indonesian direct involvement.

7. Given the mass of cables you are receiving on Timor the Department and the Prime Minister might look again at our O.JA1401 and our O.JA1389⁵ especially paragraph 21. Of course, in enlisting options open to us in that cable (O.JA1389) we did not list a fourth possible option which the Indonesians have in fact now raised. This option is for support of [at] least of a private nature from the Prime Minister for Indonesian intervention to stop the killing, restore peace and order and establish conditions for the people of Portuguese Timor to determine their own future.

8. We appreciate there would be considerable domestic difficulties in this course of action. We also need to give some thought to the fact that some of the President's advisers want to use Australia's support for Indonesian involvement as a means of getting the President to decide upon this course.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

³ 23 August.

⁴ This cablegram was dispatched from Jakarta at 8 p.m. Jakarta time. It may well have crossed with CH258382, dispatched from Canberra at 10.41 p.m. and reporting information from Matias that Pires's appeal was not a public one, but sent in a telegram to the Portuguese President at a time when Fretilin forces were obstructing evacuation and shelling evacuees. (The President had promised to send a warship.) Matias did not know why the message had been made public from Macao, but believed that it had happened in the particular circumstances of Saturday morning 23 August, when evacuation problems, since solved by the prompt provision of shipping, had been most acute.

⁵ Document 177

184 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 24 August 1975

O.LB238 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

In paragraph 7 of O.JA1401¹ Jakarta comments that 'much will depend on what happens in Portugal'.

2. The demise of the present Portuguese Government is expected any day, to be followed by a more moderate and less communist oriented regime with political party representation broadly based on the April election results.

3. However, in my view, the situation in Timor has, so far as the Portuguese are concerned, passed the point of no return. I do not believe that any Portuguese government could now be persuaded to try to reassert its authority in Timor. Indeed I doubt whether there is even a will to do so. The Portuguese would be greatly relieved to be rid of the Timor problem, and in their approaches to the United Nations there is little recognition of the fact that Portugal still has responsibilities in Timor. The Portuguese now prefer to regard Timor as an international problem with Indonesia and Australia being the most directly concerned.

4. In short, I do not really think it matters very much now what happens in Portugal so far as Timor is concerned. Having lost control of Timor the Portuguese are now content to let others solve the problem.

5. On the question of whether the Portuguese are prepared to ask Indonesia to restore order in Timor, we do not think this will happen in the way the Indonesians would wish. In our view the most the Portuguese will do is seek Indonesian assistance indirectly through the United Nations. The Portuguese Foreign Minister has already told the Indonesian Ambassador orally that they are attracted to the idea of a good offices committee which could be interpreted as an oblique way of declining the Indonesian offer of intervention. (Our O.LB235 and O.LB237.)

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

¹ Document 182.

185 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTACanberra, 25 August 1975¹

O.CH258383 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor*Ref O.JA1401,*² *O.JA1403*³

Prime Minister who is in Sydney and returns to Canberra on Tuesday has seen your telegrams up to O.JA1396 but we have been able to discuss with him by telephone the main points of your O.JA1401 and 1403.

2. As to Governor Pires's reported appeal, circumstances as described by Portuguese Ambassador are set out in our [CH258382].⁴ Appeal has moreover now been clarified by Portuguese Foreign Ministry note and letter to Secretary-General United Nations from Portuguese Foreign Minister described in Lisbon's O.LB237. Letter to Secretary-General places the appeal in context of evacuation operations.

3. It therefore appears that Portuguese Government has not responded to Indonesian enquiry whether Indonesian assistance is wanted in 'restoring peace and order in Portuguese Timor' except in this particular context of evacuation (of[n] which the Indonesians are already acting—your O.JA1399⁵). You will now have seen Lisbon's O.LB238⁶ expressing the view that the most the Portuguese would do is to seek Indonesian assistance indirectly through the United Nations. We remain of the view that cooperation and agreement between Indonesia and Portugal is of primary importance.

4. A further factor is that according to message from vessel *Macdili* now at Dili received here a couple of hours ago and repeated to you in our O.CH258379 situation in Dili at present is calm but tense (though with minor skirmishes and isolated gunfire) and *Macdili* expects to be able to accommodate all known refugees. Indonesian Consul's car has been sighted flying official flag. For the moment at least, therefore, immediate tension may be somewhat diminished although it could of course always mount again.

5. In the circumstances the Prime Minister does not think that any direct or indirect message from him to President Soeharto is called for at this stage.

6. Santos is due in Australia on Wednesday and unless there is a further outbreak in Dili the next steps may relate to his getting to Dili and attempting mediation there. There is also the question of a good offices committee. We are not sure what the next step will be. According to the Portuguese Ambassador, the Portuguese are making or may already have made a request to the Secretary-General for a good offices committee to study the political situation in Portuguese Timor. We understand from the Portuguese Ambassador that Waldheim's feeling is that Portugal, Australia, Indonesia and at least one other regional country might serve on the committee (para 13 of O.UN3624⁷). We feel that we ought to be positive in responding to a

¹ The time of dispatch is given as 12.18 a.m. Although Document 183 should have reached Canberra some time after 11 p.m., it is probable that the two effectively crossed in transmission.

² Document 182.

³ See note 2 to Document 183.

⁴ See note 4 to Document 183.

⁵ See note 1 to Document 182.

⁶ Document 184.

⁷ Document 180.

United Nation's request to serve but we would only wish to serve if the idea of a committee were acceptable to Indonesia; if Indonesia were agreeable to our doing so and if we were in company with Indonesia and some other regional countries.⁸ (We would wish to continue consulting Indonesia closely about this—your O.JA1392).⁹

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

186 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 25 August 1975

O.CH258904 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.JA1401,¹ *O.JA1405*²

You may find following Departmental comments useful:

- (a) Discussion[s] with the Prime Minister indicate that in his view we should not repeat not be in a position where we could be held to be approving in advance Indonesian intervention without a Portuguese request or in effect giving a signal to undertake it. On the other hand, we should equally not wish to be made responsible for blocking Indonesian intervention if the Indonesians for their own reasons have decided they must undertake it. We need to avoid being used to further their own views by Indonesian advisers to President Soeharto (as you suggest in para 8 of your telegram 1408³). Equally in dealing with the press we need to be careful in our indications about how closely we are in touch with the Indonesians and in any reference to the Indonesians' consulting us about or giving us warning of intervention or seeking Australian understanding of it. For similar reasons we should be reluctant to give non-attributable background briefing as suggested in your JA1405 in *advance* of Indonesian intervention or at least before we kn[e]w it was an imminent certainty. We agree with the substance of the background briefing which you suggest, although we should in addition need to express the hope that the people of Portuguese Timor would still be able to decide their own future after Indonesian intervention. (We note Tjan's remarks in your O.JA1408 para 5.)
- (b) Ceasefire and mediation (reference your O.JA1404⁴). We see no particular problems in appealing to the parties to cease fighting in Portuguese Timor; and in the course of public

⁸ Cablegram CH258875 (25 August) requested indications 'without, at this stage, approaching the authorities . . . of likely views of Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand the Philippines.

⁹ 23 August. It reported Adenan's 'grave doubts' about the wisdom of internationalisation, but that he was pleased Australia had urged Portugal to consult closely with Indonesia

¹ Document 182.

² 24 August. In the interests of 'minimising anti-Indonesian feeling and the surfacing of latent hostility', it suggested non-attributable background briefings to 'responsible editors', drawing on paragraph 5 and paragraph 8 (B), (C) and (D) of Document 182.

³ Document 183.

⁴ 24 August. It asked whether Australia could 'even at this late stage call for a cease-fire and offer to assist, along with Portugal and Indonesia, in mediating between the parties if, in the present complicated circumstances, all three parties could be brought to agree', adding that Indonesian involvement in any mediation attempts would be essential.

comment over the next few days we should expect the Acting Minister to stress the importance of bringing the fighting in Portuguese Timor to an end. But a formal call for a ceasefire raises the question of making a ceasefire effective and may lead to pressure for Australia's participation in machinery to bring a ceasefire about. We doubt, moreover, whether even a co-ordinated appeal for a ceasefire by regional countries would have much effect on the Timorese parties. We have some difficulties with your idea of helping, together with Portugal and Indonesia, in mediation between the Timorese parties. Would not our agreement to do so imply that our interests in Portuguese Timor were as important as those of Indonesia and Portugal? So far as mediation is concerned, the best course seems for the moment to be to await the outcome of Santos's mission, which, as we understand, is designed to mediate between the parties. Certainly it remains to be seen, as you suggest, whether he will be able to reach Dili. Also we recognise the danger that his mediation efforts could precipitate virtually immediate independence for Portuguese Timor, which in turn could precipitate Indonesian action.

(c) We are uncertain of the connexion between Santos's mission and the reported Portuguese decision to request a good offices committee from the United Nations. In any event we should be grateful for your continued reporting on Indonesian attitudes towards United Nations' involvement. We understand the Indonesians' fear of internationalisation. But if they were to intervene in Portuguese Timor would they see some virtue in United Nations' involvement after the event, which would allow the United Nations, for instance, by noting the Indonesian action to lend respectability to it?

(d) Reactions to Indonesian involvement. The fighting in Portuguese Timor seems to have been started by the Timorese themselves without outside encouragement; and the Portuguese have publicly admitted that they are no longer capable of controlling the situation in Portuguese Timor. The international context for Indonesian intervention could therefore be regarded as favourable. On the other hand Indonesian intervention now, as you recognise in para 3 of O.JA1240,⁵ might not be a quick, neat military operation but would mean their involvement in an already complicated situation with the risk of Indonesian casualties. The numbers of combatants involved in the fighting in Portuguese Timor seems, however, to be relatively small. We expect tomorrow a new JIO assessment of the likely Indonesian capacity to bring the situation in Portuguese Timor fairly rapidly under control.⁶

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/1/1, xii]

⁵ Document 169.

⁶ In acknowledging receipt of this cablegram and a preliminary version of Document 187, Woolcott noted the 'real damage leaks of this information could do'. He reported information just received from Moerdani of a formal request to be made to Australia to join Indonesia, if requested by Portugal, to help restore order. Woolcott had replied that Australia was not a party principal and that the Government had made it clear after Vietnam that it would not intervene in land wars in South-East Asia. He commented that Moerdani and the Foreign Ministry must know Australian forces could not be sent to Timor in the current circumstances, surmising that 'they are attempting to establish in advance that if they do feel obliged to intervene it will be as the last resort, being able to say they had explored all other avenues' (Cablegram JA1427, 25 August).

187 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 25 August 1975

O.CH258914 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor*Ref O.JA1408¹**For Woolcott (Jakarta), Cooper (Lisbon) and the Minister (Lima)*

We have discussed your telegram O.JA1408 with the Acting Minister. He has confirmed the advice in our O.CH258383² that he does not think that any direct or indirect message from him to President Soeharto is called for at this stage. For your own information, he does not repeat not wish to give a prior indication to the Indonesians that he would understand an Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor in the absence of a Portuguese request. If the Indonesians themselves should decide such intervention necessary he would however be prepared publicly to show understanding of its causes and circumstances. In this connexion we note Tjan's remarks in your O.JA1408 para 5.

2. Our O.CH258383 as to our serving on U.N. Committee, Indonesians will understand for domestic and other reasons we could scarcely give a negative response if we were to receive a request to serve from Secretary-General. We consider however that such a body would not in fact get off the ground unless conditions relating to Indonesia in penultimate sentence of our para 6 were met.³

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

188 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 25 August 1975

O.LB246 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Director of Political Affairs (Cruz) called me to the Ministry at 7.30 p.m. to hand me a third person note. Speaking to the note, Cruz said that the situation had further deteriorated, that the *Macdili* had been unable to embark refugees, that the port area in Dili was being shelled by FRETILIN, who generally appeared to be gaining the upper hand. In present circumstances the Indonesian Consul in Dili considered that it was impossible to evacuate the refugees.

¹ Document 183.

² Document 185.

³ An earlier reply to document 183, comprising the substance of paragraph 1 of this cablegram, was dispatched to Jakarta at 4.08 p.m. (Cablegram CH258289). It was subsequently withdrawn, with instructions to treat the information 'with particular discretion', in favour of this version, dispatched at 11.15 p.m.

2. The Portuguese authorities believed that the situation called for all out action of a humanitarian character including 'the immediate presence of the naval forces of Australia and Indonesia as a means of dissuading the parties to the conflict'.
3. Asked what he meant by 'all out action of a humanitarian character' Cruz said they had in mind that, if naval forces could secure the port area of Dili, at least the evacuation could proceed. (Cruz said that the evacuees were now likely to include as well as Europeans, a considerable number of indigenous people and Chinese.)
4. A note in similar terms had just been presented to the Indonesian Ambassador, and a similar appeal was currently being addressed to Waldheim in New York.
5. If the Portuguese appeal for humanitarian assistance failed, the President had decided to wait 24 hours and then ask Australia and Indonesia to intervene militarily and restore order.
6. Asked why the Portuguese did not immediately request Indonesia to intervene (as they had offered to do) Cruz said that they were afraid that if Indonesia intervened alone, there would be a massacre of FRETILIN forces. Moreover, a unilateral request to Indonesia would be interpreted by FRETILIN as a 'sell out' and could result in some 50 Portuguese troops besieged in the interior (and possibly including 2 Australians) also being massacred.
7. Cruz said that they had no illusions about their appeal for humanitarian assistance. They expected this to fail (a) because the UN would not move fast enough (b) even if Australia were willing, our warships were still in Darwin and were therefore not immediately available, and (c) Indonesia was unlikely to respond to an appeal for humanitarian assistance only. Thus Cruz believes that an appeal to Australia and Indonesia to intervene militarily is inevitable, and that only Indonesia is in a position to respond. But we should all have no illusions about how the Indonesians were likely to behave once they had intervened. For this reason Cruz said that they were anxious if at all possible to try to make Indonesia accountable to the international community for its actions in Timor.
8. I thanked Cruz for the frankness with which he had set out his Government's views. I said I would pass them to you immediately, and that if you had any views to put forward before the expiration of the 24 hour deadline and before the decision to approach Indonesia (and Australia) were implemented, I would get in touch with him.
9. I have just seen Jakarta's O.JA1427.¹ I note the Indonesian view that Portugal did not want to be accused of complicity with Indonesia by requesting Indonesia to intervene unilaterally, but it is clear from what Cruz has said that the real Portuguese fear is what might happen after Indonesian intervention. The Portuguese foresee a bloodbath in Timor unless there can be some supervision of Indonesian actions on the ground.²

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

¹ See note 6 to Document 186.

² In Cablegram JA1428 (26 August), Woolcott commented that he was merely guessing, but doubted whether Indonesian forces would act in the way Cruz believed. He was 'fairly confident' they would handle any Europeans, 'especially Australians, if they were so identified, with care'.

189 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON

Canberra, 26 August 1975

O.CH259518 SECRET IMMEDIATE/PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

*Ref O.LB246*¹

For Cooper, Lisbon; for Woolcott, Jakarta; for Campbell, New York UN; for Minister, Lima

The Prime Minister has considered very carefully the Portuguese request for further help with evacuation. We should be glad if you would inform the Portuguese in advance of 24 hour deadline of the following reply to their request.

- (a) While recognising that Australian interests in Portuguese Timor are not of the same order as Indonesia's and Portugal's, the Australian Government, as the Prime Minister said in his statement today in the House, will be alert to opportunities of contributing humanitarian assistance, but there are real questions of the practicability of such assistance given the breakdown of law and order, in the absence of which humanitarian activities cannot proceed effectively.
- (b) Australia has two naval destroyers at its disposal in Darwin.
- (c) Australia notes that, while the Portuguese authorities call for action of humanitarian character, they also refer to the presence of naval forces as a means of persuading the parties to the conflict (cf. Cruz's remarks to Cooper in paragraph 3 of O.LB246). It seems that the Portuguese authorities envisage that any Australian naval vessels sent to Portuguese Timor in response to their request would be involved in acts of force in Timor by landing at Dili and securing a perimeter against possible attack aimed at disrupting an evacuation. Our own information confirms that such a situation would have to be expected.
- (d) As the Prime Minister said in his statement of 26 August,² the Australian Government is opposed to Australian military involvement in Portuguese Timor. One of the first policy decisions of the Government was to determine that Australia would not intervene again in land wars in South East Asia, and this applies as much to the civil war in Portuguese Timor as to the earlier civil war in Viet-nam. Australian policies therefore would preclude involvement in the circumstances at present obtaining in Portuguese Timor.
- (e) In addition to assistance already given, however, Australia stands ready to provide humanitarian assistance in Portuguese Timor as soon as circumstances permit and its provision does not involve engagement in such acts of force. The Australian authorities are actively examining what possibilities may be open to them. In particular, they are in touch with the ICRC.

2. For Woolcott. Please inform Indonesians and report any comments.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

¹ Document 188.

² In the House of Representatives. See Document 191.

190 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 26 August 1975

O.CH259519 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor*For Woolcott only/Jakarta; For Minister only/Lima*

Following is record of conversation between Prime Minister and Indonesian Ambassador on 26 August:—

*Begins**[matter omitted]*¹

5. The Prime Minister then referred to the two Portuguese officers who had recently arrived in Darwin in connection with the arrival of refugees from Portuguese Timor and he mentioned that we had been given to understand that they were also concerned to explore the possibility of negotiating a settlement between the contending parties in Portuguese Timor. It was possible that they might form part of a delegation led by the former Portuguese Minister for Inter-territorial Coordination, Dr Santos, who, it had been reported, was expected to come to Australia with a view to negotiating with the Timorese parties. The two Portuguese officers, the Prime Minister said, had suggested that a RAAF aircraft fly them to the island of Atauro near Dili. The two officers seemed to be thinking in terms of making the island their base for contact with the Timorese. The Prime Minister said that the Australian authorities were prepared to consider requests of this type from the Portuguese in accordance with his reference in the statement he had made that afternoon that Australia would give all the practical help it could to the Portuguese in their efforts to mediate and bring an end to the fighting. The Australian authorities had not made a decision. They wished to keep the Indonesians informed of the trend of their thinking: Indonesian responsibility and pre-occupations in Portuguese Timor were of an order greater than those of Australia. The territory was after all in the middle of the Indonesian Archipelago. The Prime Minister repeated that we wished to keep the Indonesians informed, commenting that it was reasonable for us to help if there were a chance of bringing the UDT and FRETILIN together.

6. The Prime Minister also said that, if Dr Santos did come here, as a number of reports we had received suggested, and asked for an Australian aircraft to take him to the island of Atauro, the Prime Minister thought that we should have to consider helping.

7. The Prime Minister then mentioned that two Australian destroyers had arrived in Darwin at noon and were refuelling. This put them at about 24 hours' sailing time from Dili. We were most doubtful about having ships in the port of Dili in the present circumstances there. What would happen if the people on shore opened fire with mortars and small arms on the vessels? We should have to respond. Where would it stop? But on the other hand he had been thinking about the possibility of moving the destroyers from Darwin closer to Dili, so that, if necessary, they could more quickly participate in

¹ Her Tasning had been instructed to ask what Australia's attitude would be in the event of Portugal requesting Indonesia and Australia jointly to restore order in Timor. See note 4 to Document 186. Whitlam began his reply along lines traversed in Document 189.

an evacuation. While there were problems and disadvantages in such a movement, Australian public opinion would expect that the Australian Government would be humanitarian and far-sighted enough to be able to get the destroyers to Dili in less than 24 hours if an emergency evacuation were to prove necessary. But we should be most reluctant indeed to take part in an emergency evacuation in circumstances which could lead to an exchange of fire. We should be careful to avoid any exacerbation of the fighting between UDT and FRETILIN. If there were any question of Australian participation in an emergency evacuation in circumstances like those now obtaining in Dili, we should want to be informed of the trend of Indonesian authorities thinking about it. The Prime Minister went on to emphasise that, if there were any requests from the Portuguese for Australian soldiers, we should not be able to agree. The Indonesian Ambassador mentioned that an Indonesian naval ship capable of taking off 300 to 400 evacuees was due in Dili tomorrow. It would take the evacuees to Kupang and there the decision would be made about their future destination.

8. The Ambassador asked what the Australian attitude would be if, in response to a Portuguese request for Indonesia and Australia to participate.² [Mr Whitlam replied that] Australia would certainly not want to involve Australian military forces in Portuguese Timor but that it was up to the Indonesian authorities to make up their own minds how they responded to the Portuguese. We would not be in a situation of seeking to exercise a veto on the Indonesian response.

9. The Ambassador mentioned that the assurances that the President had given to the Prime Minister in Townsville still stood. The Prime Minister, in response, said that he admired President Soeharto's attachment to proper procedures and to the requirements of international propriety.

Ends

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

² There seem to be some words missing from the original copy. The text of this paragraph from this point appears to be Whitlam's reply.

191 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA, LISBON AND NEW YORK

Canberra, 27 August 1975

O.CH259235 UNCLASSIFIED IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

The Prime Minister and Acting Foreign Minister, Mr Whitlam, made the following statement in the House of Representatives today 26th August:—

*Begins**[matter omitted]*

I return, therefore, to the conclusion that the first priority is to put an end to the killing and fighting and to restore order. This objective requires the active intervention of Portugal itself. It is a responsibility that cannot be shrugged off on to others such as Australia. We have no national obligations or interest in getting reinvolved in colonial or post colonial affairs in Portuguese Timor at the very time when Papua New Guinea's imminent independence is leading to the ending of our colonial role there. We have no ethnic or cultural ties with the Timorese which would suggest a role for Australia in substitution for Portugal in Portuguese Timor.

The other interested country in all this is, of course, Indonesia with whom we have been in very close touch on developments in Portuguese Timor in recent days. Indonesia has shared the Australian concern about the evident drift in Portuguese policies and, like us, ha[s] urged on the Portuguese the need to reassert Portuguese control in Portuguese Timor. We, for our part, understand Indonesia's concern that the territory should not be allowed to become a source of instability on Indonesia's borders. Portuguese Timor is in many ways part of the Indonesian world, and its future is obviously a matter of great importance to Indonesia.

Indonesian policy is to respect the right of the people of Portuguese Timor to self-determination and Indonesian leaders have often denied that Indonesia has any territorial ambitions towards Portuguese Timor. Nevertheless, Indonesia's concern about the situation in the territory has now led her to offer, if Portugal so requests, to assist in restoring order there. President Soeharto has made it clear that Indonesia would only wish to act at Portugal's bidding and that the objective would be the limited one of restoring conditions which would allow orderly self-determination to proceed.

The Australian Government has frequently stated its concern that the people of the territory should be able to decide their own future.

Whatever external efforts might accomplish, the hostility and mistrust between FRETILIN and UDT remains the main threat to future stability in the territory. This hostility and mistrust is indeed one of the most disappointing aspects of the situation in Portuguese Timor. The events of the last few weeks have dashed the hopes for Portuguese Timor which followed the change of Government and Portuguese colonial policy in Lisbon. In a little over a year, the situation in Portuguese Timor has become a very dangerous one, mainly—it must be said—because of the shortsightedness of some of the territory's aspiring political leaders.

It is a matter of record that none of the three major political groups in the territory has shown any genuine willingness to work with the others. Each demands that it alone be recognised as the sole legitimate nationalist group. None seems prepared to test its claims to lead the country through any conventional form of democratic process.

At the moment, it is not possible to predict how events will move or what constructive contribution Australia may be able to make. Our first task will be to be alert to opportunities for humanitarian assistance, but here there are real questions of practicability. We shall give what practical help we can to the Portuguese in their efforts to mediate and bring an end to the fighting. I repeat my call to the parties for a cease-fire and the ending of the bloodshed. As events develop it may be necessary for me to keep the House further informed.¹

Ends

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

192 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 27 August 1975

O.CH260002 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

For Woolcott; Minister; Cooper; Harry

Our O.CH258904¹ raised the question of United Nations involvement in Portuguese Timor and Indonesian attitudes towards that involvement. Our reading of the situation is that the chances of Indonesian intervention are growing hour by hour if it is not already inevitable. From our point of view it is thus becoming more urgent to know what Indonesian intentions may be towards United Nations involvement.

2. We realise that it may be awkward for you to take the initiative in raising with the Indonesians the question of United Nations involvement if they were to intervene in Portuguese Timor. But they themselves from time to time mention to you the possibility of their intervening in Portuguese Timor and we see from O.JA1401² paragraph 6 that Australia would be informed in advance if the Indonesians did decide to 'move'. When next the Indonesians raise the question of intervention with you, or if you are given the notice you have been promised, we should like you to ask the Indonesians about their intentions towards the United Nations. You might indicate that we attach importance to the involvement of the United Nations in one way or another at the time of or after Indonesian intervention in terms of improving the international acceptability of that intervention and also in terms of Australian public opinion.

¹ Cablegram JA1474 (27 August) reported Moerdani informing Woolcott that Soeharto was 'very grateful' for this statement, which he had read in full. Soeharto was still insisting that Indonesia should not intervene without either Australian involvement or a Portuguese request to Indonesia. A suggestion that Portugal ask 'officially' ('and presumably privately') was to be made to Girao that evening.

¹ Document 186.

² Document 182.

3. The thinking reflected in Tjan's remarks to you reported in paragraph 5 of your O.JA1408³ and the procedures envisaged in Lisbon's O.LB246⁴ if they are followed would seem to make easier some reference to the United Nations at the time of or after intervention.⁵

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

193 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 27 August 1975

O.LB256 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.JA1476¹

It seems clear that, for the present at least, the Portuguese have decided against asking Indonesia to intervene. Their reasons are complex but they include: pride, a distrust of Indonesian intentions towards Portuguese Timor, a belief that integration (which would be the logical outcome of Indonesian intervention) at the present time would be contrary to the principle of self-determination and the wishes of the majority of the Timorese, and above all the admission (which would be inherent in any such request) that the Portuguese had failed to discharge their proper responsibilities in Timor.

2. For all the above reasons, the Portuguese are casting around for alternative courses of action. They now recognise that the UN is unlikely to be effective, that Australia is not going to be drawn into another civil war in South East Asia, and that only Indonesia can stop the fighting (but at a price which some senior officials—e.g. Cruz—believe will be high).

3. As I see it, the Santos mission is partly designed as a holding operation and a means of putting off the crucial decision about requesting Indonesian intervention. My guess is that the Portuguese hope that the decision will be taken out of their hands and they will be relieved if Indonesia acts on its own initiative, thus absolving Portugal (as the Portuguese would see it) from whatever happens thereafter.

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

³ Document 183.

⁴ Document 188.

⁵ Woolcott sent a 'holding reply (Cablegram JA1476) doubting that intervention was as close as Canberra had suggested, in view of Soeharto's 'continuing firm attitude'. Soeharto was in 'an unpredictable frame of mind at present', but Woolcott was confident virtually all his advisers would want to avoid UN involvement.

¹ See note 5 to Document 192.

THE PORTUGUESE EVACUATION AND FRETELIN TAKEOVER

At the time Cooper sent Document 193 the Portuguese had already taken a decisive step towards quitting Timor. At 2.55 p.m. on 27 August Governor Pires informed the Portuguese Government of his intention to withdraw his administration from Dili to the relative safety of Atauro, an island some thirteen miles from the capital. Over the course of the previous fortnight he had lost control of all local military forces in the colony, save three hundred loyal troops in Bobonaro and Oecussi. By 24 August the majority of metropolitan troops had been evacuated; all that remained were approximately one hundred marines and paratroopers and a handful of staff officers in Dili, and some fifty soldiers besieged in the interior. On 26 August the port of Dili, the only remaining part of the city under Portuguese control, was subject to heavy fire from local forces, prompting the decision to remove to Atauro. The relocation was justified by Lisbon as necessary to 'safeguard the local government, which constitutes the symbol of Portuguese authority in Timor'.

Effectively, Portuguese authority in Timor had been only symbolic since 10 August. The ten days following the Show of Force had seen UDT almost universally triumphant. With the defection of three hundred local police, access to the police armoury and the element of surprise, UDT had managed to capture quickly most of Dili and were effectively holding the Portuguese administration hostage. They had also begun a brutal anti-Fretilin campaign throughout the major population centres and there were reports of 'bitter fighting' in the hills. The disorder was such that much of the reporting coming from Timor was speculative. In an interview with Willesee on 20 August Horta reported that 'Fretilin appeared to be faring very badly'. Australian official assessments suggested otherwise. Although UDT held the initiative and, by controlling Dili, had the greater access to arms, it was felt that Fretilin had the greater discipline and commitment and a secure base in the interior. Even so, the speed of Fretilin's success was something of a surprise, particularly to the Indonesians. By 24 August they had managed to capture half of Dili and obtain a paramount position in the southern hinterland. By the close of August, and although the fighting was still fierce, it was clear that for UDT the end was near.

194 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 28 August 1975

O.JA1480 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Proposed Use of RAAF Aircraft

Ref O.CH260065¹

I spoke to Moerdani 0030 28 August (AEST).

2. He took a surprisingly hard line on proposal to use RAAF aircraft. He said that because of the obvious incapacity of the Portuguese to act he saw no point in the proposed talks at Atauro. It was unrealistic to talk about the Governor transferring the seat of government.

¹ 27 August. It asked Jakarta, on Morrison's instructions, to inform Moerdani of Australian plans to transport the advance party of the Santos mission to Atauro. It noted the times during which the aircraft was likely to be over the Timor area, and requested urgent information, 'without necessarily awaiting an Indonesian response, should you form any impression that a flight . . . at the time proposed would be "inopportune"'.

3. Moerdani said that the presence of an Australian Air Force plane at Atauro would create speculation on the main island. Its presence could also be misinterpreted both in Indonesia and in Portuguese Timor. It would also draw us into a situation which we had sought to avoid in respect of our naval ships in Darwin. I said that this was not so. We would see transporting Portuguese officers to the island in the context of hoping to get mediation between the parties going. It would not carry the risk of any use of counterforce such as would be involved in using our destroyers in Dili harbour.
4. Moerdani repeated that the proposed talks would achieve nothing and that there was no point in pretending that they would. While it was our decision to use an RAAF aircraft for this purpose Indonesia would prefer us not to do so.
5. I asked Moerdani whether he thought this view would be shared by his colleagues. He said 'yes' and that he had also discussed it with the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Professor Mochtar. (As you know Mochtar is also unhappy about the proposal but did not express reservations as forcefully or as explicitly as Moerdani.)
6. Moerdani made a final comment which suggests that he may be getting a little frayed around the edges under present pressures. He said that speaking frankly he felt that the Portuguese 'trust the white races more than they trust us'. I took this to be a reference to the Portuguese seeking our assistance and operating from Australia to arrange mediation between the parties while at the same time declining Indonesia's repeated requests to be asked to do the only thing which they believe to be essential before humanitarian assistance can be resumed or talks between the parties started, namely to reestablish peace and order.
7. I do not have the impression that a flight at the time proposed would be 'inopportune' unless the President has a sudden and unexpected change of heart or unless the Portuguese agree tonight or early tomorrow morning to Indonesia's request that they ask Indonesia, either openly or officially, to restore peace.
8. I detect a tendency amongst the Indonesian authorities to be increasingly impatient with what they regard as Portugal's incapacity to act while remaining reluctant to ask Indonesia to do so. This also applies to what they regard as unproductive and essentially obstructive (to them) efforts to divert energies away from the real issue—the restoration of order—to proposals (the Atauro talks, the UN, etc) which they feel are bound to achieve nothing.
9. I asked Moerdani whether, if we went ahead, he thought the proposed time of the flight would be 'inopportune'. He declined to make any comment on this. He said it was up to us. Incidentally I have assumed the times given in your O.CH260065 namely between 1130 and 1500 hours is Darwin time.
10. My own view is that if we wish to fly the Portuguese officers to Atauro in an RAAF aircraft we should not necessarily be deterred by Indonesia's attitude, although it is clear that they would not welcome our action. Perhaps a compromise would be to arrange a charter flight for the Portuguese officers.

WOOLCOTT

195 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA, LISBON, LIMA AND NEW YORK

Canberra, 28 August 1975

O.CH260571 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*Personal for Minister, Woolcott, Cooper, Harry*

In deciding to provide an RAAF aircraft to carry the Portuguese officers to Atauro (our O.CH260065¹) timing and dangers to the aircraft and its passengers between Darwin and the island had to be taken into account.² There were also other difficult policy questions to resolve. Although inconclusive you may find it useful to have an indication of Departmental thinking on those questions, which have implications for decisions Ministers may have to take on other matters relating to Portuguese Timor as the situation develops there.

2. On the one hand, the Australian national interest requires that, if the Indonesians do decide to intervene in Portuguese Timor, they should do so with as great a degree of international acceptance as possible. Hence our interest in some form of accounting to the UN for intervention (our O.CH260002³ and O.CH258904⁴) and in a continuing Indonesian public commitment to self-determination in Portuguese Timor, a commitment which we trust would be repeated in any Indonesian public announcement about intervention. At the least any intervention would be reported to the United Nations if only to the Secretary-General rather than to the Security Council. But the best prospect for international acceptance of an Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor would be for it to take place at the invitation of the Portuguese. They still play a big part politically and in any action that might be taken by others.

3. On the other hand, while Australia is not a party principal in Portuguese Timor it would scarcely be possible for the Australian Government, having regard to public opinion in Australia and the principles which inform its foreign policies, not to help in such ways as it could in facilitating negotiations between the parties in Portuguese Timor at the request of the Portuguese Government. Though Portugal is no longer able to exercise control it is the entity still legally and internationally responsible for Timor. If the Government had failed to respond to a Portuguese request for help it would have seemed to be hindering an attempt to restore order and find a political solution in Timor and indeed to be contributing to the continuation of the bloodshed there. We should have hoped that the Indonesians would appreciate arguments along these lines, especially against the background of the Prime Minister's statement of 26 August on Portuguese Timor and his subsequent conversation with the Indonesian Ambassador.⁵ In the same way, if Santos comes here we shall have to offer him assistance.

4. We realise that, while the prospects of a successful negotiation between the Timorese parties under Portuguese auspices are at best doubtful, so long as the Portuguese see or profess

¹ See note 1 to Document 194.

² A submission to Whitlam on 27 August recommending the transport of Santos and his advance party records an 'important caveat' that 'within a day or two the Indonesians might have launched a military operation . . . in which case we should probably have to cancel any planned flights'. The Defence Department had taken the view that each flight to Atauro should be subject to an individual operational decision by the Minister for Defence, based on the most up-to-date intelligence, and Indonesia should be given 'very adequate forewarning' of any RAAF flights.

³ Document 192.

⁴ Document 186.

⁵ Documents 191 and 190.

to see some prospects in such negotiations they are likely to delay their approach to the Indonesians. Here we need to take into account that certain of the activities of the Indonesians themselves (see O.UN3650⁶) could be interpreted as rendering Indonesian armed intervention less necessary and improving prospects for a negotiation between the Timorese parties.

5. But do the Portuguese need to see the Santos mission as necessarily precluding a request to Indonesians to assist in restoring law and order? Could not such a request be made before the Santos mission actually enters on its attempt to arrange negotiation? How indeed will the mission be able to operate, once on Atauro, without some degree of order in Dili? In a sense there has already been an Indonesian intervention, which seems to have enabled the Indonesians to negotiate a temporary ceasefire between the contending parties in Dili if only for the purpose of evacuation. Could not these negotiations be enlarged to cover wider political questions? Having had initial success, the Indonesians would seem well placed to slip into a wider role. And could not the Portuguese be encouraged formally to request Indonesia to initiate such a process which could, if successful, be enlarged and formalised to accommodate the Portuguese legal standing and role and perhaps subsume the discussions which the Portuguese hope to initiate at Atauro. Certainly, one consequence of this would be that the Indonesians would achieve some degree of acknowledged status in Portuguese Timor.

6. Foregoing ideas could be discussed at your discretion with Indonesians and Portuguese.

7. We note the useful outline in Lisbon's O.LB256⁷ of Portugal's thinking. It seems to us that the Portuguese will want to get out of Portuguese Timor with the least measure of international disapproval they can. But there must, however, be some residual fund of international goodwill towards the Portuguese because of the accelerated decolonisation the new regime has introduced, despite the bloodshed which has occurred in Angola and Portuguese Timor. The question is whether from the Portuguese point of view it is better for the Portuguese in their withdrawal from Timor to have Indonesian intervention occur, if it is to occur, at the invitation of the Portuguese or without it. Departmentally, our thinking is that Portugal's international interests would be best served if an Indonesian intervention were to occur as a result of a Portuguese invitation.

8. Finally, without labouring the point, it might be mentioned that the thinking reflected above continues to lead the Department to the view that the best way out in Portuguese Timor will be by means of cooperation between the Indonesians and the Portuguese. We hope, therefore, that the Indonesians will make use of the Santos visit to explore the possibility of cooperation with the Portuguese, who, we think, are now showing a certain impartiality in their approach to the problem of Portuguese Timor and that the Portuguese for their part will see that cooperation with the Indonesians may enable them to extricate themselves from Portuguese Timor.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

⁶ 27 August. It reported, *inter alia*, information from Sani that the Indonesian Consul in Dili and the Commander of the Indonesian naval destroyer in Dili harbour had persuaded the three parties to agree tentatively on a ceasefire to permit evacuation. Three smaller Indonesian warships were escorting vessels carrying rice to Dili and planning to return with evacuees. Mochtar had asked for a Portuguese guarantee of safety for personnel involved, a renewed request for humanitarian assistance and either an undertaking to organise unloading the rice or authority for Indonesia to do it. Girao had replied that nothing should be done until the arrival of Santos, who would have full authority; until then Indonesian ships should be withdrawn from the area.

⁷ Document 193.

196 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 28 August 1975

O.JA1499 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: Press Reports*Ref O.JA1401,¹ O.JA1431²*

Your press roundups are useful to us here in explaining to those Indonesian officials who are showing a tendency to impatience that the Australian Government is under considerable domestic pressure on this issue and is trying to be helpful.

2. However, we find some of the editorial comment unrealistic and with an anti-Indonesian bias. If, for example, Australia has a 'moral obligation to end the bloodshed' (SMH) why does not Indonesia have a similar obligation? The calls in a number of papers for self-determination seem to ignore the realities of the present situation on the ground in Portuguese Timor. Our leader writers seem to overlook the fact that a proper act of self-determination has never been held in any Portuguese colony yet and it would seem highly improbable that one would be held in Macao yet it is demanded for Timor in a state of civil war. While we support the principle, we do not consider that the principle itself can be divorced from the realities of Portuguese decolonisation generally and the present situation in Timor.

3. As we have pointed out before—and as it might usefully be pointed out to leader writers—there is no intrinsic reason why the indigenous people of Portuguese Timor—rather than the Eurasians who tend to dominate the present embryonic and immature political parties—should not, in the long term, be as well off within the Indonesian Republic as they would seem likely to be in an economically weak, unstable, non-viable, independent state afflicted by continuing factionalism.

4. We seem to be reacting sensitively to domestic pressures in Australia to an extent to which some Indonesians are starting to see us as obstructing along with Portugal the restoration of peace and order and are beginning to wonder whether, with the exception of the Prime Minister, Australians generally really do attach the importance to friendship with Indonesia they say they do. Our media's approach certainly seems to Indonesians to reflect a public attitude in marked contrast to that of their other regional neighbours, including New Zealand and Japan.

¹ Document 182.

² 26 August. It commended media and Radio Australia handling of the Timor situation as 'quite good so far' and 'representing Australia as taking a responsible, restraining and cautious approach . . .' and went on to reiterate a call for 'a real effort to limit as far as possible ill-informed or hostile comment about Indonesia's role', acknowledging that timing was critical and agreeing with the argument in Document 186 that any press briefing which might suggest collusion with Indonesia must be avoided.



Major General Benny Moerdani, HANKAM



Lieutenant General Yoga Sugama, BAKIN



Major General Ali Murtopo, BAKIN



*Major General Sudharmono, Indonesian
State Secretary*



*General Panggabean, Indonesian
Minister for Defence*



*Major General El Tari, Governor of
Indonesian Timor*



Adam Malik, Indonesian Foreign Minister, 1966–1977



Alex Alatas, Private Secretary to Adam Malik



*Brigadier General A. Adenan, Director, Asia-Pacific Directorate,
Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*



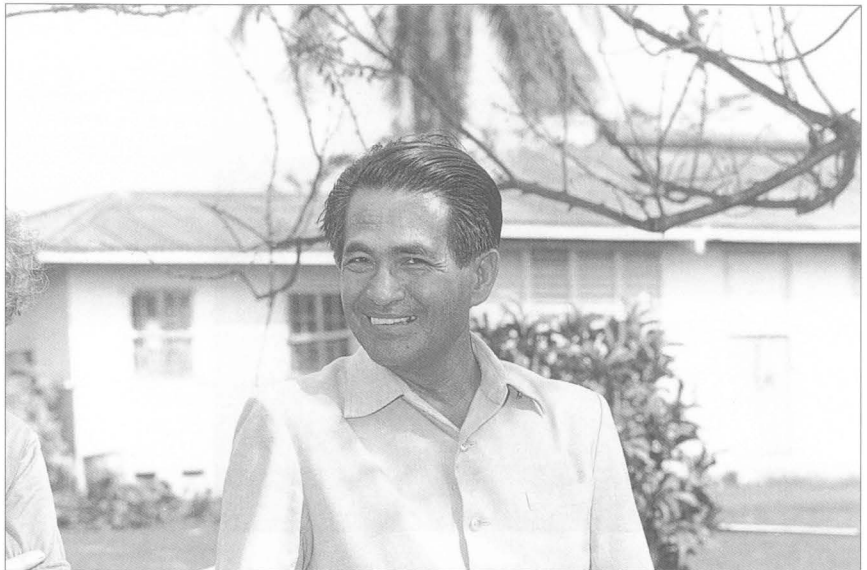
*Harry Tjan, Centre for Strategic and
International Studies, Jakarta*



*Lim Bian Kie, Centre for Strategic and
International Studies, Jakarta*



*Australian Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock with Martono Kadri,
Minister, Indonesian Embassy, Canberra*



Her Tasning, Indonesian Ambassador to Australia

5. We wonder whether in these circumstances you are doing enough to educate and influence domestic attitudes? This is what the Ambassador had in mind in his cable on the need for a better public presentation of the Timor issue (our O.JA1431).³

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxix]

197 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 28 August 1975

O.LB261 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

*Ref O.CH260571*¹

I spent nearly an hour with Cruz this afternoon.

2. I said I wanted to clarify certain aspects of Portuguese policy particularly as it concerned Indonesia. I understood that the Indonesians had again suggested that Portugal should reiterate publicly its inability to restore law and order in Timor and if not prepared to ask Indonesia publicly to intervene they should consider doing so privately. Was this correct? If so how would Portugal reply?

3. Cruz said that the Portuguese Chargé d' Affaires in Jakarta had been instructed to make it clear that there would be no request to Indonesia pending the outcome of the Santos visit. Santos had been given 'full powers' by the President to negotiate on Portugal's behalf. Asked if these powers included authority to request Indonesian intervention, Cruz hesitated and then said 'yes if he considered it necessary'. However it was clear from Cruz's subsequent remarks that Portugal has no such intention.

4. Cruz said that they had been under considerable pressure from the Indonesians to agree to intervention but Portugal had a responsibility to the Timorese and to the international community not to hand Timor over to Indonesia unless they were satisfied that Indonesia would act only as the agent of the administering power (Portugal) and in accordance with U.N. objectives. This was, *inter alia*, what Santos was commissioned to find out.

5. I asked whether the Santos mission and a request for Indonesian intervention were necessarily mutually exclusive. Could not both avenues be pursued simultaneously (your O.CH260571 para. 5). I referred to this afternoon's lead story on the BBC News which reported that an Indonesian destroyer had anchored in Dili harbour, that the Indonesians had gone ashore

³ The author was presumably Dan. In reply (Cablegram CH261042, 29 August) Canberra assured the Embassy it was taking 'every opportunity to exert a moderating influence on unfair press comment'. The points in paragraphs 2 and 3 were 'valid enough to eyes made clinical by distance' but some of the media tended to take 'the rather simple approach' that all Timorese opposed integration, and there was some feeling that Australia should involve itself more with 'a problem on its doorstep', together with impatience with arguments 'which seem to imply an undue fear of incurring Indonesia's displeasure'. Not all press comment was adverse. The *Australian*, the *Age* and the *Courier Mail* had taken 'a generally sober attitude which recognises the real limits on the scope for Australian action'. The *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Canberra Times* had been more critical of Indonesia, but the restraint exercised by Soeharto had been widely recognised and praised. It reiterated the risk that pressing Departmental views too hard with the press might feed suspicion of connivance with Indonesia: 'In the existing political climate here we cannot afford to give wide currency to this view'.

¹ Document 195.

and arranged a temporary cease fire to permit evacuation of refugees, but that the destroyer had been obliged to withdraw at the request of the Portuguese Government. The whole thrust of the story was that the Indonesians were trying to be helpful and that the Portuguese were being obstructive. This was not calculated to improve Portugal's international image.

6. Cruz conceded the point, but said that in their view once they had given the Indonesians the green light the evacuation operation would have rapidly been developed into a full scale Indonesian take over. Portugal was not prepared to connive in bringing this about. Portugal would not approach Indonesia directly, but only through the United Nations. If the UN called on Indonesia to intervene on Portugal's behalf, Portugal could accept that. But Portugal would not go it alone.

7. I said that Santos could not possibly complete his mission in under a week and it would probably take much longer. Meanwhile there were reports that food was running low in Dili and that humanitarian assistance was urgently needed. Could Portugal afford to ignore this situation, especially when the Indonesians had ships in the area carrying rice and other forms of assistance?

8. Cruz said that if the Indonesians genuinely wished to help with the humanitarian problem, as distinct from furthering their political objectives, they could ask the Governor, who was still the legally constituted authority in Timor, for permission to land and assist with evacuation. If such permission were sought, Pires would agree provided he was satisfied that the purpose of the proposed landing was limited to evacuation and humanitarian aid. As it was, the Indonesians had gone ashore in Dili without seeking permission from anyone. He also thought it significant that the Indonesian Consul had remained in Dili although he could easily have left had he wished to do so.

9. I asked Cruz whether there was any intrinsic difference between the Governor authorising an Indonesian landing and Lisbon giving its sanction for the same operation. Cruz said there was. Pires could authorise a landing for limited purposes, but an authorisation by Lisbon would be regarded in Jakarta as tacit approval for an Indonesian take over. (You will note throughout our discussion Cruz's profound distrust of Indonesian intentions, a distrust which I believe is widely held in official circles in Lisbon.)

10. I said that, on balance, it seemed to us that it was in Portugal's international interests to request Indonesian intervention, and that such a request could be circumscribed along the lines we discussed earlier (our O.LB251 para. 3²). If Indonesia subsequently exceeded the Portuguese mandate, international opinion would probably accept that Portugal had done what it could to protect the interests of the Timorese. However, I assumed that domestic considerations were a factor in the Portuguese Government's attitude. There was presumably no ideological love lost between Lisbon and Jakarta and this I assumed coloured Portuguese thinking. Cruz agreed.³

² 26 August. In it Cooper reported conveying to Cruz, in a Third Person Note, the views in Document 189. Paragraph 3 notes Cooper's suggestion, to counter Portuguese fears of the nature of any Indonesian military action, that a request to Indonesia should make it clear that the request was to achieve certain limited objectives to bring about a ceasefire, and would preclude retaliatory measures against political opponents. Cruz then agreed that any request would be couched in the context of assistance to the administering power to restore law and order.

³ Canberra's reply (Cablegram CH260710, 29 August) expressed disappointment, noting that the dispatch of the *Monginsidi* and other Indonesian vessels was in effect a response to the Portuguese requests to Australia and Indonesia on 26 August. It was 'one of the few effective steps taken to alleviate human suffering' in the territory and it was difficult to see how the request to withdraw could be justified. The incident would make co-operation between the Portuguese and Indonesians more difficult. A further concern was that the fate of seven Australians believed to be in Dili had become a matter of public concern and the Indonesian authorities had offered to evacuate them in the *Monginsidi*. The cablegram instructed that these views be conveyed to the Portuguese authorities, and to Santos in Jakarta. Woolcott noted in reply that it had suited Indonesia to comply with the request to withdraw, strengthening their hand before discussions with Santos: 'they have proved they can do the job but won't without a Portuguese request' (Cablegram JA1515, 29 August).

11. We then discussed the Santos visit. Cruz did not know how long he would spend in Jakarta but Santos' intention was to go from there to Canberra and then to Atauro (if circumstances warranted). He then planned to go to Darwin for talks. Asked if he had anyone specific in mind, Cruz said no. In addition Santos planned to go to Singapore and Malaysia if time permitted. I said we thought this was a good idea although our soundings had indicated that the other countries of the region seemed reluctant to be drawn into the Timor problem.

12. Finally we had a brief discussion on the Portuguese domestic scene. Cruz observed that Goncalves had regained some ground recently and that the President's position was becoming weaker every day.

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

198 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 28 August 1975

O.UN3663 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.UN3650¹

We have noted Portugal's reluctance to allow Indonesian intervention in Timor to restore order (ref O.LB256).² It was this Portuguese reluctance that led us to explore the possibility of providing some UN cover for a Portuguese request to Indonesia to restore order in the territory.

2. I had the opportunity today of a further conversation with Sani but he had no reactions from Jakarta to the possibilities we had canvassed. I would therefore appreciate authority to sound out on a slightly wider basis the acceptability of a mission of the Committee of Twenty-Four which might visit Portuguese Timor to report on the situation once Indonesia had, following on a Portuguese request, taken steps to restore order as the necessary prelude to reinstating a viable process of self-determination. I should like the views of Waldheim, who has been kept closely informed of developments by Sani. I see value, too, in talking to the Portuguese Chargé. I would need at an early stage to talk to the representatives of those countries which might participate in any Committee of Twenty-Four mission. In particular I would appreciate advice as to whether I may say that Australia would be prepared to participate at the appropriate time in a suitable visiting mission.

3. I have just received Jakarta's O.JA1503 and note Tjan's comment that any intervention by Indonesia would be reported to the Secretary-General but that Soeharto is firmly against 'internationalisation'. I would suggest, however, that hostile reactions in the United Nations

¹ See note 6 to Document 195. Harry had also raised with Sani the possibility that Portugal might be reluctant to request Indonesian assistance without any element of UN presence. He suggested a mission of three, a visiting mission of the Committee of Twenty-Four be set up concurrently with any invitation to help restore order. The mission's composition should be acceptable to Indonesia. Sani replied that he personally found the suggestion of such a mission more acceptable than a Committee of Good Offices of the Security Council or the General Assembly, but would seek instructions from Jakarta.

² Document 193.

to any Indonesian intervention might best be avoided by Indonesia itself proposing a Committee of Twenty-Four mission to observe the situation after it had restored order. I believe something along these lines will be desirable even if Indonesia acts with full Portuguese approval; but I see it also as a device to save Portuguese face.

4. The delicacy of the situation in relation to the UN, including possible Chinese interest, was underlined again today in a remark by Under-Secretary-General Tang Ming-chao to A. D. Campbell. Tang said he saw problems in intervention in Timor by Indonesia, an adjacent neighbour, because of the precedent this would set for Angola.

HARRY

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

199 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Washington, 28 August 1975

O.WH22356 SECRET ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

The Indonesian Embassy at Washington has sounded out the State Department at country desk level as to the likely United States reaction to Indonesian intervention in Timor. The Embassy was told that no problem was foreseen, provided that Indonesia intervened at the invitation of the Portuguese. American reactions in the absence of such an invitation were not entirely predictable and would be influenced by the circumstances surrounding the intervention. The possible pitfalls in relation to United States aid, by analogy with the Turkey/Cyprus situation, were pointed out to the Embassy. State Department recognised, however, that the situation in Timor was different from that which had obtained in Cyprus. The integration of Timor with Indonesia represented the solution to the decolonisation of Portuguese Timor that was logically most attractive to the United States. The difficulty lay in finding an acceptable way of achieving this solution.

2. The foregoing views were put to the Indonesian Embassy in light of American knowledge that Costa Gomes had decided on 27th August that, for domestic reasons, he could not afford to invite Indonesia to intervene to restore order in Timor. State Department intended deliberately to convey to the Embassy a softening in the United States attitude towards the possibility of Indonesian intervention.

Comment

3. The United States official community seems to have come to feel that the Indonesians have a better understanding than previously of the domestic constraints on the Administration, and to hope that they will carry out a clean and effective operation in Timor that will not cause the Administration undue domestic difficulties.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

200 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 29 August 1975

O.JA1528 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Following are main points from discussion with Acting Foreign Minister Mochtar at 1300 hours AEST 29 August.

2. Mochtar said that he was seeing me in advance of seeing Santos. He was very pleased with the way in which the Australian Government and the Embassy here had conducted itself during the past complicated week. He had seen the President earlier in the morning. The President shared this view fully.

3. In response to a question Mochtar said that the President had endorsed five principles as his riding instructions for the discussions with Santos. These were:

- (a) The only legitimate authority in Portuguese Timor up to the present is Portugal and, on Portugal's behalf, Governor Pires. (Mochtar said on reflection it was better that the Governor was at present on Atauro Island as this meant that he could not be held for ransom in Dili as could have happened.);
- (b) 'If and when' Indonesia moves in to Timor at the request of Portugal, it would be solely for the purpose of restoring peace and order so that a decolonisation process could be re-established. Subject to Portugal's agreement, Indonesia would be prepared to reinstate Pires on the main island and support him;
- (c) Indonesian forces must be under Indonesian command. The Portuguese had lost the will to fight and in any case there was a danger that Portuguese soldiers might act in accordance with their own political sympathies. If necessary, however, Indonesia would not object to some joint 'political' direction by Portugal and Indonesia of Indonesian forces. But the 'tactical' command must be under Indonesia;
- (d) once order was re-established there should be 'strict and scrupulous adherence to Portuguese and Indonesian understandings on decolonisation' along the lines of the Macao Agreement;
- (e) the cost of the operation should not be borne by Indonesia. Mochtar qualified this and said that, if it became a sticking point, they would amend it so the cost should not be borne by Indonesia 'alone'.

4. In commenting on the above basis for his discussions with Santos, Mochtar said that he and the President were aware of Portugal's problem in that it did not want to create the impression that it was 'selling out' Portuguese Timor to Indonesia. His real task was to convince Santos that Indonesia genuinely wanted to intervene only to restore peace and order and re-establish the conditions under which the people on the island could have a say in their own future.

5. Mochtar said that the President genuinely did not want to intervene with Indonesian forces in Portuguese Timor. He said that it was a very backward territory which would impose a drain on Indonesia's developmental funds. There was also the question of 'international flak' which Indonesia would prefer to avoid. Indonesia had always been in the vanguard of anti-colonialism and support for independence. Indonesia did not want to be depicted as 'brown colonialists'. His problem with Santos would be to get the Portuguese to believe this.

6. Mochtar drew the analogy of Mountbatten's order to the British forces to restore law and order in Java at the end of the Second World War pending the return of the Dutch. Indonesia simply did not relish being cast in a similar role.

Comment

7. While Mochtar is egocentric he is also a highly intelligent man who seems to have had some success—where Malik did not—in getting the President to agree to him having some limited role in Timor matters at present.

8. Mochtar also spoke highly of the President. He said the President had shown 'his real authority' and added that 'a weak leader could not have done this'.

9. Before I left I mentioned I had heard of a suggestion that a mission of the Committee of Twenty-Four might be asked to visit Portuguese Timor to report on the situation once Indonesia had, after a Portuguese request, taken steps to restore law and order. Mochtar said he had instructed Sani to be prepared to discuss this in New York, but only after Indonesia had restored law and order in Portuguese Timor. The President opposed the idea of any United Nations involvement at this point. But later on and after peace and order had been restored by Indonesia there might be scope for some such mission. The main thrust of Indonesian policy at present was to maintain Portuguese continuing responsibility rather than facilitate their handing it over to the United Nations.

10. There is no chance of Indonesia itself proposing at this sensitive stage a committee such as Harry has suggested in O.UN3663.¹ My own feeling on this question is that we should not ourselves seek to play too active a role in taking initiatives at the United Nations.²

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

201 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 29 August 1975

O.LB264 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.CH26[0]710¹

I expressed your disappointment and concern to Cruz this morning about the Portuguese request for the withdrawal of the *Monginsidi*, and rehearsed the arguments in your telegram under reference.

2. To my surprise, Cruz replied that the Portuguese Government had not (repeat not) asked for the *Monginsidi* to withdraw. When on 22 August the Indonesian Defence Ministry had

¹ Document 198.

² That evening Woolcott reported on further talks between Mochtar, Moerdani and Santos (Cablegram JA1537). Portugal accepted the five principles listed in paragraph 3. The Indonesian forces were to be under Indonesian tactical command, but under the political/administrative direction of a joint authority comprising Portugal, Indonesia, Malaysia and Australia (New Zealand and the Philippines had also been suggested during discussion). Soeharto had agreed. All parties understood that Australia would not want to be involved in a situation which could lead to military force, and Santos had suggested token contributions of a ship and an aircraft to be used for humanitarian purposes. He described the arrangement as a 'symbolic presence' to give the appearance of broader supervision, although in fact the only force would be Indonesian. Both sides were working on a draft memorandum of understanding.

¹ See note 3 to Document 197.

sought permission for the *Monginsidi* to proceed to Dili for evacuation purposes, they had been told that the Portuguese Government had no objection in principle, but that, as the situation in Dili was confused, the ship should contact the Governor on arrival who would be in a position to judge whether in the circumstances an evacuation was practicable. Those instructions still stood. (But see O.JA1490.)²

3. I replied that in that case there had been a serious misrepresentation of the Portuguese Government's position, because the news media had unequivocally put the blame for the withdrawal on the Portuguese Government. Cruz said (with some bitterness) that it was just another example of 'oriental deviousness' on the part of the Indonesians. It no doubt suited them to misrepresent the Portuguese position in this way. The truth was that the Indonesians were determined to take over Timor by one means or another and (Cruz said) 'the best thing we can do now is let them have it'.

4. I suggested that the cynicism implicit in his last remark did less than justice to Portugal's decolonisation policy which, from the outset, had recognised the need to give effect to the principle of self-determination so far as circumstances permitted. This touched Cruz on a raw nerve and provoked a highly emotional outburst which is best reported verbatim: 'Portugal is sick and tired of the whole question of decolonisation. For twenty years the international community criticized Portugal for not giving up its colonies. If only Portugal would decolonise, they were told, the international community would provide Portugal with all the help they needed. And what has happened since Portugal's decision to decolonise? Not a cent has been forthcoming from the international community—only some much appreciated help from Australia. When the going gets rough—as in Angola and Timor—Portugal is told by the international community that they are Portuguese responsibilities and that any problems that arise in the decolonisation process must be solved by Portugal. This was the sort of hypocrisy with which Portugal had had to live in recent times. The international community did not give a damn about self-determination. The mistake Portugal made was in thinking that the international community could be counted upon to assist in these matters. Now they knew better. So far as Timor was concerned, they should have handed it over to Indonesia in the first place. As it was, the internation[al] community expected Portugal to carry on in Timor for another three or so years at a cost of some twenty million dollars a year which they could ill afford, simply to prepare the ground for its incorporation into Indonesia, which the Indonesians had already decided upon anyway. It was mere sophistry to talk about self-determination in Timor—it was going to become part of Indonesia no matter what the Timorese or anyone else wanted'.

5. At the end of this outburst, Cruz recovered his composure somewhat and said that he was of course expressing only personal views, 'although what I have said was a fair reflection of the general Portuguese view'.

6. Having unburdened his soul in this way, I saw no point in further debate with Cruz on the future of Timor. I therefore sought to bring the discussion back to the specific question of the *Monginsidi* and suggested that, if the position were as Cruz had described it, he may wish to consider the need for a public statement by the Portuguese Government to set the record straight. Cruz agreed they may have to consider something along those lines.

7. In conclusion, I mentioned that it now appeared that Santos planned to go to Canberra after Jakarta. We would be glad to see him. As a parting observation, Cruz agreed that the

² 28 August. Yoga had told Woolcott that the *Monginsidi* had moved just outside territorial waters: Portugal had requested the withdrawal until discussions took place with Santos; Indonesia had complied 'to show the Portuguese they wanted to cooperate with them'. They hoped to be able to distribute rice, and take on refugees 'when the Portuguese adopted a more realistic attitude'.

irony of the Timor situation was that the events of 10 August and thereafter in Timor had been largely dictated by events in Portugal itself.

Comment

8. Although I am far from convinced that Cruz's version of events in relation to the *Monginsidi* is the correct one, (he claimed they had heard nothing from their Chargé d'Affaires in Jakarta on the subject which is hard to believe) his highly emotional outburst provides a revealing insight into Portuguese thinking and attitudes. Moreover, I believe Cruz when he said his views were generally held by his colleagues. It suggests that a Portuguese request to Indonesia to intervene may be forthcoming, if only because the cynicism of the Portuguese towards Indonesian intentions and the international community is such that they no longer care what happens in Timor (or Angola). They simply want out.

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xii]

202 SUBMISSION TO WHITLAM

Canberra, 30 August 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

[*matter omitted*]¹

Australian Attitudes

9. Despite these uncertainties it would be impossible, in my view, for Australia not to agree to participate, at Portuguese and Indonesian invitation, in the joint authority, mentioned in the joint memorandum. There are a number of considerations to be borne in mind:—

For

- (a) The agreement provides the possibility that the fighting and bloodshed in Timor will stop quickly and if so, the humanitarian problems can be solved.
- (b) The agreement also recognises the principle that the people of Portuguese Timor should decide their own future.
- (c) The memorandum of understanding outlines a regional solution to the problem of Portuguese Timor agreed between two of the principal parties, Indonesia and Portugal; and it has always been a cardinal point of our policy that a solution to the territory's problems must emerge from such a bilateral agreement.

¹ Matter omitted outlines the agreement between Mochtar and Santos (see Document 200) including the proposal for a joint authority to include Australia. It comments that the Portuguese, while accepting that Indonesian intervention was 'almost inevitable' sought to salve their consciences through some third country acting as 'guarantor of the Indonesians' good behaviour after their intervention', and that country could only be Australia. It notes that the role and powers of the proposed joint authority remained obscure. Relationships between the authority, the Portuguese Governor and the Indonesian Commander were unclear, as were connections between the Indonesian-Portuguese understanding and the talks Santos proposed with the parties in Timor.

- (d) So far as international opinion and Australian public opinion is concerned, the arrangements for the introduction of an Indonesian presence in Portuguese Timor envisaged in the memorandum of understanding could scarcely be better. It seems important that we should seize the opportunity which the memorandum offers: Indonesian intervention might otherwise come about in circumstances in which the principle that the people of Portuguese Timor should decide their own political future might not be recognised. Indonesia's intervention in such circumstances would be less favourable to our interests and would harm bilateral relations between Australia and Indonesia.
- (e) Public opinion in Australia would certainly favour our participating in the joint authority, although we should recognise that some of the Timorese parties, especially FRETILIN, will oppose the Portuguese–Indonesian agreement and that FRETILIN's supporters in Australia might prove active in opposition to the agreement because it provides for Indonesian forces to go into Portuguese Timor. The Government would not entirely escape domestic criticism on this score. But it seems likely to be much less than if Indonesian intervention took place in different circumstances.

Against

- (f) Australian participation in the joint authority will engage us more deeply in the affairs of Portuguese Timor. On the other hand, we are already being gradually involved in the territory because of pressure for humanitarian help there, logistic assistance to the Portuguese in their planned talks with the Timorese part[ies] and so forth, a process which it is difficult to control and which arouses Indonesian suspicions that we are colluding with the Portuguese against Indonesian interests. As mentioned above—even in the absence of any Indonesian–Portuguese agreement on Timor—it is clear that, because of the depths of their suspicions of the Indonesians, the Portuguese are trying to involve us in the territory as far as they can and it is difficult for us to avoid their pressure.
- (g) Under the terms of the memorandum of understanding we should be assuming a role which implies a degree of supervision of the Indonesian task force and in that sense we should be a guarantor of Indonesian good behaviour in Timor, before both international and Australian public opinion. In this role we can help to see that the people of Portuguese Timor are allowed to decide their own future. But we should be prudent not to assume that the commitments the Indonesians are now making regarding respect for self determination and for the processes agreed at Macao will necessarily be honoured. The behaviour of the Indonesian task force may also raise problems for us. This aspect constitutes a real difficulty for us. By agreeing to participate in the joint authority we might help towards a solution of the immediate problem in Portuguese Timor, but only at the cost of creating a much larger problem for our bilateral relations with Indonesia in the months and perhaps years to come. Clearly we must try to minimise this difficulty in what is now proposed.

Negotiation with Dr Santos

10. In discussions with Santos when he is here you will clearly not be able to say simply yes or no to the draft memorandum as it stands. There will have to be a negotiation with him. In conducting that negotiation we need to take into account the conversation between the Australian Ambassador in Lisbon and a senior official of the Portuguese Foreign Ministry, Cruz, in which

Cruz remarks that, if agreement is not reached along the lines of the memorandum of understanding, the Portuguese might simply give in to the Indonesian pressure and invite Indonesian intervention without conditions.² On the whole, we think that, despite political uncertainties in Lisbon, the Portuguese are unlikely to take this latter course at least very quickly; and there is always a possibility that, if the agreement with the Indonesians breaks down, the Portuguese might decide, perhaps in the course of Santos's discussions with the Timorese, simply to declare Portuguese Timor independent—or throw the whole problem in the lap of the United Nations—which would make any subsequent Indonesian intervention much less acceptable to international and Australian public opinion. Nonetheless, the attitude of mind revealed by Cruz suggests that we should be able to negotiate changes in the memorandum of understanding or interpretations of it which would suit our interests.

11. In negotiating with Santos it will be important for us to know more of Indonesian attitudes towards the memorandum of understanding. As indicated in paragraph 3 above, our reading of the telegrams from Jakarta suggests that the Indonesians genuinely want an agreement along the lines of the memorandum of understanding and that they are not hoping that the agreement outlined in the memorandum will collapse, leading the Portuguese simply to invite Indonesian intervention without conditions.

The Role of the Joint Authority

12. The sorts of understandings or modifications which we need to negotiate with Santos—and subsequently with the Indonesians although they may not have difficulty with them—relate essentially to the role of the joint authority in which Australia is to take part. We need to know more clearly what the role of the joint authority will be and if necessary to seek to change that role to suit our purposes. Our interest remains to limit our involvement in Timor and hence to limit the role of the joint authority. In particular we should seek to ensure that the authority does not supplant the Portuguese Governor or Portugal as the authority responsible for the territory and for giving effect to the Macao program of decolonisation. In short, we must be certain that the joint authority does not assume some sort of quasi-sovereignty over Portuguese Timor from the Portuguese. Can we limit its role to liaison between the Portuguese Governor and the Indonesian Commander, perhaps providing advice to the former and conveying his views to the latter?

13. Another aim of negotiation with Santos would be to increase the humanitarian content of the memorandum of understanding between the Indonesians and Portuguese and if possible the humanitarian role of the joint authority. From the Australian point of view the greater the role of the authority is humanitarian and the less it is directly political and military the better. The reason for our participation in the joint authority should clearly be seen as humanitarian rather than purely political or military. The presence of the authority itself, whatever its precise role, will help to make certain that the principles of the memorandum of understanding (including decolonisation and so forth) are observed.

Involvement of Australian Forces

14. The question arises also for discussion with Santos whether Australian armed forces in one way or another would be involved in Portuguese Timor as a result of an agreement between the Indonesians and the Portuguese. If some token Australian military involvement is required to bring about agreement on the memorandum of understanding we should see some advantages from the Foreign Affairs point of view in being prepared to use aircraft and, if need be, a naval

² Document 201.

vessel, in an essentially humanitarian role. We should need to be careful in how far we get involved in transporting evacuees who might wish to settle permanently in Australia. Our role would need to be concentrated on the transport and ferrying of relief supplies and also possibly doctors and medical teams into Timor. We should need to make it clear to all concerned that Australia is unprepared to involve itself to the extent of engaging in any act of force in Portuguese Timor. We should want some token Malaysian participation too. Our willingness to make a military contribution, albeit in the humanitarian area, might also serve as a bargaining counter to have our views about the joint authority accepted.

15. We should want to have the agreement notified to the Secretary-General of the United Nations or to see the proposed arrangements accounted for to the United Nations in some other way.

16. The financial arrangements which the agreement envisages are unclear. The memorandum refers to the Government of Portugal as bearing 'financial consequences'. The Portuguese reservations state that they would not accept full responsibility for payment for 'the operation'. The Indonesians say that they should not bear the cost of 'the operation' or at least that they should not bear it alone. Our initial negotiating position might be that Australia would pay for any token military forces we provided. We could perhaps also concede that we should pay the Australian share of the costs of the joint authority.

Conclusion

17. It is unlikely that we shall be able to reach firm conclusions in discussions with Santos. The foregoing ideas serve only as guidelines for those discussions. As I have indicated there are many points of uncertainty in the draft memorandum of understanding which could be resolved in particular ways to suit Australian interests. But our feeling is that we must not press our views to the point of endangering the clauses of agreement between the Indonesians and the Portuguese. In other words, we must not impede the momentum towards the agreement which now exists. The situation in Portuguese Timor itself or other factors may intervene to make a climate less favourable than the present one to the conclusion of an agreement between the Indonesians and the Portuguese on Timor.

Recommendation

18. You will obviously need to seek the views of the Minister of Defence on these questions.

19. Subject to his views, I *recommend* that you endorse the approach described above to the discussions with Dr Santos. You may wish to consider the possibility of approaching the discussions with Dr Santos in two stages—one round of exploratory discussions, to be followed by further talks between Santos and Australian officials, and then a final session in which we should hope to hammer out any remaining points of difficulty.

ALAN RENOUF

203 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA AND JAKARTA

Jakarta, 31 August 1975

O.JA1547 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

I have just seen your O.CH261139 and O.CH261140.¹

2. I think you should keep in mind that barring some dramatic new development Indonesia will not repeat not intervene without a Portuguese request to do so. I suspect Santos believes that if Portugal holds off for long enough Indonesia will do so. I tried to disabuse him of this view here. But if he does still hold it, then I believe he is misjudging a major aspect of the situation. From my 90 minutes talk with him here I would generally share Gouveia's opinion of Santos' approach to the issue as given to Ms Boyd. However, Dan, Taylor, and I all detected some movement in Santos' attitude as our discussion progressed.

3. While it remains Indonesian policy to incorporate Portuguese Timor for all the reasons with which you are familiar and while most would now agree that in present circumstances this is the most logical solution to the question of Portuguese Timor's future, the President does not want to appear to be taking advantage of the present unexpected situation to achieve what was a long term goal, hopefully to be secured by a combination of covert pressures and internationally acceptable political action. In the present situation the President still has in mind the possibility of an anti-Indonesian guerrilla operation in Portuguese Timor and he is still concerned about the additional drain Timor, in its present condition, will be on Indonesia's financial resources and about Indonesia's international standing.

4. It is for these reasons that he wants the Portuguese to ask Indonesia to intervene, that he wants as much regional and international understanding and cover for Indonesian action as possible and that he wants the Portuguese to pay the costs of such an operation or at least the major share.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

¹ 31 August. They reported the return of Santos's advance party from Atauro to Darwin late on 30 August. Gouveia, the Portuguese Consul-General in Sydney, asked Susan Boyd to inform DFA, for very limited distribution, that the opinion and wish of Pires and the three members of the mission was that Portugal should withdraw from Timor and Indonesia take over. Immediate withdrawal was prevented only by the fact that 50 Portuguese soldiers were held by Fretilin at Maubisse and Ailheu. Gouveia admitted that he would have difficulty in persuading Santos to accept the proposition: he was 'emotionally impressed by the "Portugalidade" of Timor' and the mystical allegiance of the Timorese to the flag, not realising it was only allegiance to a symbol, not to Portugal itself. Gouveia nevertheless hoped to persuade him to accept the proposal. Boyd commented that there seemed no reason why Fretilin should surrender the Portuguese hostages; Canberra suggested that consideration might be given to suggesting the Indonesians offer to rescue them as part of arrangements for intervention.

204 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON AND JAKARTA

Canberra, 31 August 1975

O.CH261153 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor—Humanitarian Concerns*Ref O.GE13766¹*

Acting Minister today 31 August expressed wish that RAAF meet requests from Red Cross stemming from what Pasquier describes as urgent need in Dili for medical supplies and personnel.

2. Red Cross is flying supplies and personnel to Darwin tonight and, provided necessary approvals are obtained, it is quite likely that in the next few days the RAAF will make a number of flights from Darwin to various destinations in Timor on the Red Cross's behalf.

3. We have also been asked by the Red Cross to make available an RAAF plane for use under Red Cross operational control.

4. We are therefore finding ourselves more and more involved in Timor, for proper humanitarian reasons and in response to Portuguese requests to us and the ICRC. At the same time, however, Indonesia, to whom an identical appeal was addressed by Portugal, has had its offers of and attempt at assistance rejected by Portuguese authorities (and has publicly expressed its unhappiness at this).

5. Please say to the Portuguese that, for the reasons set out in paragraph 8 of our O.CH261072,² and bearing our own increasing and largely involuntary involvement in mind, we think that the Indonesians must be allowed promptly to play an appropriate part in the necessary humanitarian activities now going on.

For Jakarta

6. Please advise the Indonesian authorities.

[NAA: A1838, 696/5, iv]

¹ 29 August. It reported the Geneva post's informal advice to ICRC that it would be unwise to jeopardise Indonesian co-operation in Timor by rejecting assistance offered, and that Australia was unwilling to exclude Indonesia. The ICRC nevertheless planned to rely on assistance from the Australian Red Cross during the 'emergency phase', for logistical reasons. It saw itself as responding to a Portuguese request, and saw the offer of Australian Red Cross as 'the most realistic in the present circumstances'. The point was also made, in confidence, that Indonesian involvement under ICRC aegis might prove embarrassing 'should the Indonesians use that involvement for other than purely humanitarian purposes'. Pasquier had reported only minor food shortages. It was hoped he would play a mediating role, or at least gain Fretilin permission for Red Cross teams to staff the hospital in Dili.

² 29 August. Paragraph 8 reported a request to the Australian Red Cross to advise Pasquier that 'in terms of our very important continuing relationship with Indonesia it would be unfortunate if we were to be asked for assistance in creating . . . circumstances in which Indonesia was excluded from playing a humanitarian part in a situation which is in the long term of more concern to it than any country or group of people other than the Timorese'.

205 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 1 September 1975

O.CH261649 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

The Acting Minister and the Minister for Defence saw Santos and accompanying Portuguese officials for 1^o hours this morning, Monday 1 September. Discussions were continued between Portuguese and Australian officials over lunch and the Acting Minister and the Minister for Defence saw Santos again for 1^o hours in the afternoon. Our immediately following telegram contains the text of a statement about the outcome of the discussions which was agreed between Santos and Australian Ministers and released to the news media by a spokesman for the Government this evening. The Portuguese undertook that they would not go beyond the agreed statement in dealings with the news media.

2. The discussions with the Portuguese were, in short, fruitless. We shall be sending any additional information that seems desirable after we have examined the records of discussion. The main point which it is important for you to know now is that in the discussions it rapidly emerged that the differences between Indonesia and Portugal were much wider than the Portuguese reservations (your O.JA1541¹) suggest. To judge from Santos's statements to Australian Ministers, there does not seem to be agreement between Indonesia and Portugal on any of the points covered in the memorandum of understanding. In particular, Santos repeatedly stressed that in no circumstances would Portugal alone invite Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor. He indicated that the joint authority envisaged in the memorandum of understanding (which, it is perhaps significant, he sometimes referred to as the joint command) would be the body which would invite Indonesian intervention. In other comments, Santos indicated that he envisaged the joint authority as assuming Portugal's colonial responsibilities in Timor. The Acting Minister made it clear that it would not be possible for Australia to participate in a joint authority which would invite Indonesian participation in Portuguese Timor, or assume Portugal's colonial responsibilities there. In other comments to Santos, the Acting Minister and the Minister for Defence followed the line of the Acting Minister's public statements on Portuguese Timor.

3. Santos also made it clear that he would prefer to see Indonesian intervention take place without a Portuguese invitation than with one. He suggested the international reaction to an uninvited Indonesian intervention would be much worse than we had tended to expect. To judge from his remarks, if no agreement can be reached with the Indonesians or with the contending parties in Portuguese Timor, the Portuguese will simply refer the problem to the United Nations—Santos at one point mentioned the Security Council—in the full knowledge that this action may provoke Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor.

4. There was frank discussion about the mistrust which exists between the Portuguese and the Indonesians. The Acting Minister tried unsuccessfully to get Santos to agree that if Australia provided humanitarian assistance to Portuguese Timor, as she was already doing, then the Portuguese should also allow similar assistance from Indonesia.

¹ 30 August. The Portuguese proposed five reservations to present to the Indonesians: that the force must be multinational, not wholly Indonesian; that Indonesian intervention should cease when order had been restored; that the role of the task force was to keep order, not to administer the territory; that Portugal reserved the right to resume administrative control once order had been restored; and that Portugal would not accept full responsibility for the costs of the operation.

5. The Minister for Defence is placing a VIP aircraft to fly Santos and accompanying Portuguese officials to Darwin on Tuesday, 2 September from Sydney. The two Ministers stressed to Santos that he should travel immediately from Darwin to Atauro on Tuesday in order to ascertain whether discussions with the Timorese parties could be got going. Santos seemed reluctant to go without delay to Atauro or to stay for any time on the island. He appeared to prefer to make Darwin his base for contacts with the Timorese parties. The Ministers expressed their opposition to this latter idea but undertook to transport Santos back to Darwin from time to time as it became necessary, for example, for him to communicate with his Government. Despite Santos's tendency to drag his feet over getting the negotiations with the Timorese parties going, he seemed to attach importance to them and he left the impression, perhaps deliberately, that there was some prospect of agreement, because FRETILIN would see agreement as a means of avoiding Indonesian intervention and UDT would see agreement as a means of avoiding defeat at FRETILIN's hands. We wonder whether Santos's relative hopefulness about the negotiations was not designed in some way to bring pressure on Indonesia and for that matter Australia to reach agreement with Portugal on the questions covered in the memorandum of understanding.²

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

206 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Kuala Lumpur, 2 September 1975

O.KL06162 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

New York UN, for Minister

I called on Zaiton (Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) today to explore Malaysian attitudes towards latest developments in Portuguese Timor.

2. Zaiton began by saying that the Malaysian Government believed that in the long-term interests of the area 'the best solution is for Portuguese Timor to merge with Indonesia'. Although at other points in the conversation he spoke about the desirability of peaceful solutions and an act of self-determination by the people of the colony, I was left with the clear impression that Malaysia saw these principally as steps on the way to Portuguese Timor being incorporated into Indonesia. The final act of self-determination, Zaiton said, might be five years or more away but he believed that in the end the majority of the people of Portuguese Timor would opt for incorporation as the best solution.

3. It was against this background that over the long weekend Malaysia had received a strong and direct appeal from the Indonesians to participate in a peace-keeping arrangement.

² A public statement issued that evening reported simply that discussions with Santos had taken place, that the Australian Government would provide facilities to assist him to reach Timor, and that Australian Ministers would be unable to give a definitive view on participation in a multinational body until Santos had visited Timor and had further talks in Jakarta. On the following day the Malaysian and New Zealand High Commissioners in Canberra were briefed along the lines of this cablegram.

Until that point they had not expected to be involved directly, but had agreed to the proposal as a practical way for supporting Indonesia in its attempt to re-establish law and order in the area. Malaysian participation would be purely a civilian one. The Indonesians had not asked for military support as they were confident of being able to handle the situation themselves. I pressed Zaiton on whether Malaysia would provide troops if they were asked to do so in the future. Zaiton avoided the question by saying that their forces were at present tightly s[tr]etched with their own security problems. However, he did not exclude it as a possibility particularly, I suspect, if it were desirable to give an added touch of respectability to an Indonesian involvement.

4. Zaiton said Malaysia as well as Indonesia saw Australia as having an important part to play in settling the problem. He hoped Australia would join the proposed peace-keeping team. Malaysia did not see Australia as having any military role but principally one of administrative and logistic support for the non-military side of the activities. Australia, he said, had already demonstrated its capacity and willingness to help with relief and humanitarian operations. This had been very welcome and Malaysia hoped it could continue as part of a peace-keeping arrangement.

5. I asked whether Malaysia had given any more thought to an ASEAN initiative as a possible way of inducing Portugal to make some real decision about restoration of law and order. He said Malaysia had thought about this but had put the idea aside for the time being. He added that Portugal had suggested the Philippines as a member of the peace-keeping body but Indonesia had rejected this idea.¹ Nor was he sure about the other ASEAN countries at this stage and seemed to believe that an attempt to involve them would certainly mean further delays and possibly other unnecessary complications. Nor did he see any role for a UN-sponsored initiative or peace-keeping committee. He thought that this would run the risk of introducing too many outside interests into the problem and so further complicate it. He believed if the countries immediately interested could look as though they had a solution the UN would be happy to be relieved of the problem.

6. As I was leaving, Zaiton repeated the point he had made several times in the conversation about Malaysia's wish that Australia participate in the peace-keeping exercise. He thought it in our interests and the interests of the area as a whole that we do so.

PARSONS

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

¹ Woolcott reported (Cablegram JA1537, 29 August) that Santos had initially proposed Portugal, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand. Indonesia objected that this involved three 'white' countries, whereupon the Portuguese suggested the Philippines instead of New Zealand. The Indonesians then stated a preference for Malaysia.

207 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TJAN, LIM AND TAYLOR

Jakarta, 2 September 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

Tjan and Lim Bian Kie obviously set out to impress upon me that statements by the Acting Foreign Minister, Mochtar, were not at variance with the Portuguese Timor policy of the President and Ali Murtopo, and to show that the policy of the latter had not changed. Tjan first gave me a copy of the draft terms of reference of the Joint Authority and said that this was clear proof that Mochtar was following the same policy as the generals. He drew my attention in particular to the distinction drawn in the draft between the first phase, that is the restoration of peace and order, and the second phase, that is the decolonisation process. This distinction was very important for Indonesia because it was in that first phase that Indonesian forces would ensure that result of any pursuant decolonisation program would be integration with Indonesia. Indonesian forces could not have their hands tied during this period.

2. Tjan and Lim Bian Kie stressed that Ali Murtopo and Yoga Sugama were in control of the Portuguese Timor policy. The President was aware of this policy and of the way it was being implemented. The President on the advice of Ali Murtopo had some time ago decided that Indonesia should achieve the integration of Portuguese Timor without the use of naked military intervention; the costs in political terms of the latter would be detrimental to Indonesian interests. But there was no doubt that it was the President's policy that Portuguese Timor should be integrated.

3. Tjan and Lim Bian Kie said that Mochtar was not fully aware of the OPSUS operation in Portuguese Timor. His performance, since becoming Acting Minister, had been good as far as OPSUS was concerned. It was important for the President that Indonesia maintain a clean reputation in international diplomacy. Mochtar was being used to this end (although he was probably not aware of it). He was not leading any group opposed to the generals on the Portuguese Timor policy.

4. Tjan and Lim Bian Kie said that the draft Memorandum of Understanding and the terms of reference of the Joint Authority had been discussed in general terms with the President, who approved them on a 'take it or leave it' basis. Indonesia would not compromise with Portugal on them. If Portugal did not accept this draft, Indonesia would not mind. Indonesia could wait; it did not have to integrate Portuguese Timor tomorrow. It would not be sucked in by the Portuguese to a unilateral military intervention. Indonesia was fully aware that the Portuguese were trying to force Indonesia to intervene without an invitation, but Indonesia would not come to this party. If, in the event of failure to reach agreement on an invitation for Indonesian intervention, the Portuguese turned the question over to the United Nations, then that was also acceptable to the Indonesians. The United Nations could do nothing. It had not been able to solve the Angola problem and it could not do any better in Timor. They were unimpressed by the possibility that through the United Nations Russia and China would have a legitimate means of showing interest in Timor. They also brushed aside any attempt to argue that the situation in Angola was different to that in Timor because the Russians and Chinese were already involved.

5. Tjan and Lim Bian Kie then gave the following account of Indonesian planning for Timor. There would be no outright military intervention. Indonesia was now looking to UDT to bring

about integration. On 1 September they had received from the President of UDT, Lopes da Cruz, a statement supporting integration with Indonesia, and asking for Indonesian assistance. This statement would not be published now but would be kept until an appropriate occasion arose. Such an occasion would be a declaration of independence by FRETILIN; if that happened, not only would the UDT statement be published, but APODETI and other UDT groups around the country would also make similar statements. Lopes da Cruz was in Maliana with the Secretary-General of the party, Dominiges Olivares and there was considerable support for them in Maliana. Pro-Indonesian groups had control of the border areas. Indonesian support—volunteers, arms and so on—could be sent to the Lopes da Cruz faction of UDT to fight FRETILIN. (In answer to a question Tjan said that arms had not yet been sent to the UDT in Maliana.) It was expected that as the fighting continued more and more UDT supporters would come out in favour of integration.

6. While the civil war was going on, Indonesia would appeal to Portugal again to restore peace and order and reinstitute the decolonisation program agreed upon in Macao. If Portugal refused, Indonesia would declare Portuguese Timor a 'no-man's-land', but would still not intervene militarily. There would however, be a very good case for integration once the pro-Indonesia UDT faction gained the upper hand in the fighting.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

208 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 3 September 1975

O.CH262652 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Ministers have not at this point engaged themselves on the details of the Joint Authority. Indeed they have taken the view that in the absence of Portuguese-Indonesian agreement there is no firm proposal at this stage for Australia to consider. We are thus not yet in a position to state firmly whether Australia would participate in the proposed Joint Authority.

2. It is difficult to be more forthcoming in the absence of more precise information on what the Joint Authority should be expected to do. In this connection we have noted the draft terms of reference drawn up by the Indonesians (JA1575¹). Our first impression is that what the Indonesians have in mind would involve the Joint Authority, and by extension, Australia, much more deeply in the decolonisation process in Portuguese Timor than we have hitherto been prepared to contemplate. This could create considerable difficulties for the Australian Government which has all along made it clear that it is unable to take on responsibilities of a colonial character in Portuguese Timor. We are also concerned about the Portuguese emphasis (as conveyed by Dr Santos) on the role of the Joint Authority as directing and controlling what would be essentially an Indonesian task force.

¹ 1 September. The draft terms of reference proposed that the Joint Authority should administer the territory until re-establishment of Portuguese authority, after which it would be based there to prepare for the implementation and supervision of the decolonisation process and to supervise the proposed task force.

3. In view of these difficulties, we have, for your own information only, been giving consideration in the Department to possible alternative regionalisation arrangements which might help overcome Australian difficulties and which at the same time could prove more attractive to both Indonesia and Portugal. But none of this thinking has been taken very far and in particular we have not yet been able to engage Ministers on the matter.

4. We hope to have further discussions with the Acting Minister on this and other matters relating to Portuguese Timor tomorrow, 4 September, and might then be able to provide more definitive advice. Meanwhile, we could not, of course, object if Mochtar wishes to approach New Zealand regarding possible participation in the Joint Authority.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

209 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN FEAKES AND MATIAS

Canberra, 3 September 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

Mr Feakes thanked the Ambassador for coming into the Department at short notice. He wanted to tell the Ambassador that the Australian authorities [were] unhappy with current Portuguese policies on Portuguese Timor, as we understood them following on Dr Santos' visit to Canberra. *Mr Feakes* said that what he was going to say reflected attitudes of Australian ministers. Australia was worried that Portuguese policies seemed to be evolving in a way as to cast on countries other than Portugal the responsibility for any future Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor that might occur. To all intents and purposes, Portugal had abandoned her practical responsibilities in Portuguese Timor, including, for example, the responsibility for giving effect to the Macao program, which Australia had welcomed. Despite Portugal's apparent lack of will to take responsibility for Timor, Dr Santos was intent on conducting negotiations in Timor. What was the objective of these negotiations? Even if there were a useful outcome, who would guarantee it? Australia doubted whether Portugal had the will or the capability of reasserting her authority in Timor. Would Portuguese Timor become another Angola?

2. *Mr Feakes* said that Portugal's policies on Timor appeared not to be taking sufficient account of regional sensitivities and interests. Australia believed that *if*, in the long run, Indonesia were to intervene in any way in Portuguese Timor, it was important that this intervention occur in as internationally acceptable a manner as possible. The thrust of current Portuguese policies as seen from Canberra was to corner Indonesia and to provoke her into making the sort of unilateral intervention in Portuguese Timor which was likely to be most unacceptable to the international community. Portugal seemed intent on maximising regional tensions over Portuguese Timor.

3. *Mr Feakes* said that Australia had done everything it could, within policy limits, to assist the Portuguese in evacuating people from Timor and to facilitate the Santos mission. Australia would continue to be helpful. But so far Portugal seemed to have done little in return to take account of Australian and regional sensitivities in relation to Portuguese Timor.

4. *Mr Feakes* recalled that Dr Santos had told the Acting Minister that, if it proved impossible for Portugal and Indonesia to reach agreement over Portuguese Timor, the whole matter would be referred to the United Nations. Australia was most anxious that Portugal should not refer the question of Portuguese Timor to the United Nations in a way which was critical of or an embarrassment to the Indonesians. It was to be hoped that Portugal would consult Indonesia on how the United Nations should become involved.
5. *Mr Feakes* asked the Ambassador to report Australia's concern and interests to the Portuguese Government. Mr Cooper in Lisbon would be informed of current Australian uneasiness over Portuguese policies.
6. *Ambassador Matias* said he would report all this to his Government. The Ambassador felt, however, that in Canberra people were looking at Lisbon unrealistically. Lisbon itself was undergoing a revolution and the situation there was very fluid. There was also the problem of the varying influences of the civil and the military in Portugal. What Mr Feakes had said would be more understandable to professional diplomats and civilian policy-makers. The military, however, would be less receptive to such representations. This civilian-military problem was exemplified in the different approaches of Dr Santos, a civilian lawyer, and Brigadier Rodriguez, and Governor Pires [who] had cabled Lisbon querying the authority of Dr Santos. Apparently Brigadier Rodriguez and Governor Pires were prepared to invite the Indonesians into Timor in some way. The reply came back from Lisbon that Dr Santos was bearing instructions from the President that *under no circumstances* were the Indonesians to be formally invited to intervene in Portuguese Timor.
7. *Mr Feakes* reiterated that the Australian Government's basic concern was that the thrust of Portuguese policies seemed to be to force Indonesia into intervening unilaterally in Portuguese Timor.
8. *Ambassador Matias* drew Mr Feakes' attention to Portuguese attitudes to Indonesia. It was hard for the current leadership in Lisbon to forget that probably as many as 300,000 people had been killed under the Indonesian Government in 1965-66 during its reaction to the attempted Communist coup. Lisbon feared that if the Indonesians were to intervene in Portuguese Timor, many Timorese would die.¹ Both FRETILIN and UDT leaders and supporters would have to leave or face the risk of being killed. Portugal was looking for a regional power to fill the power vacuum in Portuguese Timor. The only countries in the area which Portugal regard[ed] as world powers were Australia, Japan and possibly China. Indonesia did not rate. The problem for Portugal was that Australia was unwilling to play any significant role in Timor.
9. *Mr Feakes* pointed out to the Ambassador that the Indonesian Government had, in the main, not been responsible for the deaths that occurred after the 1965 attempted communist coup in Indonesia. Traditional differences and rivalries were a major contributing factor. Nor did Australia agree with Portugal that Indonesia 'did not rate' in the context which the Ambassador mentioned. Australia's view was that Indonesia was a power and that Indonesia would ultimately play a major role in filling the power vacuum in Portuguese Timor in one way or another. It was in Portugal's and everyone else's interests to ensure that Indonesian involvement in Timor was not unilateral and without guarantees. Accordingly, Australia had attached considerable importance to discussions and agreement between the Indonesians and the Portuguese. Australia would not take on a colonial role in Portuguese Timor.

¹ In a discussion with Cooper, reported in Cablegram LB274 (2 September), Cruz had expressed pessimism about Santos reaching agreement with Indonesia. In the event of his failure Portugal would probably refer the question to the United Nations. Portugal would be most reluctant to ask Indonesia to intervene, even if fighting broke out again: 'It was not just a question of Indonesian intentions, they did not want a Fretilin blood bath on their conscience'.

10. *The Ambassador* reiterated that Lisbon had great difficulties with the Indonesians. The latter had made a serious error in preventing Major Soares, the President's own emissary, from travelling to Dili via Indonesia. The Portuguese doubted Indonesia's good faith.

11. *Mr Feakes* said that Australia too had been disappointed by the way Indonesia had treated Major Soares. The question of Portuguese Timor was, however, too important to be irrevocably influenced by what may have merely been a misunderstanding. Mr Feakes asked how the Ambassador saw the situation developing in Portuguese Timor.

12. *The Ambassador* said that the recent events in Portuguese Timor had resulted from a series of errors on Lisbon's part. The decolonisation process was begun too quickly. Too little attention had [been] paid to political education and economic development. Two divisions of troops had been withdrawn and not replaced, thus leaving a power vacuum. The way ahead was very uncertain. Dr Santos might succeed in achieving some sort of agreement between the FRETILIN and UDT, thereby providing the breathing space everyone needed to work out future courses of action. If Dr Santos did not succeed, it was clear that Lisbon would *not* formally invite the Indonesians to intervene. Referral of the question to the United Nations seemed unlikely in view of Lisbon's disillusionment with inaction so far on the part of international organisations, especially the UN. The Ambassador could not yet see any way out of the impasse.

13. *Mr Feakes* concluded by saying that Australia appreciated that Portugal's own national interests would largely determine her manner of acting in Timor. Australia was asking, however, that Portugal take very serious account of Australian and regional interests and sensitivities in relation to the Timor question.²

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

210 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 3 September 1975

O.JA1615 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

For the Secretary and the Acting Minister from Woolcott

President Soeharto['s] apparent caution and patience and Acting Foreign Minister Mochtar's extremely dove-like comments over the last two weeks, had led a number of diplomatic observers here to the conclusion that Indonesian policy towards Timor may have changed and that Indonesia has come to the conclusion that it does not now really want to incorporate Timor.

2. This is not so and I believe it might be useful if I try to draw from the plethora of recent cables on Timor and from the labyrinth of half-informed sources (including the Acting Foreign Minister Mochtar himself) an updated assessment of how we consider the Portuguese Timor situation will evolve over the next week or so and how we now assess likely Indonesian policy responses to this situation.

² The points made by Feakes were cabled to Lisbon, Jakarta and New York (Cablegram CH262590, 3 September). The cablegram suggested that if no agreement could be reached Portugal should 'take Indonesian views into account on how the reference to the United Nations should be made'.

3. To recapitulate, President Soeharto decided last year that Portuguese Timor should be integrated into Indonesia. As you know his main reasons were that it would be contrary to Indonesia's national interests to have a very small, economically feeble independent country within the Indonesian archipelago. But the President has all along insisted that force—by which I take him to mean the use of naked force—would not be employed. General Ali Murtopo, who has been instrumental in shaping the President's thinking on Timor, and his OPSUS ('Special Operations') were given the task of achieving the objective through means other than force.
4. Throughout the events of the last three weeks in Timor Soeharto has steadfastly adhered to his decision not to use force, despite pressure from many of his senior advisers especially in HANKAM and BAKIN, many of whom (especially Generals Panggabean and Moerdani) are surprised, irritated and confused at the President's failure to seize what they thought was an ideal opportunity to achieve the policy objective of incorporating Timor, despite the comparatively favourable international climate for unilateral Indonesian intervention. The President has maintained that Indonesian armed intervention will take place only if Portugal requests it or if Indonesian security is directly threatened. He has not defined what he would consider such a threat to be, but foremost in his mind is possible interference in Timor by a foreign country, especially the USSR or China.
5. The President's refusal to agree to Indonesian armed intervention in Portuguese Timor during the last three weeks against the recommendation of his senior military advisers has not hurt him. None of the evidence available to us suggests that his position is threatened. On the contrary his authority has probably been strengthened as it becomes evident to his critics that the chances of Indonesia incorporating Portuguese Timor, without incurring a loss of international standing, may have been increased by Indonesia's inaction.
6. The President's argument in meetings with his senior advisers is based on the fact that Indonesia has no legitimate territorial claim to Portuguese Timor; the claim that he was elected with a mandate to develop Indonesia and that rash action in Timor would divert resources from development and possibly prejudice the flow of foreign economic assistance to Indonesia; and that Indonesia should avoid any action which smacked of Sukarno's adventurist foreign policy. We know he continues to have in mind the importance of preventing action which might threaten the supply of military equipment from the United States or which could create tensions between Indonesia and Australia. Our contacts have stressed the importance the President places on Indonesia being seen to be 'clean'.
7. But President Soeharto has not been diverted from the policy objective that Portuguese Timor should be incorporated into Indonesia. We believe the President is aware of Murtopo's plans for and activities in Portuguese Timor which are proceeding apace. The President is acting skillfully and shrewdly, more, in fact, like a Javanese statesman than a general. On the one hand he is refusing to be drawn into intervening militarily in Portuguese Timor and risking international opprobrium, even though it would be muted in the present circumstances. Through Acting Foreign Minister Mochtar (who I understand is not aware of the covert operations in Timor) the picture of Indonesia as diplomatically patient, clean and helpful is conveyed to the world. On the other hand Indonesia proceeds to arrange covertly for the incorporation of Portuguese Timor.

Future Developments

8. I think that developments in the near future could take one of two courses.
9. First, Portugal could invite Indonesia to intervene to restore peace and order in the hope that the decolonisation process would be completed. For Indonesia to accept, such an invitation

would have to be in terms of the draft memorandum already discussed with Santos (JA1538¹) and the draft terms of reference for the joint authority (JA1575).² President Soeharto has approved that the approach set out in those drafts be put to Santos on what is virtually a 'take it or leave it' basis. Mochtar has been instructed to take a firm line with Santos when the latter returns to Jakarta. Given Cooper's comments from Lisbon, the present Portuguese Government's deep suspicion of Indonesia and Santos' position and attitudes as expressed here and in Canberra, there is very little chance of agreement between Indonesia and Portugal on Indonesian intervention.

10. From Indonesia's point of view it is important that their hands are not tied during the restoration of peace and order phase of any intervention, which they estimate could take about two months. They would, of course, use this period to arrange for a pro-integration result in the following decolonisation process.

11. The second—and most likely scenario, given the dim prospects for Portuguese–Indonesian agreement—envisages a continuation and extension of Indonesia's covert activities adapted to account for recent developments in Timor, the timing of which, if not their nature, surprised the Indonesians.

12. We now have from Lim Bian Kie (Murtopo's Private Secretary) and T'jan (CSIS) a detailed account of Indonesia's planning in this respect.³ This information is regarded by the Indonesians as 'top secret' and should be protected absolutely. It normally would not have been passed to us and has been so that there will be no misunderstanding or misinterpretation at the highest levels in Australia of Indonesian policy.

13. A major development is that the Indonesians have acquired the allegiance of important UDT elements including the UDT President Lopes da Cruz. For the purposes of OPSUS planning it is sufficient to have the support of a part of UDT only.

14. The present OPSUS plan assumes Fretilin will get full control of Dili and declare independence. Indonesia would then demand that Portugal restore the Macao decolonisation program and honour the understandings reached at the secret bilateral talks in London and Hong Kong. UDT President Lopes da Cruz (now in Maliana) would announce that the UDT supported integration with Indonesia and request Indonesian assistance. A written statement to this effect from da Cruz was received by the Indonesians on 1 September. Groups (Apodeti and UDT) in other areas would come out with similar statements. Fighting between them and Fretilin would recommence (assuming it has already died down). 'Volunteers' and arms from Indonesia would strengthen the pro-integration forces. Efforts would also be made to cut off food supplies to Fretilin in Dili and to step up naval patrolling to intercept any arms reaching Portuguese Timor, except through Indonesia. Portugal would again be asked to restore peace and order; it would be unable to do so and Portuguese Timor would become a 'no-man's land'. Indonesia would still not intervene with outright force but would ensure that the pro-Indonesian UDT faction defeated Fretilin and sought integration.⁴

¹ 30 August. It conveyed the draft memorandum of understanding.

² See note 1 to Document 208.

³ See Document 207.

⁴ In Cablegram JA1662 (5 September) Woolcott noted reports that Fretilin had moved more quickly than the Indonesians had anticipated to take control of some areas close to the border, and that UDT was demoralised and nearing defeat. He also noted that defeat of UDT would make it difficult for Indonesia to ensure Fretilin's defeat without infusion of men and equipment on a scale so large as to be 'more difficult to distinguish from outright military intervention'. A Fretilin victory would increase pressure on Soeharto to agree to outright intervention but, to Moerdani's disappointment, on the previous evening Soeharto had said he would not so agree, even if Fretilin had the upper hand, without a Portuguese request.

15. The possibility of Portugal turning the Timor problem over to the United Nations does not worry Indonesia. It considers that the United Nations will be unable to act effectively even in these circumstances.

16. It is clear that Indonesian planning is detailed and has taken account of foreseeable eventualities.

17. The most dramatic part of the OPSUS description is, of course, the extent to which they say Indonesia controls part of UDT. They do not claim the support of the Carascalao faction yet but consider that in time most UDT supporters will favour integration. Apodeti is now regarded virtually as a dead horse as far as Indonesia is concerned although it remains essential as the vehicle for the integrationists in the formal decolonisation process.

18. The apparent extent of Indonesia's contacts with the da Cruz faction of UDT may cast doubt on our previous assessment that Indonesia was not involved in the 10 August 'show of force'. Nevertheless I do not believe that Indonesia was directly involved; it was no doubt aware that UDT was planning action against Fretilin and did not object, but the timing and nature of that action were not of an Indonesian making. The timing did not in fact suit Indonesian planning. A request by UDT to Indonesia at that time for arms was also refused.

Australian Position

19. The Indonesian Government from the President down have made it clear that it greatly appreciates your recent statements on Timor. So far Australian/Indonesian relations have not been harmed by developments in Timor which is of course one of our main objectives. On the contrary, they have been strengthened. They would like us for presentational reasons to agree to serve on the joint authority but they will not be too upset if we do not agree. Although they now see the Santos mission as something of a charade they will go right through with it for presentational reasons and in the unlikely event that Portugal will agree in the end to their terms. They will ask New Zealand to be on the joint authority if we do not come to the party. If New Zealand declines they will with some reluctance turn to the Philippines.

20. The OPSUS plan, if carried out successfully and reasonably quickly could achieve Indonesia's objective without harming her international reputation, including relations with Australia. The OPSUS people are confident that it will work. One of everybody's problems is the absence of authoritative assessments of the amount of weapons and ammunition in Portuguese Timor. We also lack authoritative information on the relative strength of Fretilin and UDT in Portuguese Timor as a whole. Part of UDT and, behind it, Indonesia, would certainly not be up against a well armed politically mature, or externally supplied movement but success could be more difficult than OPSUS considers.

21. Unless the Portuguese invite Indonesian intervention on the terms now set out by Indonesia or unless the OPSUS operation succeeds without becoming too messy, we will be confronted with the situation which we have hoped to avoid, namely a running sore in our region of primary concern and between us and our nearest and most important neighbour. We could be faced with continued internecine strife in Portuguese Timor with Indonesia's covert involvement becoming more apparent. This would mean continuing and increasing humanitarian assistance from Australia and possibly other countries. This could run us into problems with Indonesia if they do in fact seek to use food as a weapon against Fretilin's control of Dili. Another danger for Australia would be support for Fretilin within the Australian community or a polarisation of support domestically along crude 'anti-communist' (pro UDT) versus 'communist' (pro Fretilin) lines. Indonesia and Malaysia will be very firmly opposed to Fretilin.

22. I consider that our interests now would be best served by a Portuguese invitation to Indonesia to restore peace and order in Timor. Unfortunately I consider this unlikely. But if it should eventuate there are several points you might keep in mind in determining whether Australia should agree to participate in the Joint Authority. The Indonesians will seek to ensure that integration results from the decolonisation process. The early phase of their intervention to restore peace would be important for them in achieving this objective and it could become messy. If it did, the Australian Government could be placed in a difficult situation if it were represented on a body which would have some accountability for Indonesian actions, especially in the early period.

23. In the second and more likely scenario I consider our best interests would be served by strict non-involvement outside of humanitarian assistance, understanding of Indonesia's concern about Timor and its action, and by efforts to blunt as far as possible the recrudescence of latent hostility to Indonesia in the Australian community.

24. Domestically, pressures against too obvious an Indonesian involvement in Portuguese Timor are sure to develop. But we should not lose sight of the fact that there is now very little likelihood of a proper act of self-determination taking place in Portuguese Timor and that Australia's best long-term interests, as well as those of Indonesia, and possibly even those of the majority of the indigenous Timorese in East Timor, are likely to be served by the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia.

25. I apologise for the length of this cable but the future of Portuguese Timor is now an extremely important foreign policy issue for the Australian Government, affecting not only our long-term relationship with Indonesia but our role in the Asia and Pacific region. I decided that a comprehensive updated and considered assessment of the situation would be timely. Because of the sensitivity of paragraphs 11–18 and references in paragraphs 20 and 21 you will want to consider carefully distribution of this cable. I have not addressed it to other interested posts for that reason but perhaps the Department could prepare an edited version for distribution to interested posts.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

211 SUBMISSION TO WHITLAM

Canberra, 4 September 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

The discussions with Dr Santos on 1 September deadlocked on two fundamental questions. First, the Portuguese were concerned to shed some of the responsibility for inviting Indonesian intervention in Timor on to Australia. They thus pressed for the proposed Joint Authority to be established prior to Indonesian intervention and maintained that it should be the Joint Authority and not Portugal which should take the responsibility for inviting the Indonesians in. This was unacceptable to Australian Ministers.

2. Secondly, the Portuguese pressed for some national Australian contribution to the proposed intervention force. Ministers explained that Australia could not involve itself militarily. We were prepared to make only a civilian humanitarian contribution. If pressed, however, and if this were the only factor preventing the clinching of an agreement, we assume that Ministers might reconsider the question of an Australian service contribution provided that this contribution was seen to be tied to humanitarian tasks.
3. The discussions with Dr Santos did not permit more than a cursory review of other aspects of the proposal for a Joint Authority. But it seems clear that the Portuguese envisage a substantive role for the Authority in directing and controlling the Indonesian task force, while telegrams from Jakarta suggest that the Indonesians see the Joint Authority as assuming Portugal's colonial responsibilities in Timor including the function of implementing and supervising the decolonisation process once peace and order have been restored. Neither function is acceptable to us. We are also concerned that Australian participation in the Joint Authority could lead us into a position where we were acting as either a guarantor of Indonesian good behaviour or as an accomplice to a dubious act of self-determination. Indeed, as suggested in our earlier submission of 30 August, in addressing the whole question of our participation in the Joint Authority, we need to guard against a situation in which we help towards a solution of the immediate problem but only at the cost of creating a much larger problem for our relations with Indonesia in the months and perhaps years ahead.
4. In the light of the foregoing the Department has been giving consideration to possible alternative regionalisation arrangement. As a precedent (one hesitates to describe them as a 'model') we have gone to the Viet-Nam Peace Accords signed in Paris in January 1973. These accords provided, *inter alia*, for an agreement negotiated bilaterally between the United States and the DRV, for the convening of an international conference to guarantee and generally to place an international stamp of approval on the US/DRV agreement, and for an International Commission of Control and Supervision which among other things was to supervise the cease fire in Viet-Nam. Indonesia, of course, was a member of the ICCS.

Bilateral Agreement between Portugal and Indonesia

5. Could there not be a bilateral agreement between Portugal and Indonesia governing the despatch of an Indonesian peace-keeping force to Portuguese Timor? This agreement could cover the composition and purpose of the peace-keeping mission, the modalities of its operations, and the need to restore conditions allowing orderly progress to self-determination. The exact wording of the agreement would need to be negotiated by Indonesia and Portugal, but a fair start has been made in the areas of agreement already reached in relation to the draft Memorandum of Understanding prepared in Jakarta last week.

Regional Conference

6. Once the agreement had been negotiated by Indonesia and Portugal, an international conference could be convened of Portugal, Indonesia and other regional countries (including most of the ASEAN countries, Australia and New Zealand and perhaps an independent PNG) which might endorse (N.B. *not* guarantee) the Indonesia-Portuguese agreement including the commitment of self-determination. From the Portuguese point of view, such endorsement by a regional conference could help meet Portugal's objective of sharing the responsibility for inviting an Indonesian force into Portuguese Timor.
7. The other side of the coin, of course, is that Australian participation in such a conference would mean that we would incur some of the onus for the invitation to the Indonesians. But it

would be a responsibility one step removed, so to speak. The conference would merely be endorsing an agreement negotiated between two of the parties principal, namely, Portugal and Indonesia. It would mean we should be less engaged than if we were a signatory to the present Memorandum of Understanding which the Portuguese maintain we and the Malaysians should need to sign. The participation in the conference of other regional countries would help dilute Australia's own participation.

8. The absence of representatives of the Timorese political parties from any conference could draw considerable criticism in Australia. We see no easy way around this. It might be argued that Portugal, as the colonial authority, has the responsibility to represent and protect the interests of the Timorese, so that the parties themselves need not attend the conference. But such arguments would not convince critics in Australia. All that can be said is that the Timorese parties would be no less unrepresented than if the approach being discussed by the Portuguese and Indonesians were adopted.

Multinational Supervisory Body

9. The agreement negotiated by Indonesia and Portugal (and endorsed by the regional conference) could provide for the establishment of supervisory machinery made up of representatives of regional countries to monitor and report to the participants of the regional conference on the military aspects of the Indonesian peace-keeping mission. In other words, Indonesia would be accountable to the conference for its military actions in Portuguese Timor, thus going some way to meet Portugal's concern that there should be some restraint on the methods used by the Indonesian task force and some protection of Timorese forces and personalities. While this aspect could contain the seeds of future problems with the Indonesians, we believe that President Soeharto is sincere in wishing to avoid excesses by his troops in Timor. In any case, on this issue, Australia should be prepared if need be to incur Indonesia's displeasure by drawing to the attention of the Government in Jakarta any excesses resorted to by Indonesian forces in Timor.

10. It follows that we feel that Australia should be prepared, if invited, to be one of the members of the multinational supervisory body. It might be logical to use service personnel in such a body much as we have agreed to provide service personnel to serve on a number of United Nations truce supervisory or observer bodies. But if the Government is unprepared to commit service personnel, it might be possible to create a civilian observer body.

11. We should need to resist any move to broaden the terms of reference for any supervisory body beyond a purely monitoring function related to the solely military aspects of the peace-keeping mission. This limitation of the role of the supervisory body may well be acceptable to the Portuguese, whose reservations to the draft Memorandum of Understanding drawn up last week in Jakarta suggest a concern that Portuguese sovereignty in Timor should not formally be supplanted in Portuguese Timor, and indeed that the Portuguese Governor should not be impaired in his function as the chief executive in the territory. We doubt, however, whether the Portuguese have the power or the will to re-establish their sovereignty except in a formal sense.

12. In practice, of course, we should expect that following the establishment of an Indonesian military presence on the ground, there would be a quite rapid drift of power and authority from the Governor to the Indonesian military commander—a process which could well be reinforced should pressures develop in Portugal's own policy to divest itself of its remote Timor responsibilities.

13. Clearly no Australian interest would be served by impeding these processes. But we need to guard against being manoeuvred into a situation where, as a participant in some supervisory

or observer body, we were required to give an official imprimatur to political practices by Indonesia which Australian public opinion would find difficult to accept. Hence the need to focus any supervisory o[r] monitoring machinery on the military aspects of the peace-keeping operation.

14. Portugal and Indonesia should be encouraged to report or notify the agreement to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We should not, of course, wish to draw the parallel with the Paris agreements—and indeed the less said about that in presentation of the proposals the better. But, of course, editorial comment would quickly see the similarities and we should just have to bear with this.

Conclusions and Recommendations

15. The foregoing is no more than a skeleton of a possible new regional approach. It has disadvantages compared, for example, with a straight Portuguese–Indonesian agreement. But we assess that such a simple bilateral agreement is unlikely. It is also possible that the problems attached to unilateral Indonesian intervention are likely to be greater than if Indonesia intervened under some regional cover which could help legitimise the Indonesian operation and neutralise opposition. It would enable Australia to support the Indonesian move and portray the Indonesian move in the context of preservation of regional peace.

16. If it were agreed that some regional initiative were worth exploring, the proposal sketched in this letter has several distinct advantages over the current Portuguese–Indonesian approach involving the establishment of a Joint Authority with a more or less open-ended mandate to assume Portugal's colonial responsibilities in Timor.

17. Thus our alternative proposal would not commit Australia to a continuing political role in Portuguese Timor or imply any sharing of Portugal's colonial burden. Australian participation in the suggested international conference could expose the Government to criticism on grounds that it was a party to a sell-out of the Timorese. But our responsibility for inviting the Indonesians in would be of the second-remove sort. Moreover, Australia should have been seen to have been acting in concert with other like-minded regional countries and we should certainly be less engaged than if we were a direct signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding as the Portuguese are now demanding. Participation in the proposed multinational supervisory machinery would also involve Australia more than we should have liked, but at least that involvement would be concentrated on monitoring the military activities of Indonesia's peace-keeping mission (about which we should be prepared to speak our mind) rather than the more difficult political aspects.

18. Some of the ideas discussed above were touched on with the Portuguese when Australian officials met them over lunch on 1 September. We believe that they might be explored further with the Portuguese team following Dr Santos's return from Atauro. But before we did this, we should need to invite Indonesian views.

19. I should add, of course, that with the lull in the fighting in Portuguese Timor the moment for Indonesian intervention might well have passed: that is, with the fighting dying down apparently of its own accord, and with a Portuguese special envoy hoping to engage the parties in peace negotiations, it is difficult to see any pretext for Indonesian intervention which could be 'sold' to our domestic opinion. But the Department's feeling is that the breach between Fretilin and UDT is now irreparable so that any cease-fire might be short-lived. Timor, in short, is displaying all the characteristics of a South East Asian Angola. If so, the next lapse into political chaos may be the moment for Indonesians to move. So much better if Indonesia is seen to be acting not as a neo-colonialist but as the agent of a group of like-minded countries seeking regional peace.

20. If you are attracted by these ideas you may wish to discuss them with the Minister for Defence. It might then be considered whether we might put the ideas to the Indonesians perhaps with the safeguard that they represented Departmental thinking only. We should need to represent the ideas not as a dampener of their own initiative but as a possible variation of it.¹

ALAN RENOUF

Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/10/1, i]

212 LETTER FROM WOOLCOTT TO MOCHTAR

Jakarta, 4 September 1975

I wish to confirm that Australia has not yet taken a decision on whether or not to accept membership of the joint authority.

In this context you might be interested in what the Prime Minister and Acting Foreign Minister, Mr Whitlam, said in Parliament on 2 September in answer to an Opposition Member's question. He said:

'No definite propositions were put to the Minister and me by the Portuguese emissary because no agreements have been made between him and the Indonesian authorities and no discussions have yet taken place between him and any of the parties in Timor. When discussions have taken place in Timor, when arrangements have been made with Indonesia, that will be time enough for the Australian Government to consider any positive proposal. It was made clear to Dr Santos that Australia could not take on any responsibilities of a colonial character in Portuguese Timor. Australia's role in any international or regional arrangements would need to be concentrated on essential humanitarian areas. The government is already extending considerable help to the International Red Cross in the relief operations it has now launched in Portuguese Timor.'

This response suggests that the Portuguese side has not, in fact, yet extended a formal invitation to serve on the joint authority, although we are well aware through you that they want us to do so. The Prime Minister's answer also suggests that he wishes to defer making a final decision until some agreement has been reached between Portugal and Indonesia.¹

I must thank you for the trouble you have been taking to keep me so well informed during the last 10 days.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

¹ A handwritten marginal note reads: 'The PM, after discussion with Mr Morrison, decided not to pursue this initiative'.

¹ In Cablegram KL06196 (4 September), Parsons reported that Malaysia was prepared to send a token force 'if this would make the joint authority more respectable', but would not wish to be a party to inviting Indonesia to intervene in Portuguese Timor. Zaiton repeated his view on the desirability of Australian participation (see Document 206), and his relief that Australia 'had not completely closed the door on the possibility . . .'

213 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 4 September 1975

O.LB281 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

The following is the outcome of Cousins' discussion today with Major Mota, now the Head of the Timor Office within the Presidency of the Republic.

Arms and Munitions

2. Mota's account of stocks of arms and munitions in Timor followed closely reports you have had from military and civilian evacuees. He said exact figures could only be obtained directly from records with Governor Pires but thought that there were approximately 15,000 semi-automatic G-3 rifles of Belgian or German manufacture. There were also 81mm and 60mm mortars. His total figures were approximately 12-15 of each. Each unit had also been supplied with small numbers of Bazookas. There was also some older small artillery but none of the Timorese forces knew how to operate it. There was however, a substantial stock of artillery ammunition and this could be used as explosives.

3. Mota explained that the relatively large number of weapons and large stocks of ammunition dated back to the pre-25 April period when there were over 3000 Portuguese troops in Timor. The troops had been progressively repatriated but materiel had not. He estimated that even with continued wastage of ammunition through sporadic firing (as recent reports spoke of), the ammunition in UDT and Fretilin hands could last up to three or four months.

4. The bulk of the ammunition was in Dili and therefore in Fretilin hands. There were also however sizable dumps in Baucau, Los Palos and Bobonaro.

5. Mota discounted as insignificant civilian arms and ammunition (mainly for hunting) and police force stocks. On fuel, Mota said that the colony always had six months supply of petrol and diesel fuel. This was principally in Dili.

Military Assessment

6. Mota's military assessment of the situation was that Fretilin was now in a strong position and reports suggested that it was on the offensive. His personal view was that, despite the apparent lull of the last few days, Fretilin would continue the struggle and would not be satisfied until all of the UDT leaders, especially the 'Mestico' ones, had been wiped out. Fretilin had control of the central corridor of Dili—Aileu—Maubisse. It was now advancing both west and east. Mota did not expect much Fretilin success in their westward movement, as this was not a 'traditional' Fretilin area and the owners of the coffee plantations in the Emera—Liquica area were capable of mobilising support against Fretilin. Mota was more confident however of Fretilin success in its advance on Baucau. The people of the Baucau/Los Palos area were mainly Fretilin supporters and UDT had only gained the upper hand there because the Timorese unit in each centre had come out in support of UDT. Their latest reports were that Fretilin forces were already in the mountains behind Baucau. With Fretilin's control of the major fuel and ammunition dumps in Dili and its ideological commitment, Mota gave Fretilin a good chance of success in the east but doubted that Fretilin could gain the upper hand in the border area because of lack of support amongst the population and of Indonesian 'assistance' to UDT and APODETI. Their information at this stage however was that the Timorese unit (and its ammunitions) at Bobonaro had so far remained neutral.

Strategy for Peace Operation

7. Despite the amount of ammunition and arms, Mota thought any operation to restore peace could be carried out fairly quickly, possibly only two or three days. The main element would need to be surprise. An operation involving paratroopers could quickly gain control of Dili and the other main centres where there were substantial ammunition stocks (see above). In a surprise attack Fretilin would no doubt withdraw to the interior but in doing so would be able to take little ammunition or fuel with it from Dili.

Within a few weeks, Fretilin would be relying, basically, on traditional weapons to maintain guerrilla warfare.

Political Aspects

8. Mota said that for ideological and domestic reasons Portugal could never invite Indonesia to intervene. They still hoped to get the two parties together in a united front so that elections could be held. The Macao timetable would now be impossible to maintain. Portugal had to consider a much shorter time as it would now be impossible to send troops back to Timor. Agreement between the parties however would be very difficult. His personal plan, which he had conveyed to President Costa Gomes, was that agreement to a ceasefire should be reached as soon as possible and elections be proposed for two or three months time so the people could choose between independence and integration with Indonesia.¹

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

214 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 5 September 1975

O.CH263759 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

For Woolcott (Kuala Lumpur: for Parsons only; New York UN: for Sen Willesee and Harry only; Lisbon: for Cooper only) from Renouf

Thank you for your O.JA1615¹ which I have discussed with the Acting Minister. He agrees with your comments under the heading 'Australian position', from paragraph 19 onwards.

2. We have repeated the telegram to Senator Willesee in New York and to Parsons in Kuala Lumpur and Cooper in Lisbon. Within the Department, it has been given a very limited distribution. Copies have also been sent to the Minister for Defence, Tange and Jockel.

¹ In Cablegram LB282 (4 September) Cooper noted the difference between Indonesian and Portuguese assessments of the time needed to restore order. The Indonesian estimate was about two months, which, he presumed, included not only the securing of key points, but also mopping up operations in the countryside. The Indonesians wanted a free hand in this period to secure Indonesian political objectives at the same time.

¹ Document 210.

3. . . .² we have confirmation of the planning you describe in paragraph 12 *et seq* of your telegram and there [are] also the press reports referred to in your JA1609.³ You appreciate the considerable stresses and strains which developments such as are being planned by the Indonesians will place on our relations with Indonesia and on current Australian policies towards Portuguese Timor. The longer it takes for the Indonesians to achieve their aims, the greater will be the stresses. Timing is therefore of considerable importance to us. Do you know when the OPSUS plan is likely to be launched? We should also be interested in any indications the Indonesians may give on the likely duration of fighting in Portuguese Timor once their plan gets under way. Is it the two months mentioned in another context (cf. O.LB282⁴)?

4. Because of the difficulties which prolonged Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor would cause for Australia, the other possible solutions of the problem of Portuguese Timor become more attractive to us. In paragraph 15 of your telegram, you mention that Indonesia considers that the United Nations will be unable to act effectively over Portuguese Timor. In the short term at least, we are inclined to question that assessment. Few countries and none of the Permanent Members of the Security Council are likely to have much interest in Portuguese Timor, and this may enable the United Nations to take action over the problem. The following paragraphs reflect my discussion of your telegram with the Acting Minister and the Minister for Defence.

5. There are various courses possible in the United Nations. As a first step the Security Council might designate, or ask the Secretary-General to appoint, someone to go to Portuguese Timor to talk to the parties principally involved and to report to the Council. Some sort of United Nations peacekeeping force could be despatched to Timor or there could be a Good Offices Committee designed to negotiate a ceasefire. Both might be possible: the peacekeeping force might follow the Good Offices Committee. The latter might be selected by the Security Council or appointed by the Secretary-General. It might consist of representatives from selected countries or it might be made up of Secretariat members. Whether these measures would produce a solution to the problem of Portuguese Timor is another question, but at least initially we would by no means exclude the possibility that the United Nations would be able to take some action on the problem.

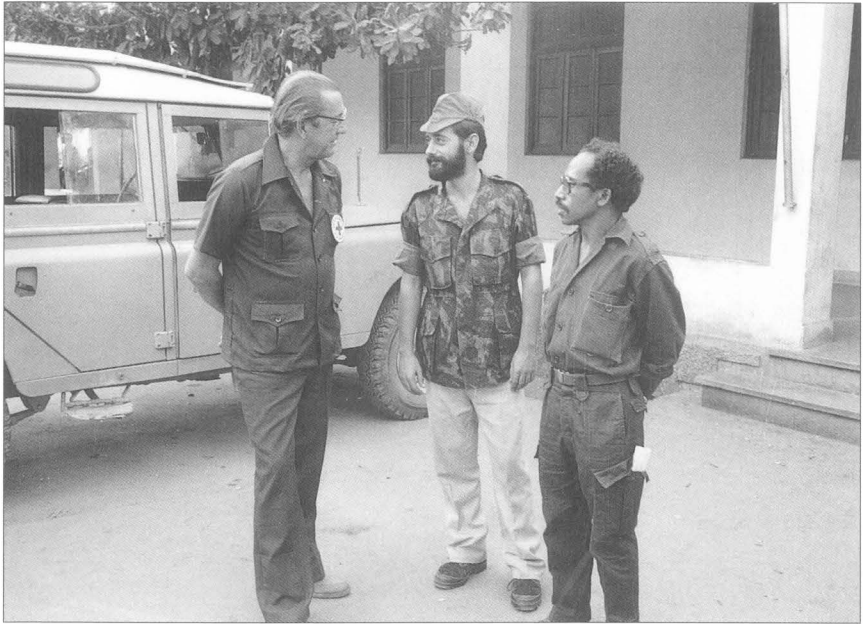
6. We recognise that whatever course is followed in relation to Portuguese Timor it will have substantial disadvantages as well as advantages. This comment applies as much to United Nations involvement as to any other course. But as we interpret the trend of events, they are leading in the direction of Portugal's referring the issue to the United Nations, and it would seem only prudent that Indonesia, ourselves and other interested parties should begin some contingency planning.

7. Nor, indeed, do we share Indonesia's conviction that United Nations involvement would necessarily be detrimental to regional interests. The Indonesians, for example, have indicated strong opposition to the idea of a Good Offices Committee. But they did so, in our view, without giving adequate attention to the possibilities that such a committee might provide for Indonesia to establish its status and credentials in Portuguese Timor.

² Half a line has been expunged here.

³ 3 September. *Berita Yudha* reported a proclamation of integration with Indonesia signed by East Timorese leaders representing a population of 300 000. *Sinar Harapan* quoted General Widodo saying that Portuguese Timorese saw Indonesia as the only saviour from the worsening war. *Kompas* reported the General as saying the war was no longer between Fretilin and UDT, but between Communists and anti-Communists, and that refugees would shortly number 5000.

⁴ See note 1 to Document 213.



Paul Eynard of the ICRC (left) with Chris dos Santos (centre) and Xavier do Amaral (right) outside Fretilin Headquarters, Dili, 10 September 1975



The ICRC's André Pasquier (in white shirt, and holding briefcase) and Fred Isler (on his left) outside Fretilin Headquarters, Dili, 10 September 1975

EVACUATION, AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 1975



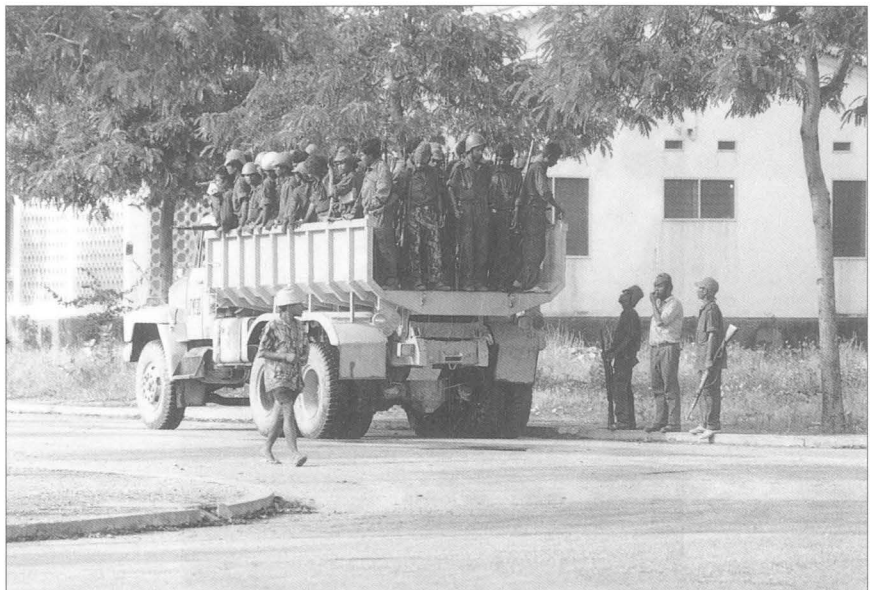
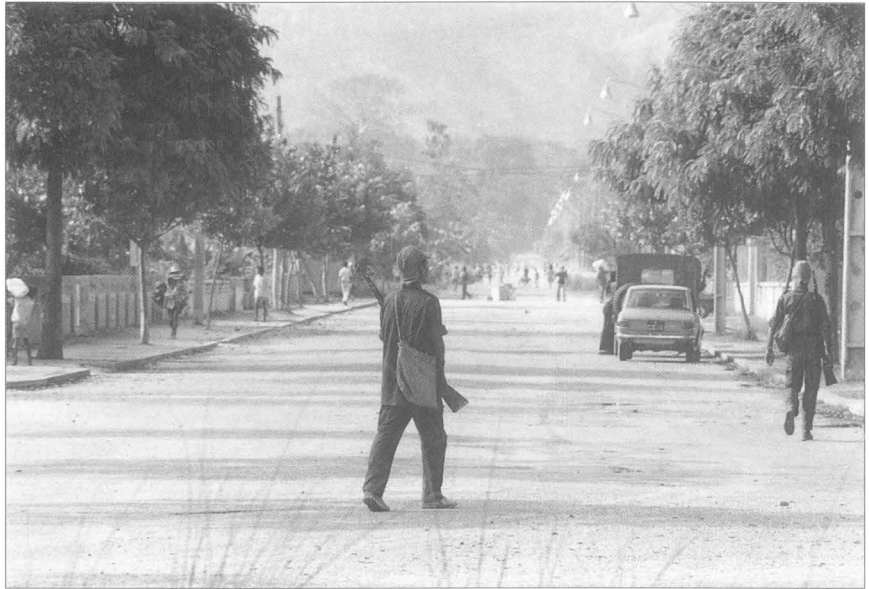
The SS Macdili, carrying 272 refugees from Portuguese Timor, prepares to dock at Darwin harbour.



José Ramos Horta, Fretilin's international spokesman, awaits the arrival of Timorese refugees at Darwin harbour.



Refugees from Portuguese Timor arriving in Darwin



Dili, September 1975



Fretilin soldiers in the control tower at Dili Airport, 10 September 1975



Fretilin soldiers farewell their Portuguese prisoners, Dili Airport, 11 September 1975



Resting vigilant: Fretilin Headquarters, Dili, September 1975



Fishing off Dili, September 1975

8. If we were to go somewhat further down the road of United Nations consideration of Portuguese Timor, there are other possibilities which might be opened up, including the possibility of designating Timor as a United Nations Trust Territory (under Chapter XII of the Charter) with several regional countries being designated as Administering Authority but with Indonesia doing the actual work. The example of Nauru offers a possible precedent: the Administering Authority for Nauru was the Governments of the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, but the other two Governments had Australia act for them in actually running the place.

9. If the issue of Portuguese Timor finds its way into the United Nations Australia would certainly have to participate in any debates and show a forthcoming attitude towards proposals which emerged aimed at restoring peace and the process of orderly decolonisation of the territory. We should hope for Indonesian understanding in this: the Australian community would expect no less of an Australian Labor Government.

10. But the foregoing is not meant to imply any suggestion that Australia itself would initiate action to size⁵ the United Nations of the Timor issue or encourage the Portuguese to do so. It is simply that we believe that Australia and Indonesia should begin to think about possible scenarios if, as seems likely, the Portuguese decide to refer the issue to the United Nations. Naturally we should wish in that event to co-ordinate very closely with the Indonesian delegation.

11. We should also wish to avoid a situation where United Nations involvement takes place in an anti-Indonesian context. With this thought in mind, we consider it important that, if the Portuguese refer the question of Portuguese Timor [to] the United Nations, they should not do so in terms which are critical of or an embarrassment to Indonesia. There is perhaps little that we can do to dissuade them from criticism of Indonesia in their reference to the United Nations, given Portuguese suspicion of Indonesia. It may, however, be worthwhile putting it to the Indonesians that, if their further negotiations with Santos fail, it would be worthwhile trying to keep the atmosphere of the negotiations fairly cordial and hopefully express some understanding to the Portuguese of their intention to refer the matter to the United Nations.

12. Finally, I should mention that we agree with your reasoning in paragraph 22 about the difficulties in Australian participation in the proposed Joint Authority.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

215 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 5 September 1975

O.CH263843 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

New York UN for the Minister

Our immediately following telegram contains the text of a message received from Dalrymple in Darwin covering a discussion last night (4 September) with Dr Santos. Dr Santos had some hours earlier returned from Atauro.

2. Dalrymple has since rung from Darwin to report that Dr Santos has conveyed through him a new proposal regarding a meeting with FRETILIN representatives. This proposal is that

⁵ The text is correct as transmitted and received. 'Apprise' or 'seize' may have been intended.

he should meet Xavier and other FRETILIN leaders in Canberra on 20 September, and that Australia should offer facilities to allow such a meeting. It seems that Santos has been convinced by discussions with Mr Michael Darby (an Australian associated with the present relief operations in Timor and who returned last night from Dili) that FRETILIN is about to take over the whole territory and that the concept of negotiations with both FRETILIN and UDT is thus no longer relevant. Darby had apparently brought a letter allegedly from Xavier to Santos proposing the Canberra meeting on 20 September.

3. Dalrymple informed Santos that the approach now being suggested by Santos was at variance with the Australian Government's approach to the Portuguese Timor problem. He said that he doubted whether the Australian Government would wish any negotiations to take place in Canberra. Santos's response was to the effect that the Australian Government would surely perceive that a new situation now exists: that is, that FRETILIN is now in or near complete control of Portuguese Timor and that it would be in our own interests in terms of our future relations with an independent East Timor to facilitate a meeting between the Portuguese representatives and the FRETILIN leadership.

4. Dalrymple gained the distinct impression from Santos, that he saw in the FRETILIN proposal an 'historical opportunity' for Portugal to hand over power in Timor to a functioning nationalist group in a way which would enable Portugal honourably to fulfil its de-colonisation responsibilities.

5. We have discussed the foregoing with the Acting Minister, who has decided that Santos should be informed that there is no possibility of the Australian Government's agreeing that Canberra, or indeed anywhere in Australia, might be used as a base for negotiations with the Timorese. Rather he feels that the thrust of our policy should be to convince Santos that talks with the Timorese political parties should be held in Portuguese Timor itself, either at Atauro, or, if FRETILIN refuses to come there, in Dili, or perhaps off-shore between Dili and Atauro on board the *Macdili* as was being suggested by Dr Santos in his first discussion with Dalrymple. The Acting Minister is most concerned that Santos should not delay too long before returning to Jakarta. (We have no news of Santos's plans to go back there—and have so informed the Indonesian Ambassador here.) We are advising Dalrymple accordingly.

6. A second request conveyed by Dalrymple from Dr Santos was that the Australian Embassy in Jakarta intervene with the Indonesian authorities to ascertain what has happened to two small Portuguese boats which were sent from Atauro to Kupang some days ago but have not been heard from since. Similarly, the Governor's Dove aircraft which flew to Atambua¹ some days ago with a message for UDT has not since been heard from. According to Dr Santos the flight had been cleared by the Indonesian authority. So where was the Dove now?²

7. We have asked Dalrymple to inform Dr Santos that in our view it would be more appropriate for the Portuguese Embassy to approach the Indonesians on these matters.

8. But we are likely to agree to a request from Dr Santos that a RAAF aircraft fly him to Atauro over the weekend (possibly on Sunday morning) for further discussions with the Governor.

9. With reference to Santos's view that FRETILIN is now in a near complete control of Portuguese Timor (paragraph 3 above), we have had a report from the Australian Favaro, that Bacau has fallen to FRETILIN. But intelligence we have suggests that both Santos's view and

¹ Dalrymple's message read: 'I thought he said that the plane had gone to Atambua (not realising at the time that it is in Indonesian territory). I shall try to clarify this today'.

² The Indonesian Government informed Girao that Santos's aircraft was stranded at Atambua for lack of fuel. Santos insisted that there was more than sufficient fuel for a return to Atauro and that this was further evidence of Indonesian attempts to frustrate his mission.

Favaro's report may be false. Aerial observation yesterday revealed no movement on the Dili-Bacau road and adjacent areas, no threat to Bacau, no sign of any offensive operations and not much fighting at all going on.³

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

216 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 5 September 1975

O.UN3723 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

For Renouf; Jakarta for Woolcott; Lisbon for Cooper; Kuala Lumpur for Parsons

Ref O.CH263759¹

As a basis for contingency planning we have examined the various possible courses which reference of the Portuguese Timor question to the United Nations could take suggested in your reference telegram, taking into account O.JA1663² which indicates that Indonesia could possibly, if reluctantly, accept a Committee of Twenty-Four Mission. We have also noted O.TH3688 which contains some pertinent points about the possible presentational difficulties with what might look like a 'West Irian solution'.³

2. We have studied in particular the practical possibilities over the next week or so, to the extent that this is possible without knowledge of Portuguese intentions. There is one general consideration which needs to be borne in mind. Although Portugal has achieved a remarkable renaissance in the United Nations since last year the Portuguese reputation is not yet entirely restored. It is possible that they are underestimating the likely reaction in the United Nations if at a time when they are failing badly in the final stages in Angola they seem at the same time

³ In late August and early September occasional reports of the situation in Portuguese Timor were received in Darwin from an aircraft radio operated by Frank Favaro, an Australian businessman running a hotel in Dili and a small airline service. RAAF crews ferrying refugees and relief supplies between Portuguese Timor and Darwin were required to carry out safety checks before landing and provided routine situation reports after each flight. The crew of a Caribou landing at Bacau on 4 September reported sporadic distant rifle fire and locals fearing impending military action by Fretilin, although no Fretilin troops had been observed en route. The return flight was delayed when a Portuguese soldier 'in a highly emotional and agitated state' produced a grenade and demanded that he and his family be evacuated. Further observation between Dili and Bacau on 5 September revealed no signs of military activity.

¹ Document 214.

² 5 September. Moerdani had informed the Embassy that Mochtar discussed the matter with Soeharto on 4 September. Soeharto did not favour reference of the question to the Committee of Twenty-Four, but had not ruled out a fact-finding mission. Moerdani thought Soeharto would accept such a mission 'in the interests of demonstrating publicly further that Indonesia was prepared to leave no stone unturned in its attempts to solve the problem correctly'.

³ On 3 September the Netherlands Foreign Ministry had expressed concern, informally, at reports that acceptance of a 'West Irian solution' was gaining currency in some quarters in Canberra. Equation of the two situations was 'misleading, and could only encourage a direct Indonesian takeover'. The present international climate 'would be less tolerant of such a solution, even allowing for the possible justification provided by the collapse of Portuguese control'. The Netherlands Government could not support a denial of self-determination for which there was strong public support reinforced by 'some latent sense of guilt over the Dutch role in West Irian'. The Ministry was considering instructing Netherlands Ambassadors in appropriate capitals to discourage 'quietly' any such solution.

[to be] trying to abdicate their responsibilities in Timor. Any attempt simply to drop Timor into the lap of the United Nations without sensible and apparently workable proposals is likely to produce a harsh new reaction against them. On the other hand the United Nations will probably respond helpfully if the Portuguese come with a constructive proposal in which they appear to be squarely accepting their proper responsibilities as the colonial power.

3. It will be relevant to the Indonesian position also that, should the United Nations admonish Portugal to resume and discharge its proper responsibility in Timor, it might limit Indonesia's room for manoeuvre.

4. Against this background we can envisage two possible scenarios, both containing some prospect of carrying matters forward but both also bristling with difficulties.

5. In the first scenario the Portuguese might again communicate with the Secretary-General reporting factually on the present extent of their control of the territory, the humanitarian measures taken, and international assistance so far received and appealing through the Secretary-General for further humanitarian help in the wake of the fighting and breakdown of law and order and essential services. Such a communication would be based on continuing Portuguese responsibility, and would avoid stating that there had been a breach or threat to the peace or international dispute, but might refer to hopes that order would be restored with the help of neighbouring member states. Mention could also be made of the intention of the Portuguese Government to invite the Committee of Twenty-Four to send a mission as soon as feasible to help with the resumption of the decolonisation process. At the same time the Portuguese could write to the Chairman of the Committee of Twenty-Four referring to the letter to the Secretary-General and the need for international assistance to restore normal conditions in the territory and indicating that as soon as possible thereafter they propose to invite the Committee to send a mission to examine and report on the resumption of an orderly process of decolonisation.

6. The second scenario would be for the Portuguese to accept the reality that the situation is a danger to international peace, to tackle more directly the question of an Indonesian-plus force being introduced and to seek a means of presenting the introduction of this force internationally in a manner acceptable to Portugal, Indonesia and other possible participants.

7. Under this scenario as soon as enough progress had been made in working out command and control arrangements, Portugal, Indonesia and other possible contributors such as Malaysia or New Zealand could *inform* the President of the Security Council in more or less simultaneous letters (referring to Article 54 of the Charter) that they were acting together in the interests of the peaceful settlement of a local problem. This action would *not* of course envisage a Security Council response and although this would have to be examined further, we do not think it need attract one. It would, however, provide some international cover for military action aimed at the restoration of law and order by an essentially Indonesian force. It might provide the means of overcoming the problem of who was inviting whom, leaving the actual conditions of the intervention to be settled privately by the participants.

8. The Portuguese communication to the President of the Security Council and a corresponding one to the Chairman of the Committee of Twenty-Four could also indicate that at the earliest possible time after the restoration of reasonable conditions Portugal proposed to invite a visiting mission by the Committee of Twenty-Four. The corresponding Indonesian communication to the President of the Security Council could note and welcome this Portuguese proposal and confirm that Indonesia's contribution was aimed precisely at the resumption of the process of decolonisation.

9. At about this juncture Australia might indicate publicly that it would favour involving the Committee of Twenty-Four in the way proposed. We could have indicated privately in advance

that we would be prepared to participate in a mission, but it would be desirable to avoid acting, or appearing to act, in one interest only, if we are to play a constructive role in a visiting mission or indeed to be acceptable as a member.

10. The Minister has seen the foregoing and considers that, subject to developments in the situation, we should seek preliminary discussions with the Indonesians and Portuguese here within the next day or two to probe whether they have developed any ideas for action in the U.N. and to canvass the two scenarios in paragraphs 5 to 9 on a 'personal thinking' basis.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

217 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 6 September 1975

O.JA1677 TOP SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

For the Secretary

Your telegram O.CH263843¹ suggests that the Santos mission has been not only fruitless, but misguided. While I agree with the point in paragraph 11 of the Secretary's telegram O.CH263759² about the desirability of keeping the atmosphere of the negotiations between Santos and the Indonesians cordial, even if they should fail, I believe the Indonesians have already assessed that the Santos mission is nothing more than a stalling tactic and a charade. Tjan told us today that Indonesia would not be surprised if Santos proposes to Lisbon that Portugal simply hand over power to Fretilin. In the light of the London talks and the Macao agreement Indonesia would regard this as an act of duplicity.

2. Indeed I find Santos' talk of a 'historical opportunity' and of a 'functioning nationalist group' surprising. Is it not a desperate rationalisation of Portugal's desire to get out of Timor? Is it not also an indication that Santos—because of his own political position and because of Portugal's domestic political situation—is unable to do anything constructive with Indonesia and that the Timor problem has really always been, at least in part, a reflection of Portugal's own political divisions. The whole issue is compounded by Portugal's suspicions of Indonesia—admittedly not without some justification—and its preoccupation with shedding 'honourably' its responsibilities in Timor.

3. Even if Fretilin were to establish, by force, a measure of control throughout East Timor and could come to appear to the outside world to be an embryonic viable government—this remains unestablished despite Michael Darby's views and Fretilin's claims—this would be done in disregard to the London talks, the Macao agreement and the views of the two other parties in the colony. It would also ignore the problem of the more than 3000 refugees already in Indonesian Timor. This number is increasing daily.

4. Tjan told Dan and Taylor today that General Moerdani had discussed the situation in detail with President Soeharto yesterday. They canvassed seven possibilities ranging from at one end an invitation from Portugal to Indonesia to intervene directly to at the other end United Nations involvement (in which Indonesia would participate). The President ruled out

¹ Document 215.

² Document 214.

all options as either impracticable or undesirable except the option represented by the so-called OPSUS plan which Soeharto described as the 'classical way'.

5. As elaborated by Tjan the OPSUS plan is now being implemented by Moerdani. The Indonesians are confident that they can prevent a Fretilin military victory. They will replace some of the refugees forced across the border by the Fretilin advance with well armed 'volunteers' who will provide backbone for UDT and other anti-Fretilin groups. (Moerdani told Tjan that with 500 men he could destroy all the ammunition depots in Portuguese Timor. It is not intended to do this yet.)

6. As evidence that the Indonesian plan was now being implemented, Tjan mentioned that Moerdani had arranged for the seizure of the Portuguese aircraft and ships (mentioned in your recent messages).³ He also said they had seized a Portuguese helicopter. Tjan said that Moerdani had papers signed by the UDT leadership stating that Indonesia was holding these items on behalf of UDT.

7. Tjan said that Moerdani would prefer Santos' return to Jakarta to be delayed so that there would be time for UDT (with Indonesian support) to demonstrate that Fretilin was not the only force to contend with in Portuguese Timor.

8. Tjan indicated that the Indonesian operation could take some time. He said that the longer it takes the more difficult it will be for the Indonesian as well as for the Australian Government.

9. I have just seen your O.CH263868⁴ which develops some of the views first put forward by Santos in your O.CH263843.

10. Perhaps Santos should now be told frankly by the Acting Minister that:

- (a) no country in this region wishes to see what he blandly calls a 'new neighbour' with whom countries in the region will 'have to co-exist for the indefinite future'. (All countries of the region adopt, for obvious reasons, a totally different attitude to PNG.);
- (b) all of the ASEAN countries and the Australian Government believe that a weak unstable mini-state in the middle of the Indonesian Archipelago is not in the interests of the region itself or any of the countries in it;
- (c) while all of these same countries had hoped that suitable arrangements would be made for the people of East Timor to decide their own future this has been rendered impossible—not so much by Indonesia—but by a failure of Portuguese colonial policy and the immaturity and resort to force by two small, Eurasian-dominated, political parties in the colony;
- (d) ethnically, culturally and even by religion, East Timor has much in common with West Timor and although their colonial histories are different, there is no intrinsic reason why the indigenous people of East Timor would not be as free [and] well off within the Indonesian Republic as they would be as an essentially non-viable, independent State which would always be a hostage to Indonesia;
- (e) Fretilin represents an important section of the relatively small Dili-based group of politicians who have assumed a degree of control over East Timor partly because the Portuguese Army allowed them to acquire the weapons to do so. (Portugal's own recent assessments have maintained that UDT was numerically stronger and had more support than Fretilin in Portuguese Timor.);

³ See Document 215, paragraph 6.

⁴ 6 December. Dalrymple reported a second meeting with Santos who had received a message from Fretilin's Central Committee proposing discussions between Fretilin and Portugal in Canberra. Fretilin claimed control of Baucau and was in a position to win the war. The message was delivered by two Australian doctors (Whitehall and Bancroft) working with ASIAT. Santos asked that Australia consult urgently with Indonesia regarding this 'new' situation, and permit him to send the doctors back to Dili with a return message. Dalrymple thought Santos now believed he had 'found a way to disengage, leaving Australia and Indonesia to put up with the consequences'.

- (f) and, far from being an 'honourable' way of 'fulfilling its decolonisation responsibilities', Portugal would simply be abandoning its responsibilities in a way calculated to create instability and incur the displeasure of all the countries of the region of which East Timor is a part.

11. While Fretilin is not a communist party (our JA1665 refers)⁵ it has a pro-communist element and there is enough potential communist influence for it to arouse considerable concern in the ASEAN countries, which are in the process of adjusting to a communist controlled Indo China, if Portugal were now to seek to hand over power to Fretilin as the way out of its present problems.

12. I have given such a high classification to this telegram because of the information in paragraphs 4 to 8 inclusive.⁶ Tjan must of course be protected absolutely.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

218 TELEGRAPH MESSAGE TO CANBERRA

Darwin, 7 September 1975

O.CE679 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Timor

From Dalrymple, Darwin

Ramos Horta returned last night from Dili with the Fretilin reply to Santos re proposal. They are unwilling to meet him on the *Macdili* and have proposed instead a meeting either in Mozambique or Lisbon on 20 September.

2. Santos is today making a counter-proposal that they should meet in Macau on 20 September. This is to be transmitted to Fretilin by Ramos Horta in a telegram to Dili which appears to have been drafted jointly by him and the Portuguese mission. This telegram, according to Santos, also contains a series of injunctions to Fretilin about the necessity of avoiding any action or statement which could antagonise Indonesia or give any possible pretext for Indonesian intervention. It recommends that Fretilin seek to cooperate with Portugal, Indonesia and Australia and that peace and quiet be carefully preserved in the territory under Fretilin control with a firm prohibition on any reprisals against former opponents.

3. Santos was uncertain until last night whether Horta still had much standing in Fretilin. He tells me he is now convinced that Horta is still accepted as a member of the leadership of Fretilin. Santos says that Horta has convincing evidence that the Fretilin leadership now is moderate and that the five or six extremists have little or no influence. He understands these

⁵ Cablegram JA1665 (5 September) argued, briefly, that communist influence might have been stronger if Fretilin had been in existence before the April 1974 revolution. Some of its leading members were generally regarded as at least communist sympathisers and might be susceptible to external communist influence. But the Embassy did not believe it was correct to describe Fretilin as communist in the generally accepted sense.

⁶ On 10 September the cablegram was reclassified by the Embassy as 'Secret'. The substance was repeated to Dalrymple on 8 September as Cablegram CH264372, for discussion with Santos.

latter will be returning to Portugal. According to Santos the intelligence the Portuguese themselves have been able to get in Atauro confirms Horta's account of the moderate complexion of the present Fretilin leadership.

4. Fretilin have empowered Horta to be their emissary to explain to the Australian and Indonesian Governments that they want to cooperate in every possible way. He is to go to Canberra for this purpose tomorrow or Tuesday. I have not been told whom Horta will seek to see on the Australian side: but Santos said he would be requesting an appointment with the Indonesian Ambassador.

5. Santos said that Fretilin's response conveyed by Horta included a proposal that, at the 20 September negotiations, the two sides seek to arrange for the return of Portuguese authority to East Timor for 'a certain period'.

6. Now that he has made contact with Fretilin, Santos is intensifying his efforts to get a dialogue going with the UDT leaders. As you know he sent his Dove aircraft from Atauro to Atambua for this purpose but it has still not returned. The Portuguese Chargé in Jakarta has now been told by the Indonesians that the plane has insufficient fuel to get back to Atauro. Santos says he believed this is untrue because there was more than enough fuel on board to get to Atambua and back to Atauro. He thinks the Indonesians have made a pretext to frustrate his efforts. He is now going to try again. There were two UDT officials among the refugees on the Caribou last Thursday and it is proposed to send them to Atambua or Kupang to contact the UDT leadership and bring back a response in the same way as Horta was used with Fretilin.

7. When Santos has Fretilin's agreement on Macau as a venue on 20 September he expects to go to Canberra, Jakarta and Lisbon.¹

[matter omitted]²

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxxiiA]

219 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 7 September 1975

O.JA1681 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Acting Foreign Minister Mochtar summon[ed] me today, Sunday 7 September.

2. He said that Indonesia had heard on Radio Australia that Fretilin had proposed talks with Portuguese officials in Canberra on 20 September. Indonesia also believed that Santos was now planning to regard Fretilin as a *de facto* government in East Timor to which Portugal could relinquish its powers. This had been confirmed by reports from Indonesian intelligence sources and from the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra.

¹ On 9 September (Cablegram CH264974) Canberra reported Santos's proposal for five-member delegations from the three parties and from Portugal to meet in Macao, with an Indonesian delegation present in Hong Kong (as had been the case for the previous Macao talks). Horta was returning to Dili in order to persuade Fretilin to send a delegation to Jakarta in preparation for the wider negotiations and to publicise its desire for co-operation with the other parties.

² Omitted paragraphs refer to Fretilin's offer to release the Portuguese prisoners as an earnest of good faith, and Dalrymple's refusal to agree to Santos's request that Australia fly them from Dili to Atauro.

3. Mochtar appeared to be quite angry and spoke from notes which, I noticed, were in his own handwriting. He said that Indonesia now regarded Santos as a 'man completely without honour'. Indonesia had had 'enough nonsense' about 'Portugal's moral obligations' to Timor. It was now clear that Santos' sole concern, and probably Lisbon's also, was to get 'off the hook'. Portugal, through Santos, was in fact now creating a *de facto* situation of a sort which Indonesia could itself have created weeks ago had it sought to do so. Mochtar added that all this confirmed his earlier suspicion of the Santos mission. But what worried him now was the way in which Australia was apparently being misused by Santos and Fretilin and inadvertently drawn into the political situation in a way which could be contrary to Indonesia's interests.

4. Mochtar then said we would be receiving an official Note from the Indonesian Government tomorrow (8 September) after he had cleared it with the President tonight. (Mochtar said he and General Moerdani would be discussing Timor with President Soeharto tonight.)

[*matter omitted*]¹

7. I said that if the President approved a Note in these terms Indonesia would I believed be over-reacting. There was no doubt about the direction of the basic thrust of our policy on the Timor issue or about the paramount importance which we attach to our relations with Indonesia. The Government was under considerable domestic pressure to act and so the government had concentrated its activities in the humanitarian assistance field to avoid undue political involvement. Mochtar interrupted to say that this was so but we were being 'drawn in'. I said it was not the Government's wish that its endeavours in the humanitarian field should be misused or misinterpreted. Moreover, the Government would not allow Canberra or indeed any other site in Australia to be used as a base for discussions between the Portuguese and Fretilin. Our view was that any such talks should take place on Portuguese soil or on a ship. Mochtar said that he accepted this as long as the talks were not held on an Australian ship, but he felt we were being inadvertently and unintentionally used by the Portuguese and he hoped that the Australian Government would 'take Indonesia's views under serious consideration'. The Acting Minister said he believed he was making 'a reasonable request'.

[*matter omitted*]²

Comment

11. A situation now seems to have arisen in which the Indonesians feel that we could be allowing ourselves to be drawn too far into the situation in a way which they would see as being helpful to Portugal and to Fretilin but contrary to their own interests. I shall do my best to counteract this impression.

12. It seems to me that Fretilin could now well 'win' in East Timor. But there would be thousands of refugees in Indonesian Timor including some UDT and Apodeti leaders. In these circumstances we are likely to face a period of instability in East Timor during which Indonesia will seek to quarantine it, if it is under *de facto* Fretilin control, from external involvement including Australian involvement. At the same time Indonesia will mount covert operations from across the border, combined with attempts both to keep Apodeti in being and to persuade the more moderate elements in Fretilin that their only logical long-term future lies with Indonesia.

¹ Omitted paragraphs report that the Note would state that Santos's actions constituted a breach of agreements between Indonesia and Portugal and his support for Fretilin demonstrated his 'bad faith'. It would request cessation of Australian support for Santos's activities and provision of communication facilities between Darwin and Atauro, and to help get Santos back to Kupang and Jakarta promptly.

² Mochtar suggested that communications from Atauro and the outside world should be handled through Kupang, and that he hoped Australians would not find it necessary to have further talks with Santos, since the matter was essentially one for Indonesia and Portugal.

13. In this situation our best long-term interests will, as I have suggested (para 24 of my O.JA1615³) and as the Acting Minister has agreed (para one of your O.CH263759⁴), I believe be served by strict Australian non-involvement outside of humanitarian assistance, understanding of Indonesia's concerns and interests and by efforts to blunt, as far as possible, the stimulation of hostility towards Indonesia within the Australian community.

14. While I am not too concerned about Mochtar's tone, it does reflect a feeling here that we have become too involved in what is essentially an Indonesian/Portuguese problem and that we have been too accommodating to Portugal because of our own reading of domestic pressures and public opinion. (The Indonesian Embassy in Canberra has apparently minimised the strength of the latter pressures in its reporting to Jakarta.)

15. We shall cable full text of Note when it is received tomorrow.⁵

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

220 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 10 September 1975

O.CH265548 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

*Jakarta for Woolcott; Lisbon for Cooper; New York UN for the Minister;
Kuala Lumpur for Parsons*

It seems to us that Santos's forthcoming discussions in Jakarta could be crucial.¹ If they break down without agreement between the Indonesians and the Portuguese the likely prospect i[s] of Portugal's either granting very rapid independence to Fretilin, or dumping the problem in the lap of the United Nations. Either would leave the Indonesians without international recognition (whether from Portugal, regional countries or the U.N.) of their special interest in Portuguese Timor. The likelihood of unilateral Indonesian military intervention would increase.² In terms of our own interest and of disturbance to the region a prolonged Indonesian effort to

³ Document 210.

⁴ Document 214.

⁵ Cablegram JA1686 (8 September) reported Mochtar informing Woolcott that Soeharto had taken 'a serious view of the turn of events'. Indonesia would continue to explore the possibility of co-operation with Portugal to the end, but was now thinking of other options. Soeharto still ruled out direct intervention, but was prepared to assist 'a drawn out fight back' and was taking seriously reports of two submarines sighted in the Dili area (the Embassy was aware of the reports but had discounted them). Woolcott commented that after weeks 'of handling the situation with coolness the Indonesians are now starting to react with more edginess'. He doubted whether the Note would be received as the points in it had been made twice orally, and he doubted whether Soeharto would wish to be associated with what he suspected was 'an element of bluff—but only an element—in Mochtar's attitude'. On 9 September (Cablegram JA1720) the Embassy reported receipt of a paper setting out in Indonesian the points which were to have been made in the Note. Woolcott wrote to Mochtar the same day, setting out arguments, which Dalrymple had been instructed to make to Santos, opposing the handing of independence to Fretilin alone.

¹ A marginal note here in Woolcott's hand reads: 'No. Part of a presentational charade'.

² A note here reads: 'It has started'.

absorb Portuguese Timor could possibly be the worst outcome. It would inevitably attract unfavourable attention internationally and particularly within Australia.

2. Santos, however, now appears to be ready to talk constructively in terms of a new conference in Macao involving all three Timorese parties, with Indonesia in the wings in Hong Kong. We hope that this is the path that events will take and that an agreement on these lines will be possible.

3. In the hope that it will be, we wonder whether the suggestion that some degree of regional endorsement might be sought of any new framework for decolonisation worked out in Macao would not help to advance matters in this direction, and be helpful to the Portuguese and Indonesians, and also to ourselves.

4. We assume that such a new framework might provide for fresh endorsement of a process of 'orderly decolonisation' under Portuguese sovereignty, having the acceptance of the three Timorese parties, entailing recognition of the need for the right of the people of Portuguese Timor to decide their own political future to be respected, and presumably leading to some future act of consultation with them on this point. (There have been Portuguese suggestions of some future act of consultation giving a choice between independence or integration with Indonesia.)

5. Our suggestion is that, if the Macao talks reached some such conclusion, (acceptable to Indonesia), there could be virtue in endorsement of it by a number of regional countries. This need not require a conference, but could be arranged through diplomatic channels, in the form of some sort of statement of declaration which would:

- (a) endorse the concept of orderly decolonisation etc. as might be agreed at Macao,
- (b) note the special interest of Indonesia in the future of the territory,
- (c) stress the importance of a stable solution which would not disturb regional security.

6. We would *not* repeat not have in mind that the countries participating in such declaration would assume continuing responsibilities, e.g. for supervising any act of consultation that might be arranged. We should, of course, have to be careful about how far we were committed in this respect by the terms of any declaration.

7. As to who the participating regional countries might be, the obvious minimum candidates are Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia, but we would also wish to see others such as Singapore, and possibly the Philippines and New Zealand joining in. The ASEAN group as a whole might be considered, but we see some difficulties in this, both in terms of possible offence to the Indo-China States and also of possible difficulties and disadvantages in Thai endorsement. Whether Portugal might also join, if considered a 'regional country' for this purpose, is an open question.

8. For Australia, this suggestion would mean an assumption of some degree of shared responsibility in Portuguese Timor, which we have so far avoided except in respect of humanitarian assistance. We would, however, be prepared to accept this if it would help achieve an agreed solution for the territory (and our responsibility would in any case be a limited one not extending beyond endorsement of the new Macao program and the recognition of Indonesia's official interest).

9. For Indonesia, the suggestion might possibly be felt to offer some hindrances to or place some limits on her freedom of action or future options, but we do not think this necessarily so.

10. Broadly speaking it seems to us that the main thing now for all concerned is to keep the Portuguese in the picture for some further period, on the basis of their continued responsibility for decolonisation, while at the same time achieving some regional or international recognition of Indonesia's interest. The advantages of our suggested approach

would be that by offering both Portugal and Indonesia the prospect of some international cover, it might assist the prospect of Portuguese–Indonesian agreement, thereby avoiding the bad consequences of a breakdown as outlined in the first paragraph above, and that it would help create some basis of international recognition of Indonesian interest (as well as of the rights of the Timorese).

11. Unless you see particular objections to this line of thought, we should like you to discuss it immediately with the Indonesians, since it will be relevant to (and we hope helpful in) their discussions with Santos.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

221 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 10 September 1975

O.JA1758 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

For Acting Secretary; for Minister and Harry; for Cooper

Thank you for your O.CH264375¹ and O.CH264372.²

2. I consider we are now entering a more complex and potentially more difficult phase on Timor, which is going to call for careful handling by Australia. We are going to need to find the correct balance between our fundamental long-term policy interests as determined by the Acting Minister and the likely more immediate domestic pressures which might be generated in Australia.

3. I believe that despite suggestions from Mochtar to the contrary, President Soeharto's position has hardened in recent days and we now face a situation of increasing Indonesian covert intervention in East Timor and increasing confusion—some of it deliberately manufactured—as well as a possible flare up of fighting in the colony.

4. Information Minister Mashuri's statement of 9 September (our JA1724 refers)³ which was in fact drafted by State Secretary Sudharmono—who as you know very faithfully reflects the President's views—reflects this. So does Mashuri's belated approval of the use of Indonesia's propaganda machine which, on his orders, has been idle on Timor since last February/March.

5. The President's attitude has probably been affected by the belief here that Santos was—and some Portuguese (e.g. Mota) are—planning to hand over power to Fretilin alone, the increasingly serious refugee problem in Indonesian Timor, Fretilin's messages to the ABC and the United Nations, John Penlington's report of his talk with Major Mota broadcast by Radio Australia, and the reports of foreign submarines in the Timor area.

¹ 8 September. It set out points for use in reply to Mochtar's criticisms reported in Document 219.

² See note 6 to Document 217.

³ An *Antara* item headlined 'Portugal unable to solve Portuguese Timor Crisis' reported discussion of Timor by Indonesia's National Security and Political Stabilisation Council, 'atrocities and tortures', and up to 15 000 refugees, for whom Soeharto had instructed food and shelter be provided. It condemned Santos's 'plan' to transfer authority to Fretilin.

6. The pressure on the President, especially from HANKAM to approve greater intervention in Timor has grown. (Defence Minister Panggabean's Personal Assistant, Dr Sinaga, told us on 9 September that 'the tempo of the gamelan music had increased' and the players had to dance more vigorously.)

7. Generally, I believe developments are now taking the second course, with variations to suit the situation, outlined in paragraphs 11–14 of our JA1615.⁴ We know that on 7 September the President agreed that if Fretilin declared independence, UDT and APODETI declarations in favour of integration would be published. These declarations have in fact already been announced (JA1733) in the absence of a Fretilin declaration but because Fretilin claimed that it controlled virtually all of Portuguese Timor. However, Tjan maintains that Fretilin only controls the area Liquica/Dili/Baucau (see JA1725). The rest of the territory is 'disputed'.

8. The President has now also agreed that supporters of integration with Indonesia should be protected by 'volunteers' from Indonesia.⁵ As Fretilin's opponents are reinforced and rearmed a situation of confusion similar to that of two weeks ago is likely to develop. According to Tjan, who is now intimately involved in the planning of Timor policy and who must be taken seriously, the President on 7 September did not rule out the option—which was put to him—of using conventional Indonesian forces in support of the 'volunteers'. According to Tjan, only Generals Ali Murtopo, Moerdani and Yoga Sugama are aware of this. Mochtar and Mashuri and other Ministers are not.

9. The operations described above represent one level of Indonesia's Timor policy. There is of course the second and more public diplomatic level—encompassing Acting Foreign Minister Mochtar's activities and the continuing negotiations with Santos. At this level Indonesia is seeking to keep the President 'clean' and to ensure that Indonesia's international standing is threatened as little as possible by the actions being taken by Indonesia or which Indonesia may take in Portuguese Timor.

10. Extraordinary as it may seem to Australian Ministers familiar with our more institutionalised policy formulation processes, Indonesian policy on Timor is being formulated in a way reminiscent of Byzantine or mediaeval court-craft with the President in complete command but declaring only different parts of his game to different persons.

11. This does not make the task of interpreting Indonesian policy particularly easy for foreign representatives here. This is especially so when the Acting Foreign Minister himself is either not fully informed of the actual plans and operations at the basic level of policy and is being used by the President to play a certain role; or he is an actor of quite amazing talent. This explains why we receive conflicting advice on Indonesian policy from General Moerdani and Tjan on the one hand, and Mochtar on the other hand. Examples of this are whether Indonesia wanted Santos to return to Jakarta, whether Indonesia is prepared to accept a United Nations involvement in Timor, and on the possibilities of cooperation with Fretilin.

12. Despite these contradictions, Mochtar's activities are an essential and important part of Indonesian policy. He will still talk with Santos possibly on the basis of the draft memorandum and draft terms of reference for a joint authority on a 'take it or leave it' basis. He will also discuss Santos' proposals for talks between the parties and Portugal. Tjan said today 10 September, that Indonesia's attitude towards the proposed Macau meeting would probably be that the meeting was Portugal's business. All parties would have to be included in any decolonisation process which would need to be administered fairly by the Portuguese, not by Fretilin.

⁴ Document 210.

⁵ Two lines have been expunged here.

13. The Indonesians will probably try to persuade Santos to say that Portugal is incapable of solving the Timor situation. If Santos does not oblige them, the Indonesians will attempt to 'prove' that Portugal cannot cope in Timor. This is of course an essential part of the 'no-man's-land' program (our JA1677⁶). This would help them present publicly any future Indonesian intervention.

14. Moerdani and Tjan still believe that Santos intends to hand over to Fretilin if at all possible. They see the invitations to Apodeti and UDT to attend a Macau meeting as window dressing following Indonesia's hostile reaction to a possible handover to Fretilin. Tjan has now developed a theory that the 10 August 'coup' attempt and all that followed are part of an elaborate plan, organised mainly by Major Mota, to create a situation in which power could be transferred to Fretilin.

15. Tjan is not impressed by Horta's statements about cooperation with other parties and Indonesia. Mochtar is also unsure about the nature of Horta's role and the extent to which he can legitimately speak for Fretilin leaders in Dili. Incidentally, Tjan said that Her Tasning had been taken in by Horta and had been instructed not to pursue contact with him.

16. I have described this situation at some length because of its complexity and because you need to know that it could be dangerous to make any judgements on the basis of what some Ministers say here or what the Indonesian Ambassadors in Lisbon, Canberra or New York might say.

[17.]On one level a covert operation is under way to secure the incorporation of Timor into Indonesia with which the President and Acting Foreign Minister will not be publicly associated and of which the latter is probably even unaware.

[18.]On another level the semi-public, diplomatic search for an accommodation continues.

[19.]The President has not entirely closed off his options yet and if the covert operation were to come unstuck and Fretilin seem likely to hold on to power he might still, if he chose to do so, change course again and seek some accommodation with the moderate group in Fretilin although I think this unlikely. It would be a feat of great political dexterity for Indonesia, having dismounted from the dying horse of Apodeti to then dismount from the defeated change-mount of UDT only to mount the Phoenix of Fretilin rising from the political ashes in East Timor. In this situation we ourselves should not burn our bridges with any of the parties, including Fretilin.

[20.]I am aware of public pressures on the Government to be seen to act constructively and your concern about the strains on our relations with Indonesia that Indonesian action of the type now embarked on might create, especially if prolonged. But in this confused and complex situation I can only recommend as I have before, that as far as we feel able to, we leave it to the parties principal—the Timorese, Portugal and Indonesia—to sort out the mess and that we remain as uninvolved as possible.

[21.]After careful further consideration in the light of the situation as of today, 10 September, I think we should stay with the recommendations in paragraphs 23 and 24 of my JA1615, which the Acting Minister has endorsed.

WOOLCOTT

⁶ Document 217.

222 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 10 September 1975

O.UN3758 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*Ref. O.CH265548¹*

We appreciate that the intention in your reference telegram is to seek regional or international and not United Nations endorsement of an acceptable conclusion reached in Macao or elsewhere, we note the minimum candidates you suggest as possible participating regional countries, and we are conscious of the pace and complexity of developments in Jakarta.

2. We appreciate also that, for the time being at least, we are putting to one side the question of use of United Nations machinery. Nevertheless, it may be necessary and possibly advantageous to have appropriate UN recognition further down the line provided this can be achieved in a way quite acceptable to Indonesia. The relationship between regional endorsement and possible associated action in New York will need to be kept in mind.

3. In the Committee of Twenty-Four there is a tendency in relation to the problem of any particular territory to follow the lead of countries from the region concerned, and indeed it is normally hoped that a regional lead will be given. As you know, Salim has already behaved in this way in relation to Portuguese Timor. This consideration should, we think, have a bearing on the countries which might be invited to participate in your proposed endorsement. In particular, we would suggest that you consider including two other Asian members of the Committee of Twenty-Four, namely Fiji and India. You will have in mind India's helpful attitude at the Lisbon meeting of the Committee of Twenty-Four.² We do not think that Indian participation would affect the Chinese position. It would seem natural to add Fiji to Australia and New Zealand.

4. We would be interested to know whether the matter is under discussion with the Government of Papua New Guinea. Obviously an early gesture like this by an independent Papua New Guinea could count for a lot in its future relations with Indonesia. In any event, in a few days, PNG will be another regional country just as closely affected as Australia.³

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

¹ Document 220.

² See note 2 to Document 145.

³ Canberra replied (Cablegram CH266103, 11 September) that regional endorsement did not necessarily preclude some form of accounting to the United Nations. The idea had been to include only countries in the immediate region of Portuguese Timor: to include India and Fiji would be 'to cast too wide a net' raising difficult problems in excluding, for example, the Indo-China states. There were obvious advantages in Papua New Guinea joining in a regional declaration but it had been decided not to approach PNG until an indication of Indonesian reactions suggested the proposal might be successful.

223 REPORT BY DALRYMPLE

Darwin, 11 September 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Timor—Portuguese Mission

On 9 and 10 September I did not report by telegram on my several conversations with Dr. Santos because the details were being conveyed to the Department by telephone.

Dr. Santos finally got away to Djakarta yesterday evening at about 4.45 p.m. on a RAAF Hercules. It might be worth recording briefly some of the main points of his position as it emerged in several conversations.

[matter omitted]

His suspicion of the Indonesians is considerable, although he seems to understand their interests. He told me several times that he sympathised with what I said to him about Australian/Indonesian relations and about Indonesia's natural and legitimate concern to avoid the creation of a non-viable unstable mini-state in East Timor. He said that where the Indonesians had made a mistake was in trying to get him to invite them to take over East Timor. That was clumsy and unwise. There were decent and acceptable ways of achieving the result Indonesia wanted while preserving appearances. He wanted to disengage Portugal but he was not prepared to pay the price Indonesia had asked when he was last in Djakarta.

Santos claims to feel that Indonesian tactics have been unwise. He was annoyed when Prof. Mochtar made a public statement about the mission being more interested in Fretilin than in UDT. He told me that he had spent more time and effort trying to contact UDT than he had with Fretilin but Indonesia was deliberately stalling and trying to make it impossible for him to contact UDT in order, as they saw it, to create conditions for their own intervention. The only circumstances in which Indonesia wanted him to talk to UDT was in Atambua or Kupang where there were thousands of UDT people who felt they had been let down by the Portuguese and who would demonstrate against him and where there would be no possibility of real discussion—only an opportunity for the Indonesians to make propaganda and set the scene for their own intervention. (From my contacts with the mission I think they probably have made every effort within their power to contact UDT. Santos sent the Dove for that purpose. Subsequently, they tried to persuade UDT people who came in on the 'highjacked' Caribou¹ to go back with messages to the UDT leadership, but the refugees in the end backed out, being fearful for their own safety. The last effort the Portuguese made was to have a letter handed to the captain of a Merpati Nusantara aircraft on a regular commercial flight from Darwin to Kupang on 9 September.)

Santos says the Fretilin are afraid of Indonesia and want to reach a political solution. He believes that the Fretilin leadership will accept completion of the Macau agreement and will co-operate with Portugal, Indonesia and the other parties to this end. I am unable to gauge how far his statements to this effect to me were based on real knowledge and how much they were determined by his own wish to achieve that or his wish that we and the Indonesians believe that that is what will happen. His contact with Fretilin leadership over a very inadequate radio link, and then via Ramos Horta can really hardly have been adequate to establish a clear picture of Fretilin's position.

¹ On 4 September an armed Portuguese soldier in Baucau demanded passage to Darwin for himself and forty-one other refugees on an RAAF Caribou being used by the ICRC. The man gave up his weapons once the aircraft was loaded and in the air.

When he left, Santos seemed fairly optimistic. He said he thought that he could complete his mission within the next 2 weeks. That would suggest that he sees the projected Macau talks on 20 September (assuming they last for 2 or 3 days) as the final stage. He does not of course know whether the parties will accept Macau as a location. A second possibility would be a place in metropolitan Portugal, but not, he said, in Lisbon where they would be surrounded by the press.

Finally, it might be worth adding that my impression from a number of things he said is that Santos intends to propose some form of joint Portuguese, Indonesian and Australian involvement, particularly in the financial field.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/2/1, x]

224 MINUTE FROM McINTYRE TO ROWLAND

Canberra, 11 September 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: Likely UN Attitudes Towards Indonesian and/or Portuguese Actions

I have thought up to now that it would be reasonably safe to assume that feeling in the UN as a whole would be inclined to be fairly tolerant of any Indonesian action to intervene physically and openly in Portuguese Timor—provided the Indonesians could make it appear a ‘clean’ action taken in order to preserve peace and stability in the region and to facilitate an orderly progress towards decolonisation through self-determination.

2. I still think this is a fair assumption. Indonesia’s standing throughout the UN is pretty good. It can expect generally sympathetic support from non-aligned countries, and particularly from Moslem countries. In addition, Anwar Sani is personally well respected as a moderate and constructive representative who held a substantial reputation during Indonesia’s term on the Security Council.

3. As for Portugal, what Harry has said about its popularity and standing in the UN is relevant.¹ While its rating was substantially transformed following the coup last year, its weak performance since then and its messy domestic situation will have lost marks for it, and it will not earn any kudos if it simply dumps Portuguese Timor in the UN’s lap and washes its hands of the whole thing.

4. But we should perhaps not take too much for granted. Pending evidence of the nature and capacity of whatever new government emerges, there is likely to be a certain amount of uneasiness in non-aligned and leftist quarters at the prospect of a switch from a progressive, anti-imperialist regime to one that looks more right-wing. This uneasiness could be compounded among the more fervent de-colonisers if it becomes apparent that the efforts of the dying regime to hand over the authority in Portuguese Timor to an actively leftist group claiming to represent a majority are being thwarted by Indonesia and perhaps by others. The statements of Major Mota²

¹ See Document 216.

² In a press statement on 8 September Mota had said: ‘Indonesia does not accept independence with Fretilin, but Indonesia has to say it, has to say—we don’t accept independence—and Portugal would denounce it at the United Nations’.

and the frequent communications addressed by Fretilin to the Committee of Twenty-Four Chairman Salim, with no parallel action from the other Timorese parties, are likely to be unhelpful in this regard.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, v]

225 LETTER FROM FEAKES TO WOOLCOTT

Canberra, 11 September 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

The Portuguese Timor situation could be approaching a point of denouement. On the ground Fretilin is near to a complete take-over. This position has been achieved by force of arms: before the recent troubles, UDT, we believe, had much the greater support. At one point it appeared as if the Portuguese were intending to negotiate with Fretilin alone for a hand-over of sovereignty in Portuguese Timor. Santos, however, now has in mind a new conference in Macao involving all three Timorese parties, with Indonesia in the wings in Hong Kong. He intends to speak in these terms to the Indonesians in Jakarta.

Clearly, the talks in Jakarta will be crucial. Your own recent reports indicate that the Indonesians have lost all patience with Santos and his mission. However, they also seem prepared for one last-ditch attempt to negotiate a solution with Santos (and they have thus, for example, sought Australian co-operation in persuading Santos to return to Jakarta as soon as possible). But if the talks break down, it seems that Indonesia is likely to wash its hands of the Portuguese and instead opt for the alternative course of a stepped up [but] still protracted campaign, in the hope that the territory will eventually fall into Indonesia's lap.

From the point of view of our own interests, and of disturbance to the region, this protracted operation could be the worst outcome. Indeed it is questionable whether in the event of palpable and extended Indonesian interference in Timor, the Australian Government could sustain the sympathetic position towards Indonesia which it has managed to follow over Portuguese Timor thus far. The strong possibility that Portugal would take the issue to the United Nations would add to the domestic problems of containing the Portuguese Timor issue.¹

It is this consideration which has led the Department to think in terms of the regionalisation arrangements referred to in our telegram O.CH265548.² We recognise, of course, that the prospects of another Macao-type agreement may not meet Indonesia's optimum requirements. Indeed, we detect in the Indonesian position, as conveyed to you in recent days by Professor Mochtar, a strong reluctance to concede that the approach they were discussing with Santos in Jakarta two weeks ago has been overtaken by events. But the Indonesians themselves must surely accept that it is difficult now to think in terms of a peace-keeping force when peace (of a sort) is breaking out all over in Timor as a result of Fretilin's military victory. In our view, the moment when Indonesia could have acted is now well past. It seems that the best the Indonesians may hope for is to retrieve something for themselves from the new round of Macao talks.

It is in this context that the idea of some regional diplomatic initiative might be attractive to the Indonesians. Such action could be a means of achieving some international recognition

¹ A marginal note here, in Woolcott's hand reads: "This is probably true, but worrying. Can we suggest a course of action?"

² Document 220.

of Indonesia's interest and status in relation to Portuguese Timor. It could indeed establish a framework for *future* Indonesian action including an Indonesian peace-keeping initiative should there be a future breakdown in the political processes within Portuguese Timor and a further lapse into political disorder. We expect in this regard that the Indonesians would share our own assessment of the fragility of the political situation in the territory. This situation is likely to continue whatever temporary political accommodation Dr Santos is able to stitch together at Macao. There is of course the additional factor of Indonesia's own covert activities which can be expected to continue to fan to lines of dissidence at least in the border areas.

In conclusion, I am attaching a copy of a paper we had been toying with last week on possible alternative regionalisation arrangements.³ As you will see, we were drawing on the precedent of the Viet-Nam Paris Agreement as offering a possible pointer to the way ahead in Portuguese Timor. These proposals have clearly been overtaken. But they are the kind of ideas which might again find favour next time Timor lapses into political turmoil.

[*handwritten*]

All this is rather overtaken by your O.JA1758⁴ (which is very helpful) but you might like to see how our minds have been working.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiii]

226 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 12 September 1975

O.JA1793 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I am sorry I have not responded to the initiative outlined in your O.CH265548¹ until now. This has partly been due to other pressures and, as you know, it crossed with our attempt to redefine Indonesia's present approach to Timor (JA1758²).

2. One problem for us is, of course, who we would talk to about a proposal like this in present circumstances. Mochtar would possibly say that the proposed initiative could, in certain circumstances, be quite helpful. If he did so, however, he would probably be operating on the public diplomatic level which I have described in paragraph nine of our JA1758. On the other hand we have discussed the idea you have in mind with Moerdani and Tjan who reacted firmly against it. Despite the casual nature of our discussion Tjan asked whether this indicated Australia was changing its policy.

3. On balance, I think the Indonesians could interpret it as a step back from the implications they have drawn from the Prime Minister's talks with President Soeharto, from what he said in his statement in the House on Timor on the 26 August³ and also in his answer to Mr Anthony

³ Document 211.

⁴ Document 221.

¹ Document 220.

² Document 221.

³ Document 191.

on the 28 August. Indonesia could I think view such action by us, at this stage, as a change in our earlier direction which would be unhelpful to them. I know that one can argue that such an initiative is intended to be helpful but I do not think they will see it in this light. I am therefore reluctant to take it further, at this stage, unless you wish me to do so.

4. I also have three other comments on your CH265548.

5. First, Santos' discussions here are important for the public diplomatic level of Indonesian policy (paragraph 9 of JA1758) but assuming our analysis of the situation in that cable is correct, they are not 'crucial' for Indonesia's Timor policy. The Indonesians still suspect that Portugal wishes to hand over East Timor to Fretilin and they see Santos' talks here delaying and disguising this but not altering the end result.

6. Secondly, Indonesia would probably not agree that it would be left without adequate recognition of [her] special interest in Portuguese Timor. Her ASEAN partners have already given this recognition privately, if not publicly and would presumably be prepared to be helpful publicly when the time comes. Australia is in a similar position and, in fact, the Acting Minister has already made publicly points (a) (b) and (c) in your paragraph five. In these circumstances I doubt the need to seek further regional recognition of Indonesia's special interest in Portuguese Timor at this stage and I do not think Indonesia or at least the group which has the main role in formulating Indonesia's basic policy—as distinct from the policy for public presentation—would want us to do so.

7. Thirdly, Indonesia wants to avoid, if possible, the Timor issue being internationalised. This may prove impossible but at present Indonesia does not want other countries drawn into some degree of shared responsibility in Portuguese Timor. That would impose restraints on her freedom of action. We have been kept very fully informed about Indonesia's intentions in Portuguese Timor. The proposed initiative could hamstring those intentions by focusing the attention of regional countries—who in any case are trying to keep as uninvolved as they can—on the territory.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

227 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN WHITLAM AND TANG

Canberra, 12 September 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Decolonisation Subjects

[*matter omitted*]¹

5. *Mr Tang* then asked the Acting Minister in the context of decolonisation what were the latest developments in Portuguese Timor.

6. *Mr Whitlam* replied that it was not easy to be sure of the situation there—but one thing that was clear was that Portugal, pre-occupied with Angola, wanted to relieve itself of its

¹ Omitted paragraphs record general pleasantries, and a brief discussion of Bougainville. Tang was visiting the region chiefly to attend Papua New Guinea independence celebrations.

responsibilities in Timor. It had dropped its bundle. Timor was in fact, he added, in the middle of the Indonesian archipelago.

7. The *Acting Foreign Minister* explained to Mr Tang that there were three parties in Portuguese Timor. The Portuguese-recruited soldiers had given arms to one party, the party that had succeeded in gaining control of the island (sic). The Portuguese administration had fled to a small island off Timor, which had become, Mr Whitlam commented, a mini-Taiwan. He added that it now looked as if the party that had started the fighting (UDT) would not be able to regain control. Mr Whitlam added that he suspected that the Indonesians were now providing arms for the other two parties. As long as arms were available, civil war would continue. Australia suspected that Portugal had wanted to embroil Australia in this situation, but Australia did not want any further colonial responsibilities, particularly at this time. Portugal had been very suspicious of and also very offensive to the Indonesians. The Indonesians had offered food supplies to Portuguese Timor, but the Portuguese had refused to accept them and had also rejected Indonesian attempts to evacuate refugees. Australia, said Mr Whitlam, as a member of the region could not condone Portugal's attempts to create the impression that Australians were the natural custodians of Portuguese Timor and that the Indonesians were not.

8. The Indonesians, continued Mr Whitlam, were paranoiac about communism. The party which was winning militarily in Portuguese Timor, was Fretilin, which Australian conservative leaders had described as communist. This has excited the Indonesians.

9. Mr Tang remarked that in fact Fretilin merely held some social-democratic ideas.

10. The *Acting Minister* suggested that they were occasionally Marxist.

11. Mr Tang said that Dr Santos had gone to the U.N. and requested the Secretary-General to set up a Committee of Good Offices to help Portugal solve the problem of Timor. The Committee was to comprise four member countries: Australia, Indonesia, Portugal and New Zealand. The Secretary-General, however, had said that he had no authority to do this, the decision had to come from a political body. The Decolonisation Committee's Chairman had said that there was no precedent for action of this kind. He suggested that a U.N. fact-finding Mission be sent to Portuguese Timor, a mission which did not include any members of the administering power. The Mission would have to be given assurances that it could go into the territory and investigate the situation without obstruction. Since this was impossible for Portugal to guarantee, said Mr Tang, Portugal had decided to involve Australia. The U.N. was willing to help in a humanitarian way, and to call a ceasefire. The Indonesians, however, were not interested. They felt insecure if there was anyone else in Portuguese Timor.

12. Mr Whitlam commented that the Indonesians would be very suspicious if the Russians or the Chinese were in Portuguese Timor. He suggested that the best solution might be if some regional arrangement could be reached. The region needed a sort of 'Monroe Doctrine'.

13. Mr Tang remarked that he himself was an international civil servant, but he could say that China had no interest in Portuguese Timor. He had heard from Soares when he was in Lisbon last January, that the Russians had asked the Portuguese for permission for Soviet ships to visit Portuguese Timor. The Portuguese had rejected the request.

14. Mr Whitlam commented that Australia did not want to see the U.S. and U.S.S.R. compete against each other in the Indian Ocean.

15. Mr Tang said that if the Indonesians were to intervene in Portuguese Timor, it would set an unfortunate precedent. It might tempt the four countries bordering on Angola to intervene

there. Also Indonesian intervention would be much resented by the African members of the U.N. because of its implications for Angola.

16. *Mr Whitlam* commented that Australia had behaved properly in PNG. But the Indonesians, after the meeting with the Portuguese in March, felt double-crossed.

17. *Mr Tang* remarked that the Portuguese were no angels.

[*matter omitted*]

20. *Mr Tang* said that he was afraid that if the Indonesians intervened militarily in Portuguese Timor, some African countries would take it as a precedent and follow suit. It was in fact a dangerous precedent—to intervene in the affairs of a neighbouring country because you did not like the nature of its government.

21. *Mr Whitlam* replied that until now Indonesia had been very strict about observing legal boundaries.

22. *Mr Tang* said that if Indonesia were to intervene it would set a precedent which might in the future have implications for Papua New Guinea—which also had a common boundary with Indonesia.

23. *Mr Whitlam* commented that if a regional arrangement were reached to solve the problem, PNG should also be included.

24. *Mr Tang* concluded that he believed that the best solution was the U.N. position. The first priority was to reach a ceasefire, then negotiations could take place towards peace.²

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, iii]

228 MINUTE FROM McINTYRE TO ROWLAND

Canberra, 12 September 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: Possible Action in United Nations

The following are some very provisional and speculative thoughts about possible situations Australia might be faced with if the Portuguese Timor question should be referred to the UN.

2. Given the present very fluid and uncertain situation in the negotiations area and on the ground in Portuguese Timor itself it seems altogether undesirable that there should be any move to ask for action by the United Nations at this stage. It would be somewhat different if we could see a prospective scenario as envisaged by Harry, with Portugal and Indonesia generally agreed on a course of action that Australia and other neighbour countries could support and work for. Any such agreed proposal would in all likelihood be gratefully accepted anywhere in the UN. But so long as there is no such agreement a debate in any UN organ could well be confused, difficult to control and ultimately embarrassing for countries in the region, including Australia.

3. An appeal to the UN, however unwelcome it might be to the organisation itself, could in due course become inevitable and necessary, but not until all other existing possibilities are

² The record of a discussion between Tang and Feakes, on the same day, notes the two agreed that 'the most hopeful course of action lay in persuading the parties concerned to revert to the plan agreed in May, even if the date for independence were advanced a little. The Portuguese could not be allowed to shift responsibility to someone else'.

exhausted. These possibilities include the current talks in Jakarta between Dr Santos and the Indonesian Government and the meeting that seems to be tentatively scheduled for 20 September, in Macao or elsewhere on Portuguese territory, between the Portuguese authorities (meaning presumably Santos) and representatives of the Timorese parties, with Indonesia somewhere in the wings. It seems desirable also that some impression of the views and attitudes of the new Portuguese Government should be got, however ill-informed and uninterested these may be. So we would hope that Portugal could be dissuaded from going to the UN at present.

4. However, we need to be prepared in case the pending talks fail and contacts break down and Santos, out of pique or exasperation or with an ostensibly genuine cause for complaint, decides that Portugal has no alternative but to ask the UN to take the matter over. We do not know Portuguese intentions, and we may well have no opportunity to influence the manner and nature of any appeal to the UN. Portugal has various options open to it, and we should try to be prepared for whatever course it chooses.

5. If there should be a desperation appeal, with Portugal simply throwing Timor into the lap of the Security Council, the Committee of 24, the General Assembly itself or the Secretary-General, we would presumably feel free to some extent to work discreetly but closely with Indonesia and not worry too much about Portugal's feelings. If on the other hand the Portuguese approach should be more purposefully and selectively directed and asked for a particular course of action—and particularly if Portugal wanted to embarrass Indonesia—we could well have to step more carefully and take more account of Portuguese wishes. The situation could become very awkward for us if it reached a stage where the Portuguese might decide to call upon the Security Council to condemn Indonesia for interference in or aggression against Portuguese territory.

6. In any event the Minister and Harry would need, I believe, to be given as much flexibility and discretion as possible in consulting and working quietly towards the best or the least unpalatable course in the light of circumstances existing at the time.

7. It has been suggested that the Security Council or the Committee of 24 might be asked to send some kind of mission of investigation or 'good offices' to Timor, or that the Security Council might authorise the Secretary-General to send out a special representative for the same purpose. But any such action would seem to have little meaning until there is reasonable evidence of an authority in control in Portuguese Timor to ensure the safety of a UN mission, which does not seem to be the case at present.

8. Until such time as there can be an assurance of order and reasonable security, one possible first step—perhaps the only one—might be a resolution by the Security Council calling upon Portugal, as the legally recognised authority, to carry out its responsibilities under Resolution 1514¹ by making every effort to restore order and control and to bring about a ceasefire (*perhaps* in association with other regional governments) and by consulting with representatives of the local political parties. This would be a tricky operation, but it or something like it might come off as a purely holding operation, perhaps with the acquiescence of Indonesia and Portugal—depending again, of course, on circumstances at the time.

9. A decision by the Security Council to send an emergency UN force to restore and maintain order in the territory would be another matter. The Council would almost certainly be very reluctant to involve itself in another UNEF operation, especially one bearing some resemblance to the unsatisfactory Congo venture.

10. I do not think we ought to encourage the idea of an investigatory UN mission, although we could find ourselves in a situation, after security is ensured, where we would have to go

¹ See note 4 to Document 66.

along with it. (Even as part of a first step by the UN there could be pressure, though I think it is very doubtful, to constitute some kind of mission with a mandate to proceed to the territory as soon as conditions permit.) The New York Mission seem to think it unlikely that either the Security Council or the Committee of 24 would be keen to send out a mission of its own members, and I hope they are right, though one cannot be sure. The Committee of 24 finds it very hard to resist the temptation to travel. If there is to be any question of establishing a UN presence in the territory I believe the least unsatisfactory answer would be for the Council to authorise the Secretary-General to send out a special representative. One possible choice might be Osorio Tafall² of Mexico, who spent some years as UN representative in Indonesia before doing well in the difficult Cyprus job, and who can probably speak some Portuguese.

11. I have not mentioned the possibility of Portugal's asking to place the territory under trusteeship, on the lines set out in the Rogers paper.³ In terms of the Charter I still believe this would represent a neat, logical and entirely constitutional solution. But I have few illusions about its practicability. We must assume that the parties most directly concerned would not like it, and I cannot see much if any enthusiasm for it among the active UN decolonisers, who mostly regard the trusteeship system as a fusty and paternalistic remnant of the UN's early philosophies. Still, it is there if all else fails.

12. The foregoing thoughts may be of course subject to radical revision within the next few days.⁴

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, v]

229 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 13 September 1975

O.JA1815 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

[*matter omitted*]¹

5. Mochtar maintained that Indonesia and Australia were in fact the victims of a Portuguese plan to gain time to enable Fretilin to consolidate its position in East Timor. In this respect Australia had 'assisted' Portugal—he hoped 'inadvertently'—in its 'duplicity'. Mochtar said that in his 'personal opinion' Australia had allowed itself 'to be drawn far too far into the situation'. He added that the sooner that we 'dissociated ourselves from the whole

² Bibiano F. Osorio-Tafall had been the UN Special Representative in Cyprus between 1967 and 1974.

³ This paper has not been located.

⁴ Cablegram CH267335 (15 September) instructed Cooper to see Santos on his return. If he seemed to be considering reference to the United Nations, Cooper should urge him not to do so in a manner embarrassing to or critical of the Indonesians, 'and so disturbing to the region'. He should also make it clear that a transfer of power to Fretilin would not be acceptable to Australia and would be provocative to Indonesia.

¹ Omitted paragraphs report Mochtar's view that Santos's talks in Jakarta were 'bound to fail', that discussions between the three parties and Portugal were unlikely to take place, and that Santos was adopting a 'callous' attitude towards the refugee question. He accused Portugal of having 'two levels of policy' ('somewhat ironically in the context of Indonesia's own policy', commented Woolcott) with official support for the Macao programme, while Major Mota's group worked to ensure proposals for talks failed and power was handed to Fretilin.

thing the better'. Ramos Horta was now mounting a campaign to gain public sympathy and support for Fretilin in Australia. He hoped there would be no Government cooperation with this.

6. Mochtar added that in the present complex and difficult situation Indonesia and Australia 'should not now become divided'. They should keep cool and 'keep their eyes fixed on the bigger picture' by which he clearly meant the importance to both countries of the Australian/Indonesian relationship.

7. He said that while we had maintained that our policy was one of non-involvement except in humanitarian activities [our] efforts had in fact assisted Portugal's delaying tactics and Fretilin. This would be made worse by non-government activities in Australia. Mochtar added that he was afraid that 'the forces in Australia who wanted to set Indonesia and Australia against each other would exploit the situation'. Australia had gone some distance to facilitate Santos and to show understanding of Portugal's efforts. Portugal's efforts to bring about talks were now shown not to be genuine and it was time 'we looked at the Indonesian side of the coin'.

[*matter omitted*]²

9. Mochtar said he was glad to hear this but, speaking personally and frankly, I should know there [were] some doubts about the role we had been playing in the Indonesian Government, especially in the Hankam (Defence) area, where Australia tended now to be seen as the only country in the region acting in a way which could be unhelpful to Indonesia's and the region's long term interests. I told Mochtar that while, frankly it was probably in the long term interests of all the countries in the region to see Portuguese Timor become a part of Indonesia with the minimum amount of suffering and especially if this could occur without military intervention and with some support from the people, there was a domestic situation in Australia which apparently did not exist to the same extent in the other countries in the region, and of which the Australian Government had to take some account.

Comment

10. The situation which we now seem to be in is that Santos' mission here will fail, he will return to Lisbon without contacting UDT or Apodeti leaders and there will probably be no meeting in Macau or elsewhere. Each side will blame the other for this situation.

11. I consider the President will still not authorise direct Indonesian intervention in these conditions and that he will attempt to keep Indonesia's covert pressures as covert as possible. He probably believes that Fretilin's position is untenable and will deteriorate again over the next week or two.

12. What Mochtar was really saying to me is that if we cannot support Indonesia's position at this stage, then we should disengage ourselves as far as possible and not allow ourselves to participate even indirectly in what the Indonesians regard as a Portuguese charade.

13. I can only say that in this situation I see no reason to draw back from our earlier recommendation that we remain, politically, as uninvolved as possible.

14. Perhaps you may be able to pass this to Acting Minister before he goes to Port Moresby where he will probably meet Malik. Since sending JA1814³ I have heard the

² Woolcott denied any Australian Government assistance to Fretilin and reaffirmed Australia's commitment to the 'over-riding importance' of its relationship with Indonesia.

³ 13 September. It warned that Malik, who would be attending Papua New Guinea independence celebrations shortly after his return from overseas, was likely to be 'somewhat out of touch with the Timor situation'.

Indonesians intend briefing Malik on current Timor development before he leaves for Port Moresby. While he may thus be better informed he will not necessarily be fully aware of the ins and outs of Indonesian policy.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

230 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 15 September 1975

O.CH267336 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Jakarta for Woolcott; Port Moresby for Acting Minister; New York UN for Minister and Harry; Kuala Lumpur for Parsons; Lisbon for Cooper

Ref. O.JA1815¹

As this is the second time Mochtar has complained to you about aspects of Australian actions over Portuguese Timor and Indonesian complaints were set out in *bout de papier*,² we think that you should take an early opportunity to speak to the Indonesians in low key and at an appropriate level making the points set out below and indicating that you are speaking on instructions. You should emphasise to the Indonesians that what you are saying represents no change in Australian policies or departure from what you have told them already. You will appreciate that some of Mochtar's comments, particularly those in paragraph 5 of your JA1815, verge on the undiplomatic.

- (a) There can be no question of Australia's being a 'dupe of Santos' enabling him and FRETILIN to gain time in East Timor. Santos's mission to Timor might indeed have taken much longer but for Australian assistance. Australian Ministers hurried Santos to Darwin on Tuesday 2 September when he wanted to take his time getting there: and we provided an aircraft to take him direct from Darwin to Jakarta on Wednesday 10 September in order to save time.
- (b) It seems to us that, whatever the timetable for Santos's talks might have been, developments on the ground in Portuguese Timor would have proceeded quite independently and with their own momentum. One cannot argue that the time taken by Dr Santos in Atauro contributed to the extension of FRETILIN's control. This could (and can) only be prevented by activity on the part of UDT and APODETI or some other party.
- (c) Australian assistance to Santos has been limited. We could scarcely have done less and were under a good deal of pressure to do more. Santos pressed, for instance, to make Darwin the base for his operations; and there were also requests that Canberra should be a site for negotiations between Portugal and FRETILIN.

¹ Document 229.

² See Document 219.

- (d) The Indonesians themselves are not without responsibility for prolonging Santos's mission by making it difficult for him to make contact with the UDT and APODETI, for instance by seizing the Dove aircraft.
- (e) Just as the Australian Government takes careful account of the domestic political and constitutional contexts in which the Indonesian authorities have to work, so should the Indonesian authorities take careful account of domestic and political factors in assessing Australia's actions and policies. The Government has resisted domestic pressures to intervene in Timor by mediating between the parties or sending a fact-finding mission there. The Government has also resisted suggestions that we take some initiative in the United Nations. Its attitude in these matters shows full understanding for Indonesia's position.

2. You might also take up some of the specific points in the *bout de papier* which the Indonesians gave you on 9 September. You might say that the Australian Government agrees with the thrust of points I, II and III in the Indonesian paper, namely that for the Portuguese simply to hand over authority in Portuguese Timor to FRETILIN would not constitute an acceptable process of decolonisation allowing the people of Portuguese Timor to decide their own political future. You might say that the facilities which Australia provided to Dr Santos were designed to help him organise negotiations with the *three* parties in Portuguese Timor and not just with FRETILIN: and you could refer also (with reference to the first point under the heading *note* in the *bout de papier* that the Australian Government was happy to facilitate Santos's return to Jakarta for further discussions with the Indonesian Government.

3. While your telegrams O.JA1818³ and O.JA1815 provide us with a good deal of information about Santos's talks in Jakarta, we are uncertain of the exact state of negotiations between the Indonesians and the Portuguese now that, as we understand it, Santos has left Jakarta to go back to Lisbon. As we read the situation a major stumbling block in the negotiations has been Santos's refusal to negotiate with UDT while UDT still hold Portuguese prisoners. Although Mochtar apparently regards this as an 'impossible' condition for the talks, we believe that the Portuguese were sincere in advancing it and feel strongly about the fate of their military prisoners in Timorese hands.

4. It is not easy to see where we go from there. From the Indonesians' point of view their reaction, summarized in paragraph 7 of your O.JA1793,⁴ is understandable. We take it that you did not pursue the possible initiative outlined in our O.CH265548⁵ with Mochtar, and, in all the circumstances, that may be just as well. All the same, it seems to us that the Indonesians should not overlook the danger, in the light of what FRETILIN is putting to the United Nations and what Major Mota is saying in Lisbon, that Portugal might now merely dump the problem of Portuguese Timor in the lap of the United Nations, even making some complaint about the Indonesians in doing so. This would mean internationalisation in circumstances embarrassing to Indonesia and indeed to others and could lead to rather unpredictable consequences. Another danger is that the Portuguese might simply transfer power to FRETILIN. Although it is difficult to see how more time can be found, it still seems to us that that is what is chiefly needed. The Indonesians may fear that time will consolidate FRETILIN's position but assuming that UDT and APODETI remain active and given Indonesian relations with them need this be the case?

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

³ 13 September. A translation of a Foreign Ministry press release reporting on the Santos talks.

⁴ Document 226.

⁵ Document 220.

231 FILE NOTE BY TAYLOR

Jakarta, [15] September 1975

SECRET

President Soeharto & FRETILIN

Mr Dan and I in the course of our recent discussions with Tjan have twice asked about the President's attitude towards a declaration of independence by a FRETILIN-controlled East Timor.

2. On the first occasion Tjan said that the President would not see a FRETILIN declaration as reason enough for unilateral Indonesian action. The people of Portuguese Timor had a perfect right to the Government they wanted and, provided Indonesian security were not threatened, Indonesia should respect that right. [Indonesia would not recognise their independence though. It would not be difficult to quarantine Portuguese Timor which would be so weak that it could not be independent.]¹ This had, according to Tjan, been the President's reply to a similar question to ours from Moerdani.

3. Tjan gave much the same reply on 1 September when we asked him again. However, he said that the President had indicated to Moerdani that he (Moerdani) could take care of such a development. The heavy implication of Tjan's comments was that the President was suggesting to Moerdani that, in the event of a FRETILIN independence action would need to be taken to ensure that there was justification enough for Indonesian intervention. (Indonesia was clean if the President was clean.)

4. On another occasion Tjan described the President's attitude towards dubious activities as one of covering his eyes with open fingers (or looking through open fingers).

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

¹ The words in square brackets are handwritten.

232 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 16 September 1975

O.LB322 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Canberra (for Secretary and Acting Minister); UN New York (for Minister and Harry); Jakarta (for Woolcott); Kuala Lumpur (for Parsons)

Santos came to see me this afternoon. He said he wanted to give me a resume of his trip because it was important that we should understand what Portugal's objectives were.

2. Santos reviewed his first visit to Jakarta and his discussions in Canberra which did not produce anything essentially new. He expressed however his appreciation for all the help he had received from the Australian authorities. He then discussed the new situation created by FRETILIN's 'victory' and the opportunity which this provided for a political solution. He said he had made it clear to FRETILIN that a political solution was their only hope because either directly or through UDT Indonesia would see to it that a pro-integration consensus emerged in Timor. (Santos is well aware of Indonesia's covert activities in Portuguese Timor.)¹ Santos was convinced that he would be able to get FRETILIN to negotiate with the other parties, because FRETILIN was 'terrified' of Indonesian intervention and they could not possibly run Timor on their own.

3. Asked about contacts with UDT, Santos said that the Indonesians had effectively torpedoed them by their retention of the Dove aircraft on the specious ground of lack of fuel. However, he was sure that UDT could be persuaded to release their Portuguese detainees and that eventually both UDT and APODETI would agree to talks. The venue was not important and some compromise could be worked out.

4. Santos then turned to his second visit to Jakarta. He said that, unlike the first visit, the atmosphere was completely different. The Indonesians were cold, highly suspicious, and seemed convinced that he had already sold out to FRETILIN. (Incidentally he expressed his dislike for Mochtar.) They pressed him to go to Atambua for talks with UDT, and when he refused unless Portuguese detainees were released, the Indonesians accused him of being more concerned about a handful of Portuguese than some 20,000 refugees. Santos frankly admitted this was so and pointed out that no government could be expected to negotiate under duress, that Portugal had not created the refugee situation and that, in any event, since UDT now professed to want to join Indonesia² the refugees were obviously in good hands. Santos said if Indonesia could persuade UDT to release the detainees and agree to a mutually acceptable venue, he would be prepared to talk both to UDT and APODETI. If not he would have to return to Lisbon.

5. Since the Indonesians were not disposed at that time to agree Santos saw no point in remaining in Jakarta. However, before leaving he pressed the Indonesians to support him in his efforts to get a political solution. He said he even urged the Indonesians to keep up their covert activities and thus maintain the pressure on FRETILIN who, Santos was convinced,

¹ The Embassy in Jakarta doubted his knowledge of the extent and details of these activities, and reported Indonesian assurances that at no time had Santos urged them to 'keep up their covert activities' (paragraph 5). Santos had given no hint that he knew of them in discussions with the Embassy (Cablegram JA1894, 17 September). Lisbon replied (Cablegram LB325, 18 September) that while he might not have been aware of details, his knowledge of the existence of covert activities had been one of the factors leading to his conclusion that Fretilin could not possibly win.

² On 3 September *Berita Yudha* reported the signing of a Proclamation of Integration by leaders of the anti-Fretilin forces in Timor (see note 3 to Document 214). On 15 September *Antara* reported that the UDT leaders had written to Soeharto indicating their desire for Portuguese Timor to join with Indonesia.

would soon come to realise that they could not go it alone. In a couple of weeks, if not sooner, they would be ready to negotiate, and meanwhile Indonesia could assist his 'plan' by persuading UDT to talk. Santos said he left the Indonesians in no doubt that the object of the plan was to create a political environment in which progress towards integration with Indonesia could be made. Integration was in the best interests of all concerned but it had to be done in a way that would be internationally acceptable. Once normal political conditions were restored, the UDT refugees would start to return, Indonesia could start putting in the aid and logistic support of which it was capable, and the FRETILIN rank and file (as distinct from its present leaders) would soon come to realise that the logic of the situation pointed to integration with Indonesia. Thus although there was at present a probable majority in favour of independence the situation would soon change in favour of integration.

6. Santos said that the President and the new Foreign Minister (Melo Antunes) had endorsed his plan, but his problem was to convince the Indonesians of his *bona fides*. He said he intended to talk to the Indonesian Ambassador (and would do so in my presence if I wished) and he would be grateful if I could do my best to assure the Ambassador that his plan offered the best way out for all of us. (I said I thought he should see the Indonesian Ambassador alone and Santos agreed.)

7. As for the venue for the proposed talks, Santos said he was flexible. His preferences were Macao, Bangkok (where they had an Embassy) or Singapore in that order, but he would not insist on any of them.

8. As for the future administration of Timor, Santos seems to envisage a Portuguese presence, plus the political parties and 'some administrative help from Indonesia and Australia'. I said I saw no prospect of Australian involvement in the administration of Timor. Santos said he was thinking primarily of humanitarian aid. I said that was a different matter and I would not rule it out.

9. If the plan failed, Santos said they would have no alternative but to refer it to the United Nations. On this aspect, I said that before implementing any such decision, it would be important, in our view, to consult with Indonesia. Suharto had not excluded altogether the possibility of a UN role in Timor, and the success of such an exercise would be greatly enhanced if it were done with Indonesia's prior knowledge and hopefully with their blessing. Santos should bear in mind that Indonesia was a very influential member of the Committee of 24 which would probably be involved in one way or another. Moreover, our soundings indicated that the countries of the region were most unlikely to take any position contrary to Indonesia's on Timor. This could be important in the UN context.

10. Santos noted what I had said but I got the impression that if his 'plan' failed, it would mean that they had also failed to win over the Indonesians in which event consultation about UN tactics would be academic. It is clear however that Santos sees a referral to the UN as a last resort and to be undertaken only when Portugal has decided that there is nothing more they can do to influence the situation on the ground in Timor.³

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

³ Canberra replied (Cablegram CH.268387, 17 September) welcoming the hope offered in Santos's new approach, particularly his emphasis on integration with Indonesia as being in the best interests of all concerned in Portuguese Timor. It asked for indications of further steps proposed by the Portuguese to contact the parties, and the timetable for further discussions. It instructed Cooper to seek an interview with Antunes to ascertain how far Santos's views were shared by other elements of the Portuguese Government. The Embassy in Jakarta was instructed to inform the Indonesians of Santos's advice and Canberra's views. The Embassy in Jakarta gave a more qualified welcome. Cablegram JA1958 (19 September) suggested it would be difficult to persuade the Indonesians that Santos's change of attitude was genuine; they had been exasperated by his shifts of position during his visits. It also questioned whether Fretilin could be persuaded to co-operate. Meanwhile, Lisbon reported that Santos had spoken in similar terms to the Indonesian Ambassador in Lisbon (Cablegram LB331, 19 September).

233 MINUTE FROM MILLER TO RENOUF

Canberra, 17 September 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

At the press meeting this morning you foreshadowed that at your press briefing next week you would try to get your audience to appreciate the Government's dilemma in having to steer a course between its attachment to self-determination and the fact that the only realistic course is for Portuguese Timor to be incorporated into Indonesia.

2. I think you should expect to be questioned hard, and by others than Juddery, about the latter point.

3. In this regard the attached papers, which Mr Cottrill and I prepared at the end of last week, may be of use as indicating some lines of question or comment you may encounter.

4. Mr Cottrill's paper¹ questioned the damage which would be done to Indonesia by an independent East Timor; mine canvassed whether we should now be considering urging the Indonesians to ask themselves one last time whether they really can not live with such a thing. Mr Rowland thought we should let the situation clarify a bit more before considering whether we had come to such a point.

5. (In regard to that we can argue in two ways:—

- (a) that in the meantime the Indonesians *are* engaged covertly in trying to bring the *de facto* Fretilin administration down; but
- (b) if that administration can not stand the very limited pressure the Indonesians have so far used it may as well fall now as later. The question will become sharper for us if/as the Indonesians increase their activities.)

Attachment**MINUTE FROM MILLER TO ROWLAND**

12 September 1975

Secret AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

Another aspect that some thought might be given to today is the question of what we say about, and even how we regard, the proposition that the journalists will almost certainly bring back from their visit to Timor, namely that Fretilin is in effective control, that a peaceful handover of power to Fretilin in Timor is possible, and should we not support and work for that.

2. Yesterday in the Senate Senator Wriedt in fact said that the Australian Government would wish to see the Timorese people determine their own political future without interference by anybody else.

¹ Dated 11 September.

3. The record of the South-East Asian Heads of Mission meeting records the Minister as noting that Indonesia might find, on examination, that an independent Timor could be lived with.²
4. On the other hand telegram O.CH264372³ containing instructions for discussion with Santos strongly attacks the idea of a hand-over by Portugal to Fretilin, saying in part that a process of de-colonisation taking account of the views of all three Timorese parties 'is the only path that offers any prospect of a stable settlement'.
5. It is of course hard to assess imperfect information, but there do seem to be indications that Fretilin's claims are not so wide of the mark. In these circumstances I take it that the force of 'stable' in the preceding paragraph is 'that Indonesia would accept'.
6. I must say I find some of the arguments in the remainder of telegram O.CH264372 not very convincing. Probably the majority of nations have been formed as the result of struggles between contending groups—and, in the case of former colonial territories, against the former colonial power. While an independent East Timor would have only 600,000 people Luxembourg, which is to provide this year's President of the General Assembly (a fact which could have some significance) has only 350,000. An independent East Timor would require continued external financial assistance, but so will PNG. And while the existence of a pro-Communist element in Fretilin may be of concern to Indonesia need it be of such concern to us—given our relationships with China, the Soviet Union, and the communist countries of Indo-China? If we judge that what the *Age* calls 'geographic and economic logic' will always keep an independent East Timor responsive to Indonesia's concerns, need we choose to give greater weight to what we would regard as exaggerated Indonesian fears?
7. In this regard the attached note by Mr Cottrill is of interest.⁴
8. Leaving aside the prospect of our participating in an international force, which seems to have receded, the policy choices before the Department now appear to boil down to two—either simply await events, which could include overt Indonesian intervention in East Timor, or attempt to influence events in favour of Indonesia accepting, with whatever concessions, guarantees and safeguards it can obtain, the prospect of a Fretilin-dominated independent East Timor.
9. The advantages of the former course include keeping ourselves more detached from events, about which we have to rely on second-hand information, and making more likely

² In introductory remarks to the meeting (held from 7 to 9 July) Willesee had predicted 'serious short term difficulties' in relations with Indonesia over Portuguese Timor, acknowledging that Indonesian policy was to gain control over the territory 'by whatever means are available'. Australia must 'face the situation where Indonesia is proceeding in a manner contrary to Australian policy and expressed views. Australia is presented with a conflict of interests. Although high priority . . . must be accorded the preservation of good relations with Indonesia, Australia is committed to the principle of self-determination'. Hence all diplomatic avenues should be explored in order to emphasise that Australia could not condone the use of military force against Portuguese Timor, that consideration of an annexation in international forums could place a serious strain on the bilateral relationship, and that Indonesia might find that an independent Timor could be lived with. He concluded, however, that if Indonesia did absorb the territory, Australia's interests would be 'to minimise to the greatest extent compatible with our convictions . . . the damage to our bilateral relations'. [On file NAA: A7824, 1/3/9, i.]

³ See Document 217, and note 6 thereto.

⁴ Cottrill argued that Timor's value to major powers was slight, and that no other country would attach as much importance to it as did Indonesia. No significant threat to Indonesia could be mounted from Timor without involvement of a major power, which seemed unlikely. He acknowledged that a Fretilin-dominated East Timor would be an unstable and unsettling element in the region: concerns over possible communist influence and apprehensions of possible great power interference were likely to be transmitted to other ASEAN countries. A more difficult situation would develop if Indonesian forces, after an invasion, were to become bogged down in a long drawn out anti-guerrilla campaign, leading to 'speculative external interference'. Indonesia's sense of threat and possible desire to find a scapegoat might then have wide repercussions in the region, including damage to bilateral relations with Australia.

Indonesian intervention which, if successful, would mean a neat solution to the East Timor problem, and remove the prospect of the territory becoming a real or imagined focus for communist subversion in the East Indonesia/PNG area.

10. The disadvantages of this course are that in so far as it consciously encourages Indonesian intervention it is indefensible in terms of the Government's stated policies and principles, and that Indonesian intervention may lead to a protracted struggle which will distract Indonesian attention from more important tasks and opportunities, distort its perceptions, and harm it internationally in both general (the United Nations) and particular (the United States) ways. After all, and despite Goa, India, another ex-colonial heir to an imperial tradition, has adapted well enough to co-existence with a number of small, sometimes difficult neighbours who are *de facto* part-independent/part-client.

11. The great advantage of the latter course is that a recognition that Fretilin has established itself as the dominant influence in East Timor would appear to accord with reality, and the distinguishing mark of the Government's foreign policies since its election, and a point of success, has been its readiness to accept realities.

12. The greatest disadvantage of that course is that we can of course not be sure that an independent East Timor would be domesticatable, and that it might turn into 'the Cuba of the South Seas'. If it did, and we had urged moderation on the Indonesians, they would blame us for bad advice, but it is hard to see the situation ever developing beyond repair by the use of Indonesian armed force if necessary.

13. Earlier, when the Portuguese left Dili in disarray leaving a situation of violence and confusion behind them, the international community would probably have accepted and even welcomed Indonesian intervention to restore order, and would have accepted the implication that Indonesia would also thereby get a large say in what would happen to the territory in future. Now the situation has changed, and the need for such a step to restore something like normal conditions in East Timor is something which, to say the least, it would not be easy to establish.

14. The Indonesians have, shrewdly, compromised us by making sure that we know their plans for covert intervention in some detail; but, as Woolcott points out in para 9 of his O.JA1758,⁵ Suharto 'might still, if he chose to do so, change course again and seek some accommodation with the moderate group in Fretilin'. Woolcott thinks this is unlikely, and would be a feat of great political dexterity, but he does not rule it out. (He also cautions us against burning our bridges while the Indonesians are changing horses—presumably in mid-stream!)

15. You said this morning we should not white-wash the Indonesians. I think that, as we have said throughout, after the Indonesians have made their decisions, whatever they are, we should work to minimise damage to Australian/Indonesian relations, to the greatest extent domestic political considerations allow. But, just as we have played a part in forming those decisions in the past, by declining to give a green light to overt intervention in East Timor at a time much more propitious than the present, so now we should consider *privately* urging the Indonesians to consider whether the problems of accepting the prospect of Fretilin dominating an independent East Timor would not be less than the problems of seeking to prevent this, and in effect setting out to deny what appear to be the realities of the situation.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxxi]

⁵ Document 221.

234 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 17 September 1975

O.JA1900 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Ref.O.CH267336¹

Port Moresby for Acting Minister; UN New York for Ministers and Harry; Lisbon for Cooper; Kuala Lumpur for Parsons

While Mochtar's concern about some of Australia's actions over Portuguese Timor is genuine and also reflects some doubts in HANKAM about our recent role, including our initial lukewarm reaction to the proposed Joint Authority, I do not believe we would gain by making 'low-key' representations at an 'appropriate level' as you suggest.

[matter omitted]

5. The real point is that Mochtar and I believe most Indonesians, want their regional friends and neighbours not to make, what is for them a difficult enough situation, more difficult through involving themselves in what they regard as an unhelpful way. This is what Mochtar and others believe Australia is doing by being over active and concentrating its interest on Dili and its environs. They are surprised that they find Australia alone—not the United States, not Japan, not New Zealand, not China, not the Soviet Union, not North Vietnam, not Cuba and not even a country like Mozambique—in this position. General Panggabean who is at present acting Foreign Minister as well as Minister for Defence expressed some annoyance to newsmen today, 17 September, about Australian Parliamentarians in Portuguese Timor while Radio Australia is coming in for some criticism for its reporting of Fretilin activities. (It has been referred to by one of our main media contacts as 'the Voice of Fretilin'.)

[matter omitted]

9. As for Indonesia it is moving ahead, apparently with some success so far, with the course of action outlined in paragraphs 11–14 of JA1615.² Its aims are to create confusion in the territory and to undermine Fretilin's claim to full control there. Nothing new arose at General Yoga's meeting with the President on 15 September (JA1832). Tjan has told us Indonesian policy would be 'more of the same thing'. We have no knowledge of any precise time-scale the Indonesians may have in mind. Perhaps they don't have one yet; they are clearly waiting to see how the situation in the territory develops and what happens next in Lisbon. They would *not* see time consolidating Fretilin's position (your paragraph four). On the contrary as effect is given to their policy the Indonesians expect Fretilin's position to weaken.

10. A drawn-out and increasingly obvious Indonesian covert action in Portuguese Timor would, I agree, increase pressure on the Australian Government and possibly place strains on Australian/Indonesian relations. We should seek to reduce this pressure. Much of the first-hand reporting in Australia on the situation seems to come from reporters who visit Dili. Indonesia has quite a good case which deserves a fairer presentation in the Australian news media, a course which we urged in our JA1431 and JA1499 last month.³ Despite the patent lack of authority of Portugal, the breakdown of law and order in the territory, and the influx of

¹ Document 230.

² Document 210.

³ See Document 196 and note 2 thereto.

large numbers of refugees, now said to have passed 30,000 including children, into Indonesian Timor and its attendant problems, Indonesia has shown restraint.

11. Your assumption that I did not raise the possible new initiative outlined in your CH265548⁴ is correct. Mochtar was preparing to leave for Manila and I considered that, given his attitude towards Australia's role at that stage (JA1815⁵), it would have been counterproductive to do so. We may yet be able to sound Malik out about it when he returns and depending on the way in which the situation develops.

12. I see no reason in the present situation to change the recommendations about Australian policy in paragraphs 23 and 24 of my JA1615 of 3 September which the Acting Minister has since endorsed. In fact I would go somewhat further now.

13. We need to accept that the Indonesians see the future of Portuguese Timor as involving questions of major national security interest to them and the stability of the region. The decision has been made that the territory will be incorporated into Indonesia sooner or later. We cannot change that decision. It is also accepted by other countries in the region. The only possible alternative would be a situation in which the covert operation failed. Then the President might tolerate a *de facto* hostage Fretilin government but only temporarily.

15. It is now highly unlikely there will ever be a 'proper act of self-determination' in East Timor. This is a fact which we don't like but with which we need to come to grips. The alternatives now are a *de facto* Fretilin Government under continuing Indonesian pressure and the integration of East Timor into Indonesia. Neither would involve a genuine act of self-determination although both could go through the motions of carrying out such an act.

16. There has never been a proper act of self-determination in any Portuguese colony so far and there will not be one in Macao. Why should Timor be different? It is neither our fault nor our problem. Can we not now come clean, accept the likely realities of the situation and say so publicly.

17. The situation is mainly the fault of Portugal's failure to carry through its decolonisation policy and the immaturity and resort to force of two small predominantly Eurasian political elites. There is, as I have said before, no reason to assume that, in time, the indigenous East Timorese, as distinct from the Eurasians, will not be better off and as free with their kin in the other half of the island than they would be as a weak, impoverished mini-state in the Indonesian Archipelago. Is it not time we accepted the likelihood that sooner or later, one way or another, East Timor is destined to be part of Indonesia and seek belatedly to explain to the public that this is in the region's and Australia's interests?

[*matter omitted*]

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

⁴ Document 220.

⁵ Document 229.

235 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 17 September 1975

O.LB324 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese TimorRef. O.CH268387¹*Jakarta (for Woolcott); UN New York (for Minister and Harry)*I shall endeavour to answer your questions *seriatim*:

Your paragraph 3. I don't think Santos has had a change of heart. His distrust of the Indonesians is as great as ever, but I believe that he is sufficiently realistic to conclude (probably as a result of his trip) that Indonesia has decided as an act of policy to take over Portuguese Timor, and that therefore the only sensible thing for Portugal to do is to work to bring this about on internationally acceptable terms. But this does not mean that Santos likes the Indonesians (he doesn't) and in this respect he reflects a generally held Portuguese attitude. In our discussion yesterday Santos told me that he went to Jakarta with full powers, even including authority to invite Indonesia to intervene, but that he did not do so because he was convinced that it would result in an Indonesian massacre of Fretilin far worse than the bloodshed which intervention would be supposed to prevent. But Santos sees no point in trying to prevent something (i.e. integration) which he now regards as inevitable. Santos' whole approach is a fairly cynical one—I don't think he is greatly concerned about the real wishes of the Timorese. He wants a solution that gets Portugal off the hook and by means which leave Portugal's image relatively untarnished. As to Fretilin's capacity to consolidate its administration, Santos is confident that, apart from Indonesian pressure, the logistic problem of running the territory is beyond Fretilin's capacity and that they will soon come to realise this. He is of course contemptuous of the Fretilin leadership (as he has been of all Timorese politicians whom he once described to me as a bunch of schoolboys). Nor is Santos greatly concerned about the refugee problem and the difficulties this is creating for Indonesia. It would not be unfair to describe Santos' attitude as one of *schadenfreude* coupled with the thought that the Indonesians largely brought it upon themselves by their collusion with UDT.

Your paragraph 4. Santos' immediate objective is to get the Indonesians to persuade UDT to release their Portuguese detainees and to agree on a mutually acceptable venue for talks. He proposes to do this by talking to the Indonesian Ambassador here and through Girao in Jakarta. He also hopes that we shall agree to lend our support by talking to the Indonesians. Once UDT has agreed to talks Santos believes the Indonesians can 'deliver' Apodeti at any time. Meanwhile, Fretilin will be allowed to reflect on their so-called victory for a week or two at the end of which Santos believes they will be much more co-operative. As he indicated at his press conference (our O.LB317²) Santos does not regard it as essential that tripartite talks should take place simultaneously. Although clearly this will be the first objective.

Your paragraph 5. Santos does not have a clear time table at this stage. But he said yesterday that even if it took until October 1 to arrange the talks this would be no bad thing. He believes that the longer Fretilin are allowed to 'sweat it out' the more co-operative they are likely to be. Once all three parties have agreed to talks Santos does not anticipate any real problem about a venue.

¹ See note 3 to Document 232.² 16 September.

Your paragraph 7. Santos stated categorically that his plan had been approved by the President and the Foreign Minister, (paragraph 6 of our O.LB322³) and I made him repeat this assurance. But I agree that I should check it out as soon as possible, and I am seeking an appointment with Melo Antunes. (A complication here is that Antunes has not yet been formally sworn in as Foreign Minister and he may decline to receive me until this has been done.) As to Mota's views, my guess is that Santos has convinced the President and Antunes that whatever superficial attraction there may have been in the idea of handing over to Fretilin, Indonesia has made it clear that it was not going to let it happen, and that Portugal's best bet was to try to hold the ring in Timor until such time as a pro-integration consensus emerged which would permit a political solution acceptable to all parties.

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

236 SUBMISSION TO WHITLAM

Canberra, 19 September 1975

Humanitarian Assistance to Portuguese Timor

On 8 September you agreed to a submission from ADAA and the Department that the Government should provide a cash contribution of \$100,000 to the ICRC Appeal for its relief work in Portuguese Timor. Following exchanges of correspondence between yourself and the Treasurer the \$100,000 contribution was announced on 18 September.

2. Meanwhile a refugee problem of considerable proportions appears to be building up in Indonesian Timor. The refugees, whose numbers according to Indonesian estimates, run to the order of 30,000, are mostly UDT and Apodeti supporters who have fled across the border into Indonesian Timor.

3. In view of the refugee problem in Indonesian Timor we have been working on the basis that a portion of the \$100,000 contribution to the ICRC should be channelled by the ICRC through the Indonesian Red Cross as relief for the refugees. We have already informed the ICRC in Geneva that an amount of the order of \$20,000 might be provisionally set aside for this purpose, but that we should wish to be guided by the ICRC's assessment of relevant needs before coming to a final decision on an appropriate allocation.

4. The ICRC still has no precise details of the position on the Indonesian side of Timor but is to send a representative to Kupang over the weekend to look into the situation. The ICRC's initial disposition has been to regard some of the estimates of the numbers of refugees on the Indonesian side of the border as exaggerated.

5. Our wish that some of the Australian contribution should be allocated to the refugees has been dictated in part by our concern that Australia should not be seen in Indonesian eyes as being concerned only with the people in Fretilin-controlled territory. We should in principle be no less concerned about the welfare of those who have fled from Fretilin into Indonesian Timor.

6. The Department's preference would have been to allocate an amount greater than \$20,000 or one-fifth of the Australian contribution, for the refugees. But as against this consideration

³ Document 232.

the ICRC Appeal was addressed to the situation in Portuguese Timor itself and indeed related very much to the need to re-imburse expenditures already being undertaken by national Red Cross associations which in practical terms in this case are the expenditures undertaken by The Australian Red Cross. Ear-marking a larger amount than \$A20,000 for the refugees would therefore have been difficult. We have also had in mind that the Government is coming under pressure from press and other quarters to undertake a food relief program in Portuguese Timor. There are substantial political problems in proceeding with such a program (it would be difficult to avoid the impression that we were giving direct underpinning to the *de facto* Fretilin administration in Timor) and we have seen in the cash offer to the ICRC a means of possibly forestalling pressure for Australia to do more.

7. The Australian Embassy in Jakarta has, however, reacted adversely to the proposal that only one-fifth of our \$100,000 contribution should be made available for the refugees. A copy of Jakarta telegram JA1936¹ is attached. It will be seen that Jakarta is recommending either (a) a specific Australian bilateral offer to Indonesia for the upkeep of the refugees; or, (b) that a greater proportion of the \$100,000 contribution to the ICRC be set aside for Timorese refugees in Indonesian Timor.²

8. The problem with the first suggestion is that with the commitment of the \$100,000 to the ICRC there are no further funds within existing budgetary allocations which could be made available for the refugees. In other words, were we to make a bilateral offer to Indonesia we should need to seek additional funds. The Treasury, with whom we have discussed the matter, is quite insistent that the Treasurer would be reluctant to agree to this course particularly at such an early stage in the financial year.

9. There is no practical restraint on us setting aside a greater amount than \$20,000 of the \$100,000 for the refugees. We should of course wish to await the outcome of the survey being conducted by the ICRC of the extent of the problem on the Indonesian side of the border. But assuming that a clear need for relief is established, there would seem no reason why we could not simply inform that ICRC that, for example, we should wish them to divide the expenditure from our \$100,000 equally between the refugees in Indonesian Timor and those persons in need of relief still in Portuguese Timor. The expenditure in both cases would fall within the terms of the announcement of the contribution, that is for assistance for 'the victims of the recent fighting in Timor'. But we must expect that the fact of the ear-marking would become known. This could mean that there would be additional pressure on the Government to make further contributions, possibly food aid, solely for Portuguese Timor.³

¹ 18 September. It argued that Indonesians would conclude that 80 per cent of Australian aid was going to a smaller number of refugees, pointing out that Indonesian sources 'who have been engaged in actually registering names' claimed over 28 000 refugees were in Indonesian Timor.

² In fact it recommended both options.

³ Cablegram CH269956 (22 September) reported claims of incipient famine and pressure for food aid from journalists and the recently returned Parliamentary delegation. Preliminary ICRC views, on the other hand, suggested the claims might be exaggerated. The Embassy replied (Cablegram JA1996, 22 September) that Indonesia would not favour an Australian offer of food aid, even through the ICRC. It would strengthen Fretilin's position at a time when 'Indonesia and possibly even Portugal are expecting pressures to build up on Fretilin which will induce it to adopt more realistic long-term policies'. The Indonesians maintained that any food shortage could be blamed on Fretilin's military campaign, and the burning of coffee plantations owned by UDT supporters. There was reported hostility among UDT leaders and refugees towards the ICRC, and towards the concentration of Australian Red Cross assistance in the Dili area. The cablegram acknowledged domestic pressures on the Australian Government, but recommended delaying any decision as long as possible.

10. On balance we recommend that you agree to our informing the ICRC that provided need is established, we should wish the Australian contribution of \$100,000 to be allocated evenly between the refugees in Indonesian Timor and the ICRC relief operation inside Portuguese Timor itself.⁴

G. B. FEAKES

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii]

237 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 19 September 1975

O.CH269162 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

*Ref. O.JA1900*¹

Jakarta: for Woolcott; Lisbon: for Cooper; New York UN: for Minister and Harry; Kuala Lumpur: for Parsons

We have carefully considered the arguments in paragraphs 1 to 6 of your reference telegram, but feel that it would be best if you could proceed along the lines of our O.CH267336.² We leave it to your judgement how you make the points which we have asked should be put to the Indonesians and to whom you or an officer of the Embassy should speak. We would be grateful, however, if it could be made clear to the Indonesians that the Embassy is acting on instructions from the Australian authorities. We are considering calling the Indonesian Ambassador in Canberra in to the Department to give him a piece of paper setting out the main points in our O.CH267336 and we shall advise you of our decision. But we should prefer that you should not further delay action in Jakarta.

2. It may be helpful to you to know by way of background to our O.CH267336 that we had in mind the following considerations:—

- (a) The views which Mochtar conveyed to you were conveyed not only by him orally but they were also reflected in the piece of paper from the Foreign Ministry. It would be unusual to leave this statement of Indonesian views without some response, especially as they misrepresent the Australian position. (We see from paragraph 4 of your reference telegram that you have already been making some of these points to the Indonesians but we think that it would be well to go over them again and if they have been made already to the Indonesians it would do no harm to repeat them.)

⁴ Whitlam agreed to the recommendation on 19 September. In a letter to ADAA, Joseph emphasised that assistance was conditional on the outcome of the ICRC survey of the extent of the problem in Indonesian Timor. A submission for information to Whitlam on the question of food aid, dated 23 September, concluded that, in terms of foreign policy interests, it would be best not to provide food aid 'at this stage'. But final recommendations could not be formulated until receipt of a full ICRC report; in the event of a clearly established need, domestic and humanitarian pressures for food aid would increase.

¹ Document 234.

² Document 230.

- (b) We notice something of a tendency on the Indonesians' part to look around for a scapegoat on whom to put responsibility for developments in Portuguese Timor which are unfavourable to their interests. We want to make sure that Australia is not cast in this role.
- (c) If the present situation in Portuguese Timor drags on the risks of misunderstanding between the Indonesians and ourselves will persist. It is important that they should have a clear understanding not only of Australia's policies but also of the political conventions (freedom of the press, independence of MPs and so forth) within which the Government in normal circumstances in Australia always has to work.

We are grateful for what you have already done to explain to the Indonesians the political context in which the Government has to conduct its policy on Portuguese Timor. It occurs to us, however, that there may be some advantage in making some of the points in our O.CH267336 not only to the Foreign Ministry but also, for instance, to HANKAM. Perhaps your service advisers might be an appropriate channel. We might add that remarks like those attributed to General Panggabean in yesterday's press (your paragraph 5) serve to increase suspicion of Indonesia here.

3. We agree with the description of Indonesian attitudes in your paragraph 5. But those attitudes overlook a number of relevant facts and we do not feel that we should give up hope of influencing Indonesian officials to recognise some of them. For example, the Indonesians are ignoring the fact that, compared with the other countries mentioned in your paragraph 5, Australia is much closer to Portuguese Timor, has long served as a place of transit to the territory and contains certain persons and groups who take a close interest in its future. In these circumstances, domestic pressures for Australian involvement in Timor would always be much greater than pressures on the other countries in question. We had hoped also for some greater degree of understanding among the Indonesian authorities concerned with Portuguese Timor of the extent to which the Australian Government has *avoided* being drawn into Portuguese Timor. As already noted political traditions in Australia, but not in most of the other countries you mention, preclude the Government from preventing Members of Parliament from visiting Portuguese Timor or from controlling the press or from doing anything beyond advising Radio Australia about its reporting. (We have, however, told Radio Australia of the reputation which its broadcasts have earned it in Jakarta, cf. last sentence of paragraph 5 of your telegram.) Thirdly, unlike the leaders of the other countries you mention the Prime Minister has made public statements which have been sympathetic to the Indonesian interest in Portuguese Timor. The Government has gone a long way to reflect an understanding of Indonesia's interests and it is disappointing that this is apparently not wholly recognised in Indonesia.

[*matter omitted*]³

7. We find little to disagree with in your paragraphs 13 and 14 (but see the final paragraph below). In comment on your paragraphs 15, 16 and 17, we should say that we still need to keep some balance in our policies on Portuguese Timor and to be circumspect in our public exposition of them. The right of the people of Portuguese Timor to decide their own political future cannot be ignored. The recognition of these rights indeed offers some protection for Indonesian interests, for it enables both Indonesia and Australia to oppose FRETILIN's claim to be recognised as the sole negotiating party among the Timorese.

³ Omitted paragraphs contain specific replies to comments in Document 234. There is also a suggestion that journalists be permitted to visit Indonesian Timor to see at first hand the plight of refugees there.

8. We recognise the force of the arguments in the first three sentences of paragraph 17 of your telegram. But we do not think that now is the time to make the sort of public explanation which you advise. We take it that the Indonesians will continue to present their policy on Portuguese Timor as being designed to ensure that the people of the territory are allowed to decide their own political future. We can scarcely do less. We need to keep in mind the sorts of attitudes we should want to express should the question come to the United Nations. Another point is that we should keep open for *possible* use in the future the policy option that if the military situation in Portuguese Timor should deteriorate and the Indonesians show no sign after some time of being able to master it, then it may even become necessary for them to accept some sort of autonomous status for Portuguese Timor rather than to continue military action (but this consideration is very much in the background of our thinking for the moment—and we note Santos' view that in the longer term FRETILIN cannot possibly win).

9. As general background to how we see things at present and as explained in our O.CH267536 paragraph 4 we should say that it still seems to us that more time is what is chiefly needed. Despite the Indonesians' distrust of Santos and their apparent view that another round of talks would be a mere charade, does not this path offer them the best way forward? If Santos is to be believed he sees it as a way of bringing FRETILIN to accept union with Indonesia but by 'respectable means'. But even if this were not so the prospect of talks would act as a hindrance to any unilateral grant of independence to FRETILIN. If talks were held and broke down, the position of the other two parties would have been reasserted in a forum which would give them more credibility than at present, there would have been an opportunity to strengthen their position in other ways as well; and in sum the Indonesians would seem to have lost nothing but rather to have the opportunity of making progress.⁴

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

238 SUBMISSION TO WHITLAM

Canberra, 19 September 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

Your attention is invited to the attached article by Mr Bruce Juddery in the *Canberra Times* of 17 September. At the end of his article Juddery refers to the danger that Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor could lead to a bitter war continuing for up to 10 years with very bad consequences for relations between Australia and Indonesia. He alleges that our policy on Portuguese Timor ignores this danger.

⁴ Woolcott replied (Cablegram JA1965, 19 September) that the points had been made to Tjan by Taylor that day, and would be put to Akosah on 20 September. He proposed to put them to Panggabean (then Acting Foreign Minister as well as Defence Minister) to ensure they reached HANKAM at the highest level. Although most of the points had been made orally to Mochtar he would put them to him in writing, and would raise them with Yoga the following week. Canberra replied (Cablegram CH269489, 20 September) that it had been decided not to call in the Indonesian Ambassador, and that Woolcott need not necessarily give a written response to Mochtar. It also noted that this document had been approved by Whitlam. Cablegram JA2014 (23 September) reported at length on Woolcott's interview with Panggabean, noting that although he was 'responsive and clearly anxious to avoid divisions between the two governments', the basic situation had not changed. The prospect, as Woolcott saw it, was for 'talks about talks combined with continuing political and covert military pressure on Portugal and Fretilin'.

2. The danger which Juddery describes is one which we all along had in mind considering Portuguese Timor. In a major submission of [13] December 1974 to the Minister for Foreign Affairs,¹ the Department commented: 'There are grounds for regarding the outlook in Portuguese Timor as ominous . . . the terrain is very rugged with an obvious potential for guerrilla warfare. Some thousands of men receive continuing military training and it would be easy for outsiders to introduce arms. An armed revolt in Timor would be very hard to put down and might drag on for years . . . It seems unlikely that political development in the territory will take place without incident. It would be prudent to expect disturbances and periodic bouts of violence as the various political groups increase their activities and try to extend their influence into the up-country villages and isolated mountain areas . . . The Indonesians have so far shown no appreciation of the risks that, if they occupy Portuguese Timor, they might face armed opposition capable of sustaining guerrilla warfare for many years—with all this prospect implies by way of openings for outside intervention in the territory.'

3. Against the background of these fears the Department asked the Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO) for an assessment of the Indonesian capacity to pacify Portuguese Timor by military means. On 10 February the JIO provided us with an assessment which concludes as follows:—

'It is assessed that the Indonesians could handle an insurgent type resistance for these reasons:

- (a) the insurgents would lack a sanctuary from which to draw support in the form of training, rest, weapons etc. The Indonesians would be able to substantially isolate the island.
- (b) It is unlikely there would be strong international support, either moral or material, for the insurgents.
- (c) The Timorese do not appear to have a strong will to pursue a protracted insurgent campaign against the Indonesian army. The level of education and political consciousness is low.

The Indonesians would parallel expected resistance with the type they experienced in Dutch New Guinea and which they have managed to contain.'

4. We renewed our request to the Joint Intelligence Organisation more recently and on 26 August the JIO provided us with a further assessment concluding as follows:

'In view of the probable lack of material support for the resistance from outside the island, and the broad experience that the Indonesians would bring to bear in dealing with disturbed political situations and dissident movements, we expect that the Indonesians would be able to secure, control and pacify the regions that they chose to occupy in strength. This would include the more populous areas.

'While any resistance movement would not be able to challenge or seriously threaten Indonesian control, the size and strength of the resistance movement would be related to the skill of Indonesian political intentions and programs. The nationalist impulses at work in Portuguese Timor are likely to continue despite the present break-down.'

5. These assessments reflect the belief that the FRETILIN leaders have neither the military competence [n]or the political effectiveness of some guerrilla leaders elsewhere and that they will not receive substantial outside support. We shall certainly need to keep these questions under review. Clearly if it looked as if the Indonesians, by their actions in Portuguese Timor, were being drawn into a major guerrilla war lasting some years, we should have to consider reviving with the Indonesians the ideas we have previously expressed to them about the possibility of their living with an independent Portuguese Timor over which they would exert

¹ Document 67.

a preponderant influence. But in our view the occasion for doing this has not yet arisen. Nor should we hope that if we were to revive these ideas with the Indonesians we should have much effect on them or that such ideas would be well received.²

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii]

239 LETTER FROM MOTT TO WOOLCOTT

Canberra, 23 September 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

The Secretary and Graham Feakes have asked me to reply to your comments about the role of Radio Australia and our handling of the media in relation to the Timor problem.

We have conveyed to Radio Australia the feeling that seems to be developing in some quarters in Jakarta that their reports have some bias towards Fretilin. They said that they would take these views into account—a reaction that would be familiar to you. They speculated however that it might be an Indonesian tactic to bring pressure to bear on Radio Australia, for Indonesian purposes, through the Embassy and the Department, by alleging partiality on Radio Australia's part.

We have also had in mind that, until about a week ago, most of the news that came out of Timor was inevitably Fretilin-based news (and Radio Australia does not apologise for using this) and of course the impact of this was increased by such events as the visit of the Australian Members of Parliament—although I do not think that they have had a great effect here so far and of course the Indonesians are aware that they do not speak for the government.¹ With Parliament not sitting at the moment, (it resumes on 30 September), there is not so much opportunity to put an alternative position on the public record.

Let me assure you that, within these obvious limits we are providing Radio Australia, and other media organisations, with as much material as we can to balance assertions that Fretilin is the only possibility for Timor. You will have received a transcript of remarks by the Prime Minister on television on 21 September which will be helpful from this point of view. Additionally, we have looked at the RA transcripts over the past week and conclude that they are not partial to Fretilin; there have been several reports that rely solely on Indonesian sources—and these are no fewer than the reports from the Fretilin side. In other words, there has been a notable shift of emphasis in the last few days.

As to the question of handling the press, the Secretary has asked me to make the point that the situation in Canberra has changed substantially in recent months. I think that it would be fair to say that many journalists sympathise generally with the government and its policies (although believing in the case of Timor that Australia should be playing a more active political

² The submission was initialled by Whitlam on 22 September.

¹ Senators Neville Bonner (Lib., Qld) and Arthur Gietzelt (ALP, NSW) with Ken Fry MHR (ALP, Fraser ACT), travelled to Dili on 16 September. Bonner returned to Australia after ten and a half hours, the other two the following day.

role). But this attitude is not shared by the proprietors, who have hardened in their opposition to a point where they are constantly on the lookout for ammunition to use against the government.

In this situation if we were to go too far with the press along the path that you define in paras 17 and 18 of your telegram O.JA1900² we would be likely to find that they would seize upon our comments and adapt them for political ends. Activity of this kind, instead of being helpful, might be positively counter-productive from the point of view of the government's objectives.

This however does not mean that we can go *no* way along that path. I think here that there may be room for a difference of view between us resulting perhaps from distance and perspective. In fact we here don't think we are doing badly in regard to the press. I would contrast the heavy fire that the government came under last month for inactivity and pro-Indonesia tendencies with what I believe is a greater, although still not complete, understanding now.

President Soeharto's restraint has been acknowledged and praised. The papers, I believe, are accepting more readily the importance of Australia's relations with Indonesia and Indonesia's great interest in Timor as important factors in the situation. Not so often do we read urgings for Australia to be active in a mediatory role. There seems instead to be a disposition to reflect more soberly about the realities of the situation as opposed to wishful thinking about what might be or should be, and I hope that the Indonesians will appreciate that this is so. Finally there is more news in the media these days from the Indonesian side of the border than from the Portuguese, and on the whole there is little of a critical flavour about it.

All this of course does not mean that the press will accept all that the Indonesians may do or say—or indeed that they should do so, or even that we should encourage them towards such a reaction. But the Indonesian position does get a better hearing now, and has gained more understanding, than it had a month ago.

I hope that you can agree that this is so—and that you can give us some credit for it, granting that we are having to steer a cautious path between the potentially potent feelings in favour of Timor for the Timorese and Australian mediatory action on the one hand and a ready, high profile acquiescence in an Indonesian take-over on the other.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxxiii]

² Document 234.

240 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 23 September 1975

O.JA2018 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*Ref. O.CH269940¹*

We note from your reference telegram that charter flights from Australia to Portuguese Timor would be suspended *inter alia* if the security situation in Timor were to deteriorate to a point which made such flights hazardous.

2. Today's local press has reported that UDT and APODETI have combined their military operations and will use guerrilla tactics against FRETILIN beginning this week. (This accords generally with information we have received from Indonesian sources.) In these circumstances our Indonesian contacts do not rule out the possibility that attempts will be made to put airports out of action.

3. The future security of the airports is also relevant in your consideration of Australian food aid for Portuguese Timor.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

241 LETTER FROM WOOLCOTT TO JUDDERY

Jakarta, 24 September 1975

PERSONAL

[matter omitted]

Bruce, I have just read your article in the *Canberra Times* of 17 September and I would like to offer a few comments, even from this distance and although it is no longer my task to attempt to assist the media in Australia.¹ I must say that I do not, myself, regard the Government's policy on Timor as a 'nasty, narrow, cynical, obtuse and wholly dishonourable exercise'. Nor can I regard it as a blunder as serious as the manoeuvres involving Australia in Vietnam, as your article suggests. That all seems rather emotionally charged stuff and, knowing your objectivity, I am sure that you will not mind my putting a few ideas on this subject to you personally.

The core of the Timor problem for Australia lies in its ramifications for our future relationship with Indonesia and the South East Asian region as a whole. The situation is

¹ 22 September. In response to a question by Tjan whether Australia could prevent charter flights from Darwin, it noted that power to approve or refuse charter flights rested with the Department of Transport, and that it would be contrary to Australian political convention to prevent journalists or members of Parliament from going to Timor. Flights would only be suspended if the Portuguese refused visas, or if the security situation were to deteriorate to a point which made flights hazardous.

¹ Woolcott had considerable experience of dealing with the press. He had been Public Information Officer, Department of External Affairs, from 1964 to 1967. As such he was the Department's first senior policy officer in this position. He accompanied Prime Ministers Menzies and Holt on overseas visits, and later, as a more senior officer, McMahon and Whitlam.

complicated in that there would appear to be a conflict between the principle of self-determination, which is enshrined in the United Nations Charter and is part of the ALP platform and what is, logically, the most sensible long term future for East Timor, namely its incorporation in Indonesia, which is regarded by all of the Governments in this neighbourhood as the best outcome of its decolonisation.

This potential conflict between principle, on the one hand, and national and regional interest, on the other, often overlooks the fact that Indonesia, and in particular the President, has wanted association with Indonesia to be the outcome of an act of self-determination, which would be prepared over a sufficient period of time to allow genuine East Timorese political forces to emerge.

Parts of our media tend to overlook this and cast the situation in rather crude black and white terms as a clash between a romanticised image of Fretilin as a progressive, anti-colonial, genuine, widely supported, national liberation movement, and an equally misleading image of Indonesia as a large, evil, fascist, expansionist brown-colonialist power intent on denying, by force, the former its right to self-determination. In the same over-simplified manner those, including members of the government and the department, who probe beyond these over-simplifications and see the case for integration, especially if it can be brought about in an acceptable manner, tend to be branded as dishonourable anti-self-determinationists. Some of this is based on latent fears of Indonesia, some on a delayed bad conscience about our acquiescence over West Irian, some on genuine left wing sentiments and some on political ill will towards the Prime Minister, mainly within his own party.

[matter omitted]

I do not for one moment think we should be obsequious towards Indonesia or that our policies towards Indonesia should be based on the assumption that we should not adopt policies which might offend Indonesia. We should always weigh carefully our responses in terms of our national interest. I was a supporter of our opposition to Indonesia at the time of 'konfrontasi' when Indonesia itself sought to stop the incorporation of Sarawak and Sabah into Malaysia. I feel that we earned some Indonesian respect for the stand we took then. Equally, we should not romanticise Fretilin into a genuine, broadly based national movement. It is of some interest that Fretilin has so far received no response to its various messages to the United Nations and no messages of support or congratulations on its 'victory' from any government, communist or non-communist. Strangely such support as it receives comes mainly from individual Australians.

There is no doubt in my mind that, in the long-term, the Australian/Indonesian relationship, along with our relations with Japan, the United States and possibly China, are destined to be the most important of our foreign policy relationships. We should not therefore lightly oppose what Indonesia, supported by all other countries in the region, sees as its national security interest. Long after Timor is settled one way or the other this will remain true.

Does anybody—except possibly a handful of Fretilin leaders—really want to see a weak, unstable, non-viable and impoverished mini-state in South East Asia? Naturally, none of the ASEAN countries want this and, whether or not their fears turn out to be justified, none of them want to see opportunities created for an extension of the Sino/Soviet conflict in the ASEAN region. While the Indonesians may exaggerate the dangers of this they are determined not to permit either an Angolan or Cuban type situation to develop in the middle of the Indonesian Archipelago; nor would Australia want such situations on its northern doorstep.

[matter omitted]

You refer to the lip service which the Government has given to the principle of self-determination. Self-determination is, of course, a principle which we all support and one is saddened by how often it is honoured in the breach and by its failures in Africa. But let us be honest. It is now highly unlikely that there will be a genuine act of self-determination in East Timor. This is a fact which we may not like but with which, as realists, we need to come to grips. The alternatives now seem to be a *de facto* Fretilin Government or the integration of East Timor into Indonesia. Neither will involve a genuine act of self-determination although both results could be achieved through what could appear to be such an act. Basically, this situation is Portugal's—not Indonesia's—fault. Given this Hobson's choice, I believe Australia's interests are better served by association with Indonesia than by independence. I know that what I am writing is pragmatic rather than principled; but that is what national interest and foreign policy is all about, as even those countries with established ideological bases for their foreign policies have acknowledged. Let us not play the role of the naïve conscience of Asia, seeking to preserve our virtues by placing the fig leaf of self-determination—when we know it is unlikely to happen anyway—over the geopolitical realities of the situation. Inevitably Timor will be part of Indonesia.

[matter omitted]

I would not normally use the objectives which you use to describe myself but, as a pragmatist and a realist making the best assessment I can of Australia's real long-term national interest in the South East Asian region, I must endorse the view—shared by the Prime Minister and, albeit with some reservations, by Senator Willesee and, as far as I know, by the alternative Prime Minister and now by the shadow Foreign Minister—that in the long-term the Australian/Indonesian relationship is of overriding importance. Even if Indonesia were to move openly against Timor—which I do not believe it will—then I would still believe that it would be in our national interest to remain as uninvolved as possible and do our best to contain damage to the long-term Australian/Indonesian relationship as a result of a recrudescence of latent hostility to and fears of Indonesia in the Australian community. I believe influential persons—politicians, journalists, academics—who stimulate these fears and hostility are not doing Australia a service. Nobody likes to see big countries pushing small territories around or groups, however small, being denied self-determination but it is all much more complicated than that. And in the end our national interest and the inevitable geopolitical realities are bound to prevail over echoes of Wilsonian idealism.

There is a danger in this situation that, through the activities of a relatively small number of members of Parliament, journalists, and unionists, we shall come to be regarded in Indonesia as the only country in the region which is taking an unhelpful anti-Indonesian stand on this issue. Let us not lose our sense of perspective; let us not lose sight of Australia's fundamental interests.

[matter omitted]

I regret this letter has become so long but this problem does need to be treated in more depth and with more objectivity than I believe it was in your article of 17 September. Indonesia deserves more understanding of its response to the unwanted dilemma which, mainly due to Portugal, it now finds on its doorstep, than it has been receiving in our media.

242 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 25 September 1975

O.LB349 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Jakarta (for Woolcott); UN New York (for Minister and Harry)

Prompted by para 6 of Jakarta's O.JA2073¹ I sought an urgent interview with the Director of Political Affairs in the Foreign Ministry, Dr Malaghaes Cruz.

2. I referred to my long talk with Santos on 17 September, when he outlined to me his plan for achieving a political solution of the Timor problem, an essential element of which was the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia provided this could be achieved by internationally acceptable means.² I recalled that Santos had said that his plan had been endorsed by the President and Foreign Minister, and the latter had subsequently assured me that the Santos plan was now the considered policy of the Portuguese Government. I asked Cruz specifically to confirm that the objective of integration with Indonesia was an essential feature of the plan. Cruz said that it was.

3. I then told Cruz that I had reason to believe that in reporting to Jakarta on his talks with Santos and the President, the Indonesian Ambassador had not mentioned the integration aspect. As Cruz would appreciate, this omission could have serious consequences so far as Jakarta's attitude to the Santos plan was concerned. Cruz agreed.

4. I also recalled that Santos had told me that they intended to enlist Indonesian support for the plan through both the Indonesian Ambassador in Lisbon and the Portuguese Chargé d'Affaires in Jakarta. Had Girao been instructed in this sense? Cruz said he would have to check the papers as he had been on leave last week but his impression was that Girao had not (repeat not) been so instructed. I pointed out that, in that case, the Indonesians had apparently not yet been officially informed of the Portuguese Government's conclusion (which we shared) that integration of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia was in the best long term interests of all concerned. Cruz undertook to follow up urgently.

Comment

5. When it comes to deviousness, it seems that there is little to choose between the Portuguese and the Indonesians. For reasons best known to himself, my Indonesian colleague has apparently not passed on to Jakarta the most essential aspect (from Indonesia's point of view) of the Santos plan, despite the fact that without it Indonesia would have little incentive to support the plan. The omission could not have been due to any misunderstanding on Say's part, because when I discussed the plan with him, including the integration aspect, he agreed that Santos had spoken to him in identical terms.

¹ 25 September. Paragraph 6 reported that Girao could not believe Santos had accepted that integration with Indonesia was in the best long-term interests of Portuguese Timor. Nor had the Indonesian Ambassador in Lisbon reported such a view to the Foreign Ministry in Jakarta.

² See Document 232. The date given should read 16 September.

6. Then there is the incredible fact (if it is a fact) that, contrary to what Santos told me, Girao has not even been advised of the essential elements of the plan or instructed to make representations in support of it. Given Girao's comments about Santos (as reported in O.JA1958)³ one can only speculate as to whether Girao enjoys the confidence of his own government.

7. I also took the opportunity to raise with Cruz the references to Australia in the Decolonisation Committee's communiqué on which I shall report separately.⁴

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

243 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 27 September 1975

O.JA2102 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I discussed Timor situation with General Moerdani for over an hour last evening, 26 September.

Possible Talks with Portugal

[matter omitted]¹

5. I added that one of the problems bedevilling the present situation was the intense suspicion of Portugal in Indonesia and of Indonesia in Portugal. Would it not be in Indonesia's own interests to explore thoroughly the possibility of a change of heart in Portugal and the possibility of talks? Even if the talks came to nothing Indonesia would have been seen to be doing its best to bring about a political solution. General Moerdani said he saw the logic in this position and would be prepared to put it to the President at the weekend. (He will be seeing the President again on Sunday.) However, the mood at the high level policy meeting with the President last Thursday had not been in favour of talks.

³ Paragraph 4 of JA1958 (19 September) reported Girao's 'disloyal personal and critical attack' on Santos, whom Girao described as the 'most unreliable and dishonest politician in Portugal'.

⁴ Cablegram CH271616 (25 September) referred to a communiqué issued the previous day which included an appeal to the Australian Government to agree to talks in Australia between Portugal and the parties. The cablegram noted continuing Departmental reservations about increasing Australian involvement in such a way, but recognised the importance of encouraging the Portuguese initiative, and likely domestic pressure in favour of an Australian venue. The Embassy in Jakarta was asked to gauge likely Indonesian reaction; Cooper was instructed to be 'firmly discouraging' and to draw attention to Whitlam's earlier decision against talks in Australia. Canberra remained sceptical of claims that disagreement over choice of venue constituted a major obstacle. Cablegram LB350 (25 September) reported Cruz asking whether Darwin might be considered if it proved the only venue on which all would agree. Cooper replied that the Portuguese Government would have to 'convince us that an Australian venue was absolutely essential before we could consider any change in our position'. Jakarta reported (Cablegram JA2096, 26 September) that Tjan and Lim Bian Kie said the question of venue should not 'cloud the real issues', but did not believe the talks would take place. Woolcott saw advantages in Australia adopting a positive attitude, but also doubted their chances of success.

¹ Woolcott suggested that the new Portuguese attitude offered an opportunity for a political solution to the Timor problem. Moerdani replied that there was a strong feeling in Indonesian circles that Portugal was not genuine.

6. Summing up Indonesia's attitude to the question of talks General Moerdani said that General Panggabean, himself and others were opposed to talks with Portugal and the parties because of their distrust of Portugal and the doubts about the practicability, nature and the outcome of such talks. He had however taken note of what I had said and would follow this up. I said that if there were no talks and if as seemed possible, given recent reports from the border area, Fretilin would gain full control of all of Portuguese Timor, what then? General Moerdani said Indonesia's 'official position' would be that Fretilin had gained control by force and with the connivance of leftwing Portuguese soldiers who had given them the arms to do so. Indonesia would not accept an independent Fretilin-controlled East Timor which came about in such circumstances.

Present Indonesian Attitude

7. On the situation in general, Moerdani said that the Indonesian Parliament (DPR) and its ASEAN neighbours were becoming impatient with the drift of events. Nobody really wanted a weak, independent East Timor on the southern fringe of the South East Asia region which would be an easy prey to outside interference. It would always be a trouble spot to Indonesia, Australia and other countries in the region.

8. Moerdani went on to say that if Australia had agreed two weeks ago to cooperate with Indonesia in restoring law and order the problem might have been settled by now. I said that this was unfair and unrealistic. Australia could not have agreed to put combat forces into East Timor and we did not know what arrangements Portugal might have actually agreed to in any case. General Moerdani said that he realised this but Indonesia now found itself in a difficult position which was not of its own making and under pressure to settle the issue itself without help. Nobody wanted an independent East Timor, except Fretilin leaders, but nobody was prepared to take the sort of steps which would facilitate its integration into Indonesia. With the exception of Malaysia countries wanted Indonesia to make all the running. I referred again to the possible change in Portugal's attitude. I also said that this was natural as the choices facing East Timor really boiled down to independence or integration with Indonesia. General Moerdani conceded this but made it plain that Indonesia would welcome firmer public support for integration than we have been able to give.

9. Moerdani then said 'the old man (President Soeharto) is still standing firm'. He said to him (Moerdani) last night that he did 'not want to carry the blame for the rest of his life' for Indonesian intervention in Timor.

10. I asked Moerdani whether reported Fretilin mortar attacks across the border were genuine or whether they were designed to prepare the ground for counter action against Fretilin. Moerdani said that on three separate occasions on the 24 and 25 September Fretilin mortar fire had landed in Indonesia. Although this was 'definite' the President had decided that there would be no retaliation at this stage. On the other hand he had agreed to Indonesian forces being placed along the border. General Panggabean however had reacted very strongly (as you will know from cabled *Antara* report). Moerdani added that he believed UDT and APODETI would counter attack. They wanted to do so, however, with Indonesian armed forces given Fretilin's firepower but President Soeharto had still not agreed to this. Moerdani said that 'speaking as a soldier' he thought the President had been wrong. The longer the issue dragged on the more Fretilin might delude itself that it could sustain independence and the more it might attract support in the countryside. Simple people tended to 'go with the strength of the moment'. This meant that regrettably there might now be more casualties than there would have been unless Fretilin came to realise that in the longer run its position is untenable and decided to seek an accommodation with Indonesia.

11. Moerdani told me that UDT and Apodeti group would take Ocussi and establish themselves there. This would mean that the whole colony could not be said to be under Fretilin's control even after the fall of Batugade. Indonesia would permit them to transit Indonesian territory for this purpose. Also on the military side, Moerdani said that 'one brigade minus' (I gather this means one and a half to two battalions) of Indonesian regular troops are now being moved to the border area. If Fretilin forces as distinct from mortars were to cross the border, then Indonesia wanted to be in a position 'to chase them all the way back to Baucau'. I asked whether the President had agreed to this. General Moerdani said the President had authorised the moving of the battalions to the border area but had 'not yet' authorised them to cross it.²

[matter omitted]³

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

244 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 29 September 1975

O.JA2113 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Dr Testuz, ICRC Representative, has asked us to send you the following message:

'During meeting 22/9 Batugade with leaders Movimento Anti Comunista Grouping UDT KOTA etc. Australia was under sharp criticism and accused of helping openly FRETILIN. The[y] said (A) Australia sent a team (understand Darby team) under humanitarian cover but its real purposes are all out help. (B) Radio FRETILIN announced an Australian gift of one hundred thousand dollars to FRETILIN. (C) Two senators visited FRETILIN which shows Australia is biased. (D) Plane lent to International Red Cross by Australia is used to transport Darby, Horta, senators. (E) Australian Red Cross medical team makes discrimination and refuses to treat UDT patients. (F) Representative of Australia favoured Favaro¹ is spy of

² On 30 September (Cablegram JA2145) Woolcott reported advice from Moerdani that he had discussed the new Portuguese approach with Soeharto who had been 'non-committal'. Moerdani himself thought the proposal was 'a dead letter'. No direct indication of the change had been received from the Portuguese; Australia was the only source of such information. After his discussion with Woolcott on 27 September he had ordered a cable to Lisbon seeking confirmation but no reply had yet been received.

³ Omitted paragraphs deal with the whereabouts of the Portuguese hostages (then in Indonesian Timor) and an editorial in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of 12 September describing Australia as 'indecisive' on the Timor issue. Soeharto had read the editorial although he did not normally read the paper. Woolcott suggested the writer had failed to take account of domestic pressures in Australia.

¹ Frank Favaro was an Australian businessman operating a hotel and a small airline service in Portuguese Timor. He advertised himself as unofficial Australian consul in Dili. Late in August, despite evacuation offers, he decided to remain, arguing that his language and contacts could be useful. Boyd recommended then that DFA permit his continued use of the designation, both for his protection and for the value of the 'implied authority'. Joseph replied that it was not possible to make an official appointment, but agreed DFA should raise no objections to Favaro's use of the title, adding, with emphasis, 'We need not say anything to him, just let him continue'. [Marginal notes to message CW652, 31 August, on file NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxx.] In answer to a question in the Senate on 16 October, Willesee repudiated all claims by Favaro to be a representative of the Australian Government.

FRETILIN and each time he appears in a UDT place with Red Cross flag and even Red Cross delegate for instance in Baucau or Maubisse this place is attacked by FRETILIN 2 days later. (G) Even attempt by Pasquier to establish Red Cross security zone in Maubisse is believed to be attempt to lure UDT women and children to specific spot which was under heavy FRETILIN shelling 2 days later. Testuz tried to convince UDT of true situation and succeeded in part to do so. Discussion started very violently and finished rather friendly. Unfortunately my presence 22/9 in Batugade was followed 24/9 by attack from FRETILIN and possibly UDT have returned to their previous thinking and there is possible danger for ICRC delegate to go there, as UDT Military Commander (Domingos Oliveres) is mentally unbalanced and all leaders near desperation. Please communicate to Fisher Darwin, Pasquier Red Cross Darwin and Stubbings Red Cross Melbourne.

TESTUZ

Jakarta

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, viii]

245 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON AND JAKARTA

Canberra, 30 September 1975

O.CH273153 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: Talks

Ref. O.CH272232¹

It is difficult to know where we go from here—and to avoid the suspicion that the Indonesians, or at least Tjan, choose deliberately to ignore what now seems to be the established fact that the Portuguese did convey their plan in its entirety to the Indonesians. Although it is difficult to do so without risking embarrassment to Ambassador Say, Jakarta might consider putting it to Tjan that, having checked very thoroughly in Lisbon, we are convinced that the Portuguese plan was put in its entirety to the Indonesians as to us.

2. For whatever reason, the Indonesians, we must assume, are now firmly opposed to talks (cf. Paragraph 2 of JA2103). This opposition, which may be publicly inferred from the UDT and APODETI refusal of the Portuguese invitation to talks, has serious implications for our own policy, which has been to support talks. It also seems to us that, if their opposition to talks becomes known, the Indonesians will have further difficulty in maintaining the credibility of their public commitment to the right of the people of Portuguese Timor to decide their own political future which remains a major part of Australian policy. All in all events seem to be moving towards a reference of Portuguese Timor to the United Nations in circumstances unfavourable to Indonesia.

¹ 27 September. It requested 'the clearest possible reading of Indonesian attitudes towards talks', noting contradictory indications received. In Cablegram JA2013 sent the same day, the Embassy repeated its advice given in Document 221: Indonesian policy was on two levels. On the public level Indonesians might adopt a more positive attitude; on the policy and operations level they did not believe talks would take place and did not want them. Talk about talks might be a 'charade on both sides but a necessary one'.

3. We agree with some of the arguments in paragraph 3 of JA2096 and with the points for public presentation in paragraph 4 of the same telegram.² But we do not now see how the Indonesians could favour our making it known that we should be prepared to offer Darwin as the site for talks. There are in addition two main difficulties in the way of our offering Darwin, first, if talks were to be held in Darwin it would undoubtedly stimulate further (and possibly major) press and some public interest in the issue of Portuguese Timor (and that interest is mainly concerned with supporting FRETILIN, ignoring the Indonesian interest in the territory and the problems of the refugees in Indonesian Timor). Second, we should risk being associated with the outcome of the talks in a way which would risk drawing us into Portuguese Timor further than Government policy favours or reducing our range of policy options.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

246 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 30 September 1975

O.JA2161 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Tjan told us today, 30 September, that on 26 and 29 September the President had agreed to increased Indonesian assistance to the anti-Fretilin forces in Portuguese Timor.

2. He said that up to 3800 Indonesian soldiers from Java would be put into Portuguese Timor gradually. Atsabe would be their base. The King of Atsabe would be the figure-head for the anti-Fretilin side. Jao Carascalao would probably be its military commander.

3. Tjan indicated that this plan of operation would probably start later this week.

4. Tjan said that the President still refused to approve outright Indonesian intervention. The President described Indonesian actions mentioned in paragraph 2 above as 'helping' the anti-Fretilin forces.

5. Indonesia would also provide the King of Atsabe with a radio transmitter to enable the anti-Fretilin forces to communicate with the outside world independently rather than through Indonesia.

Comment

6. The plan of operations mentioned by Tjan represents a significant escalation of Indonesian involvement in Portuguese Timor and of the approach they have adopted in the last three weeks (JA1677¹ refers).

7. Tjan acknowledged that the scale of support for the anti-Fretilin forces now planned could not go undiscovered.

² The Embassy had argued on 26 September that, despite doubts about the chances of successful talks, a helpful Australian approach might ameliorate pressures on the Australian Government and assist the Indonesians in the public presentation of their policy. Points for a suggested public statement were that Australia had not been consulted by Portugal regarding use of Darwin as a venue, that Australia would welcome talks and be prepared to assist (although arrangements were Portugal's responsibility) and that Australia, not being a party principal, would not participate.

¹ Document 217.

8. The plan also represents a return to the initial idea (which Tjan had referred to before 10 August) of using the King of Atsabe as the Indonesian stalking-horse rather than the UDT remnants in Batugade as has been the case in recent weeks. These remnants will still play an important part in the plan, however.

9. It seems that the aim of the plan is to capture Fretilin-held territory. Tjan did not say how long Indonesia expected this to take. But recently he has said that a solution to the Timor problem would be found by March 1976.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

247 MINUTE FROM MILLER TO JOSEPH

Canberra, 1 October 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

This morning's cables say that the Indonesians will put up to 3,800 soldiers into East Timor, starting this week, and make it clear that the Indonesians, in Jakarta, have chosen to ignore, and frustrate, the stated Portuguese policy of favouring the eventual integration of East Timor into Indonesia.

2. Our telegram O.CH273153¹ notes that 'it is difficult to know where we go from here', and concludes that 'all in all events seem to be moving towards a reference of Portuguese Timor to the United Nations in circumstances unfavourable to Indonesia'.

3. The foregoing indicates to me that we now have to examine seriously the option canvassed in my note to Mr Rowland of 12 September.² That was that *if* we regard the Indonesian fears of the consequences of an independent East Timor as exaggerated, we attempt privately to dissuade them from pursuing the course they appear to have chosen, on the grounds that it holds considerable disadvantages and dangers for Indonesia, for Australian-Indonesian relations, and for regional relations.

4. Expanding these disadvantages and dangers:

- (a) Indonesia's planned actions are almost certain to precipitate the U.N. intervention they have sought to avoid;
- (b) They will prompt Fretilin to seek outside support, which is likely to lead to the involvement, at least politically, of the Communist powers, including Viet-Nam, which Indonesia wants to keep out of the issue;
- (c) This in turn will revive the polarisation of South-East Asia along ideological lines which it is an important aim of Australian Government policy to prevent;
- (d) Australian public opinion has not been greatly exercised by the Timor affair as yet, but it will be if Indonesia becomes involved in a drawn-out campaign of invasion and subversion which has become an international and U.N. issue. Australian-Indonesian relations could be distorted, and set back for some time;

¹ Document 245.

² See attachment to Document 233.

- (e) Indonesian use of force in Timor could adversely affect its relations with, and access to aid from the United States, and possibly relations with other ASEAN countries nervous of Viet-Nam's reaction;
 - (f) The likely lack of quick success for Indonesia's chosen course in East Timor will distract national efforts from other urgent tasks and objectives.
5. When I raised this before Mr Rowland's reaction was that we should let some more time pass in the hope that talks between the parties would begin and, more importantly, that the realities of the situation would become apparent. I think that it has by now become apparent that:
- (a) Fretilin is in effective control of East Timor despite
 - (b) the presence of up to 50,000 refugees in Indonesian Timor, and that
 - (c) while Indonesia has decided to frustrate talks between the parties
 - (d) Indonesia will only be able to dislodge Fretilin by a substantial effort which will not be disavowable (O.JA2161³).
6. I regret putting this forward in the absence of Mr Feakes. However, if the Indonesian actions are to become public knowledge, as Tjan expects they will, we will have to take a stand on them, and will probably oppose them. If we are to oppose them, should we not do so now and in private, when
- (i) we have at least a theoretical chance of influencing Indonesian Government policy, and
 - (ii) by so doing we establish that we did not choose to ignore advance knowledge of Indonesian intentions, and thus condone them.
7. While we may feel that the chance of our altering Indonesian policy is slight, the advantage of asking them to reconsider their goal rather than the means now foreshadowed is that doing so does not invite them to involve us in a discussion of alternative means.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxxiii]

248 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 2 October 1975

O.CH274075 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: Talks

Our accompanying telegram contains the text as monitored by FBIS of a Jakarta domestic service radio bulletin to the effect that UDT and APODETI are now willing to attend talks with the Portuguese. UDT leader da Cruz was reported as having confirmed his willingness to attend such a meeting in a telegram to the Portuguese President.

2. If these reports are correct, they would represent a significant breakthrough and would suggest that Indonesian policy has returned to the point of a week or two ago when they were publicly supporting a new round of Macao-style talks.

3. You will no doubt be covering this new development in the assessment foreshadowed in your telegrams JA.2145 and JA.2188.¹

³ Document 246.

¹ 30 September and 1 October, respectively.

4. You will also now have received our CH.273763 reporting Horta's comments on the prospects for talks.² While it seems that FRETILIN is still resisting the concept of round table talks at which UDT and APODETI would participate on the same basis as FRETILIN, the FRETILIN leaders have come some way (if Horta is to be believed) from their earlier position of refusing to recognise any role for the other parties. The FRETILIN leaders are no doubt motivated by their conviction that they are dealing from strength. But we may also be witnessing a first indication that FRETILIN is accommodating to Indonesian pressures. FRETILIN's expressed wish to send a delegation to Jakarta, and the efforts being made to represent FRETILIN as an organisation now dominated by moderate and conservative elements, point in the same direction.

5. There is, of course, still a long way to go before any agreement that talks should be held is likely to be reached. It remains to be seen whether the FRETILIN leadership stands by Horta's softer line. In addition, FRETILIN will need to go much further than Horta contemplates by way of allowing a substantive role for the other parties. The Portuguese would clearly need to bring their influence to bear here. Horta foreshadowed in his discussions with the Department that he might be proceeding to Lisbon within the next few days for discussions with the Portuguese Government.

6. On the Indonesian side, we still need confirmation that the Jakarta broadcast does indeed reflect a change in the UDT/APODETI (and Indonesian) position. In this connection, there would seem advantage in our making a further effort to bridge the communications gap between the Portuguese and Indonesians in regard to the Santos plan. We should therefore like Cooper to make a further approach to the Portuguese (perhaps Cruz) to try to persuade them to spell out to the Indonesians the full details of the Santos plan, including the integration aspects.³ Jakarta has suggested that this might be done in a special Ministerial message (which could pose difficulties) or even by the despatch of another Presidential emissary. But if the Portuguese were to work through Girao, it would seem important that he be authorised to inform the Indonesian Government explicitly that the Santos plan, in its entirety, was endorsed at the highest levels in the Portuguese Government.

7. We recognise the weaknesses in the Santos approach. As Tjan says (JA.2188) it seems to amount to little more than a return to the kind of vague assurances that the Portuguese have been giving to the Indonesians over the last twelve months. The problem, of course, is that the Portuguese are still reluctant to come fully to terms with integration and do not yet know of an internationally acceptable means of achieving it. The argument that FRETILIN will be forced by the logic of events to accept integration is simply not convincing and the Indonesians are unlikely to find it so. Nevertheless, if the Portuguese could persuade the Indonesians that Portugal was genuinely in favour of integration, and was prepared to use what political influence it had to this effect in any revived Macao program, this could be helpful in persuading the Indonesians to go along with a new round of talks.

8. In any event, Australian policy supports, and needs to be seen to be supporting, further talks even if we are not overly optimistic about their outcome. Any alternative course could

² 1 October. During a call on the Department on 30 September Horta had said that Fretilin would refuse to sit at a round table with the other two parties, but would not oppose talks between the Portuguese and UDT and Apodeti. He believed, however, that the other two parties were spent forces.

³ In Cablegram LB364 (1 October) Cooper explained his understanding that Santos did not intend the talks to propose integration directly. 'This would come about by the logic of events as the parties, including Fretilin, came to see that integration offered the only viable political and economic future for the territory.' The weakness of the plan was its dependence on Fretilin's acceptance of integration as the best solution. In his attempts to unravel the question of what the Portuguese had in fact told the Indonesians, Cooper had already concluded that although 'integration is official Portuguese policy . . . they are not prepared to say so to the Indonesians' (Cablegram LB357, 29 September).

run Australian policy into very substantial difficulties. In this connection we cannot but view with considerable apprehension the information conveyed in JA.2161⁴ foreshadowing a substantial acceleration in Indonesian armed intervention in Portuguese Timor. As Tjan himself acknowledges this activity is certain to become widely known. The Australian Government could then come under strong domestic pressure to dissociate itself from Indonesian policies.

9. The other aspect to all this is that, unless the Portuguese can succeed in getting talks under way, the issue is likely to end up in the United Nations. It may well be that events, including Indonesia's military activities, are leading in that direction anyway, and that we and the Indonesians should now be conditioning ourselves to this prospect.

10. One further problem is that of the Portuguese prisoners held by UDT. It would indeed be unfortunate were the return of the detainees to become a sticking point, obstructing the holding of talks. We should hope that if the Indonesians are now prepared to rethink the option of talks, they would also consider whether the UDT should not be brought to accept the advantages of releasing the prisoners. We recognise that UDT and the Indonesians may regard the prisoners question as a point of leverage on the Portuguese. But it is clear that a unilateral gesture by the UDT releasing the prisoners would significantly improve the atmosphere and prospects for negotiations.

For Lisbon

11. Grateful if you could speak again to the Portuguese in terms of paragraph 6 above.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

249 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

London, 2 October 1975

O.LH40061 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Male (Deputy Under Secretary, FCO)¹ said today, that if Indonesia were to take over Timor by force, the British Government would wish to resist the pressures which would inevitably and quickly build up here not only for oral condemnation of Indonesia but also for practical measures such as cutting off aid. To help contain such pressures, a British Government statement would quickly be issued at the time (A) drawing attention to Indonesia's long and remarkable display of patience and forbearance, (B) disclaiming any notion that Timor was even in a marginal sense Britain's problem, and (C) observing that those countries in the region who did have real reasons to be interested in Timor were not too concerned by developments.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, iv]

⁴ Document 246.

¹ P. J. E. Male was an Assistant Under Secretary of State, responsible for the South West Pacific, South-East Asian and South Asian Departments of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

250 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 3 October 1975

O.JA2248 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*Ref, O.CH273153¹*

Our updated assessment of the situation in Portuguese Timor follows.

2. We are already at the threshold of a testing period in our relations with Indonesia. A situation in Portuguese Timor which we most wanted to see avoided, namely one involving a protracted and confused political/military struggle, has begun. Our attitude towards this situation as it evolves will, to a large extent, determine the nature of our relations with Indonesia and, to a lesser extent, with other countries in the region in the next few years and possibly beyond.

Indonesian Policy

3. We consider that Indonesia intends to escalate its involvement in Portuguese Timor. We do not think it can be dissuaded from this course especially as most of the countries which could, if they acted in concert, influence Indonesia consider that the best future for East Timor is as part of Indonesia and will acquiesce in Indonesian pressure to bring this about. As the number of Indonesians in the territory increases, it will become more difficult, if not impossible, to prevent some of the involvement from becoming known publicly. I also have doubts which are shared by the Defence Adviser, about the efficiency with which Indonesia will conduct its covert and semi-covert operations. This could make for further complications.

4. The mood in Jakarta if anything is hardening. Attempts to adopt what Indonesia considers a 'correct' approach to Portugal have produced only frustrations. Indonesia feels deeply that its present difficulties over Timor have been caused by Portugal's refusal to accept its responsibilities as the governing authority, specifically to restore law and order there or, if it could not do so, then to ask the only country which could do so. There is some truth in this. Portugal is now largely distrusted and discredited here. The application of steadily increasing covert military pressure in support of anti-Fretilin forces is seen as the only way, short of outright invasion, of preventing an unwanted, potentially dangerous, economically weak, unviable, left-leaning, *de facto*, independent East Timor. I still do not think the President will agree to outright invasion, although the pressure on him to do so is continuing to increase. We have first hand evidence of growing and general impatience with the President's restraint throughout the armed services, especially the army, and this pressure will become even stronger if the present mix of political pressure, support for the refugees, covert actions and the possible use of 'volunteers' or even Timorese 'deserters' is a failure.

[matter omitted]²

Australian Policy

[matter omitted]

13. In addition to the policy suggested in paragraphs 23 and 24 of JA1615³ which after careful reconsideration I would adhere to, I suggest that our public attitude towards the issue include the following points:—

¹ Document 245.

² Omitted paragraphs suggest opposition to Fretilin in the territory might still have been significant, and note that despite the poor prospects for fruitful talks or genuine self-determination, the Embassy had continued to press the advantages of seeking a political settlement.

³ Document 210.

- responsibility for the breakdown of the decolonisation process in Timor rests with Portugal, UDT and Fretilin; not Indonesia
- the issue in Portuguese Timor remains undecided notwithstanding Fretilin's present ascendancy.
- Indonesia has a special interest in the future of Timor. In many ways Portuguese Timor is a part of the Indonesian world, as the Prime Minister has said.
- the right of colonial people to self-determination can only be carried out in Timor in conditions of peace and order and should involve the whole East Timorese community.

14. As I have said before, I consider it is in the interests of Australia, Indonesia and Portugal to seek a solution which represents the wishes of Portuguese Timor. Even if a genuine act of self-determination is not possible we should certainly continue to encourage Indonesia and Portugal to go through the motions. In this connection Cooper's talk with Cruz (LB369⁴) provides some encouragement.

15. But I consider that in encouraging Indonesia and Portugal on this matter we should take care not to push either, particularly Indonesia, into a position where they consider their national interests are threatened by approaches dictated by our own domestic considerations. For instance Indonesia is especially sensitive about the need to restore law and order in the territory before an ordered decolonisation process is re-introduced. Indonesia would not accept that the wishes of the people could be fairly determined while Fretilin held the guns. The idea in paragraph seven of LB369 as it stands would not be acceptable to Indonesia for this reason.⁵

16. In a letter to me dated 7 July⁶ the Minister expressed his concern about the likely sharp public reaction in Australia to any Indonesian military involvement in East Timor. He also referred to the growing sympathy in Australia for the independence of Portuguese Timor. In the same letter, however, the Minister wrote that even if Indonesia were openly to move against Portuguese Timor we would have to do our best to contain the damage to the long-term Australian/Indonesian relationship. I consider this should still be the basis of Australian policy.

17. I appreciate the domestic problems within the Australian community about Portuguese Timor and I would like to be able to recommend some helpful initiatives which would have some prospect of success and be more than window dressing or grasping at straws. But I find it difficult to do so. Unless we are prepared to declare ourselves a party principal which I would not recommend.

18. We are in fact moving into a situation in which the Government is facing a critical choice between what I would see as our longer term foreign policy interests and what appear to be mounting domestic pressures to adopt attitudes or policies which would be contrary to those interests.

19. The Government has now a considerable investment in the sensible pragmatic way it has developed relations with Indonesia, including the Prime Minister's personal contacts with President Soeharto, and I would hope that a hard-headed assessment of our long-term national interest will prevail over the natural political tendency to yield to domestic pressures. These

⁴ 2 October. Cooper carried out instructions in Document 248 to press the Portuguese to try to convince the Indonesians of their *bona fides*. Cruz had at first been negative about the Santos plan itself, but later conceded that a Portuguese initiative was called for and suggested sending a Presidential envoy to Jakarta. Cooper commented that Cruz had 'needed a good deal of working over', and had said at one point, 'I don't know why the Indonesians don't invade and get it over with'. Cooper thought it important to give the Portuguese 'sufficient help and encouragement to make them feel that they are not entirely alone and without friends in South East Asia'.

⁵ Cooper had suggested that during a transitional administration period local Timorese forces and the arms at present under Fretilin control might be placed at the disposal of a joint administration in which Fretilin would participate.

⁶ Document 152.

domestic pressures are based, in part I believe, on a lack of understanding of what is a very complex issue.

20. In reassessing our policy we should also keep in mind the regional context. You will recall that at the meeting of Heads of Mission in South East Asia in July it was one of the main agreed conclusions, endorsed by the Minister, that South East Asia is in many respects the main area of importance for Australia and that, within that area, Indonesia must continue to have some special emphasis in our policy formulation. We are not dealing only with Indonesia and with Australian/Indonesian relations. Our response to the Timor situation will be seen to a considerable extent by other ASEAN countries as a measure of the sincerity of our identification with South East Asia and of our search for a role as a partner on the periphery of South East Asia. We need to avoid as far as we can setting Australia apart from the other countries in the region in which we are situated.

[*matter omitted*]⁷

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

251 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 7 October 1975

O.CH275467 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

For Woolcott from Renouf

Thank you for the assessment in your telegram JA2248.¹ We will give it due weight in our consideration of future policy.

2. There are, however, a number of points I want to make to you immediately. These are as follows.

3. No doubt, as you say (paragraph 20 as well as paragraph 3) our attitude to Timor will to some degree affect our relations with countries in the region beyond Indonesia in the next few years. But our policy must also take account of *principle* as well as of the need for good relations with Indonesia. Nor can it be assumed that Indonesia's ASEAN partners will stick with her should the going become rough. You will have noted in this regard the support for FRETILIN offered by Mozambique and Guyana in the U.N. There are also indications of possible DRV interest.

4. You are in my view too hard on Portugal. It amazes me, in fact, that Portugal has hung on so long in what is a thankless task. We may not agree with Portuguese apprehension but there

⁷ The final paragraph reiterated recommendations to maintain existing policy of continuing to encourage Portugal to remain involved, and both Portugal and Indonesia to seek a political settlement. Australia should continue to explain its domestic difficulties to Indonesia, warning that sympathy with Indonesia's basic objective did not preclude public criticism of the means of achieving it. Australia should remain detached, and if necessary adopt a 'moderate, inactive posture' in the UN. 'We should not play the role of an apologist for Indonesia, but equally, we should show understanding of its special position and not be in the forefront of its critics'.

¹ Document 250.

is at least some reason for their fear that in 'restoring law and order' (which now exists in most of Timor) Indonesia might have treated, and still would treat, FRETILIN harshly.

5. As you know, Ramos Horta has conceded that there are divisions within FRETILIN between what he claims to be the currently dominant conservative faction and the radicals. But FRETILIN seems to be united in opposing absorption of Portuguese Timor by Indonesia. So of course were the UDT leaders until their defeat at the hands of FRETILIN. But I wonder how much da Cruz and Carrascalao now count for inside Portuguese Timor.

6. Nor is it necessarily accurate to believe that most of those who have crossed the border into Indonesian Timor actively oppose FRETILIN. As Rodgers found during his visit last week, the level of political consciousness among the refugees is low. I recognise, of course, that this consideration applies as well to those people left behind in Portuguese Timor. As you say, an illiterate rural community will tend to support those with the power—in this case FRETILIN. But the point I would make is that FRETILIN is clearly in control in Portuguese Timor and arguments to the contrary will simply appear to the world at large as a quibble.

7. Unpalatable though it may be, Indonesia will have to allow for this fact in its own policy. Indonesia's moment for action was at the end of August when there would have been a reasonable degree of international understanding for a 'humanitarian intervention' designed to separate equally matched contestants and save the lives of innocent civilians. Indonesia hesitated, allowing FRETILIN itself to restore law and order under FRETILIN's exclusive control. Indonesian intervention in current circumstances would clearly have much less international support. The problem is compounded for Australia because of the keen interest of our public opinion in the outcome in Portuguese Timor and the certainty that as Indonesian involvement escalates, knowledge of it will become increasingly public, leading to domestic pressure for the Australian Government to dissociate itself from Indonesian policy in Timor.

8. This brings me to your paragraph 12.² While good relations with Indonesia are clearly of the utmost importance—a fact which is categorically reaffirmed in the latest strategic basis paper³—I do not believe that what the Prime Minister told President Soeharto in Townsville was meant to convey a *carte blanche* to Indonesia in relation to Timor. The Government has never accepted Indonesian claims that an independent Portuguese Timor could pose a threat to Indonesia. In addition, the element of self determination, not necessarily a one-man-one-vote plebiscite or election, but at least some form of popular consultation, has also remained an important plank in Australian policy and was also conveyed to President Soeharto in Townsville.

9. If this question goes to the U.N., it will be most difficult for us to be 'inactive' although, of course, we [s]hould try to adopt a moderate posture and avoid any trenchant criticism of Indonesia.

10. The public guidance you suggest in your para 13 will not convince anyone here. It is better to leave this kind of activity to the Department. Also, Indonesia has some share of responsibility for the breakdown of decolonization.

11. In general, I have the feeling our policy is being overtaken by events. Between them Portugal and Indonesia have made a mess of things. The question which Ministers may soon have to consider is whether we sit tight and allow the mess to drift on getting more messy or do we change course and if so, how? In considering the matter, Ministers will have to decide on one main aspect, among others, that is, whether the Government can contain the criticism here likely to mount up from the maintenance of present policy if it is to be maintained.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

² Paragraph 12 stated that policy in recent months had been guided by what Whitlam told Soeharto in Townsville, 'that Australia's policy towards Timor would be determined by the paramount importance we attached to our relations with Indonesia'.

³ *The Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy*, a regular Department of Defence assessment.

252 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 7 October 1975

O.UN4002 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

United Nations: Portuguese Timor

We have kept in mind in recent weeks the possibility that at some stage consideration of the Timor problem by the Committee of Twenty-Four might be of assistance to Portugal and Indonesia (despite Jakarta's rejection of the idea) in devising acceptable international procedures for decolonisation.

2. Any prospect of assisting in the 'solution' of the Portuguese Timor problem through the United Nations has receded. While it is becoming clearer that consideration will be given to the territory during UNGA 30 only FRETILIN seems to be able to capitalise on the United Nations. If a hand-over to FRETILIN were to become the most convenient way out for them, the Portuguese might also benefit from United Nations involvement this year.

3. The Indonesians, as matters stand, seem likely only to be disadvantaged as a result of action at UNGA 30. This would certainly be the case if the Fourth Committee were to take up the call by Mozambique for Portugal to negotiate with FRETILIN the modalities for the decolonisation of Timor. The Indonesians ought already to be working to head-off the possibility of a draft resolution in these terms. It seems clear the FRELIMO has mistakenly identified itself with FRETILIN, and there is of course an element of hostility in the Mozambique statement reminiscent of the antipathy towards Indonesia of a number of African delegations at the time of the West Irian dispute. Mistaken or not, however, Mozambique has a definite standing in relation to the dispute as a former fellow colony of Portugal. (It is fortunate for the Indonesians that Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe have *not* sought this year to make general debate statements.)

4. The degree of support which the Mozambique position is likely to attract is not yet clear to us and it would perhaps be risky to take too many soundings without having a reasonable idea of the reactions of Indonesia and Portugal as well as your views on our own position. Salim volunteered a first reaction to us yesterday 6 October which, while generally critical of Indonesia and reflecting the discomfort he has shown in recent weeks over the circulation of FRETILIN messages,¹ did not indicate commitment to the precise terms of the Mozambique position. Salim made three points in some haste. First, that the Indonesians had really missed their chance to play the role of liberators in Eastern Timor at a time when the Portuguese were still there as colonial power. Second, that Indonesia would have to accept United Nations support for the application of the right of self-determination *and independence* to Timor—an apparent disavowal of the Committee of Twenty-Four position negotiated at Lisbon. Third, he asked why Indonesia could not agree to a visiting mission—the implication being that he had tried this thought out with Sani some time previously.

¹ Circulation of Fretilin messages as official documents of the Committee of Twenty-Four had been opposed by Indonesia with the support of Australia, and it had been agreed that any circulation should be limited to members of the Bureau of the Committee. On 1 October the Australian Mission in New York reported (Cablegram UN3942) that a Fretilin message protesting at Indonesia's use of force in East Timor had been circulated to all members of the Committee, without consulting either Indonesia or Australia. Salim had authorised the wider circulation in response to pressure from some African delegations. He subsequently agreed that, in future, circulation of messages containing controversial references to Indonesia or Australia would be limited to Bureau members.

5. We are uncertain how to interpret last week's statement by Guyana which called on those wishing to intervene in an attempt to redirect the course chosen by the East Timorese to desist from violating the right to self-determination of the people of the territory. On the face of it, and given the close links between the Missions of Tanzania, Guyana and Mozambique, the omens are not good. On the other hand, Guyana Ambassador Jackson, with whom we have close relations, has denied separately to the Indonesians and to us that Guyana had intended to criticise Indonesia. Jackson claims that the comments on Timor were made in the context of Guyana's criticism of intervention by the Great Powers in the affairs of Angola.

6. In any event, it is high time that the Indonesians set about protecting their own position at UNGA 30. As we have reported for some time, they seem to have hoped that the question could be kept out of the United Nations indefinitely. It seems increasingly likely that the Fourth Committee will discuss the situation even if talks between the Timorese parties have got under way. If there are no talks and Indonesian help to the anti-FRETILIN forces increases, so will the attention given to the territory. Until recently, a regional initiative, meaning in fact a draft resolution or consensus statement, would probably have been acceptable to the Africans and other groups provided the Portuguese were not active in seeking a more radical draft. It was, of course, recognised in the Committee of Twenty-Four in Lisbon that there was a degree of regional collusion between Indonesia, India and Australia.

7. The possible substance of any draft resolution has, however, already been complicated by the Mozambique statement. Whereas a week or so ago the Indonesians could probably, at the level of their diplomatic and public activity, have secured support for a resolution recommending talks between Portugal and the three Timorese parties, such a call might now be unacceptable to a number of influential delegations. A resolution might now have to reaffirm the right to independence as well as the right to self-determination. Australia's role and recent activities might well come under discussion, including the question of our unwillingness to provide an Australian venue for negotiations. The communiqué of 23 September of the Portuguese National Decolonisation Committee, hoping for a negotiating venue in Australian territory, has been belatedly circulated as a General Assembly document dated 2 October.

8. While the exact circumstances in which the Fourth Committee debate will be held are not yet clear, we believe we should begin in the very near future to take some discreet soundings with the Indonesians, Portuguese and other relevant delegations. Consideration of Timor here will develop its own momentum in the coming weeks however unrealistic and inconvenient this may seem. Even if the Indonesians simply decide to let the General Assembly run its course and to stand aside, possibly by abstaining on or even opposing a draft resolution, we shall need to give full and timely consideration to the issues of principle involved for Australia.

9. We should have in mind also, in the light of the continuing messages from FRETILIN, the possibility of an appeal being made to the Security Council on its behalf.

FRETILIN ON THE WORLD STAGE

Throughout September and early October Fretilin leaders began the process of establishing themselves as the de facto government of Portuguese Timor. Although the surprise of the UDT coup and the speed of their subsequent victory had left them largely unprepared for the task of administration within Timor, they were far better prepared on the international plane. Since mid-1974 an active network of representatives had been operating from a base in the Casa dos Timores in Lisbon to win support and sympathy from European politicians, governments and public opinion. Australian missions as far afield as Stockholm reported requests from host governments, following Fretilin visits, for information about the situation in Timor. Fretilin had been even more active in Africa and in South-East Asia. By September Fretilin leaders had begun sending messages almost daily to the United Nations, claiming their legitimate authority within East Timor and complaining of Indonesian activities. As the degree of Indonesian intervention in East Timor increased, so too did the weight of Fretilin messages to the Committee of Twenty-Four, the UN General Assembly and eventually the Security Council.

253 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA AND NEW YORK

Canberra, 8 October 1975

O.CH276025 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY/ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Ref. O.UN4002¹

While in no way intending an initiative of our own in the UN at this stage, we had been giving some thought, on a contingency basis, to the possibility of encouraging a simple resolution in the Fourth Committee which would have endorsed the concept of talks between Portugal and the three Timorese parties (your paragraph 7). But with indications that the Indonesians were backing away from support for talks, it has been difficult to see how we could promote this idea in New York. We have now renewed our efforts with the Indonesians to try to enlist their support for getting UDT and APODETI to accept talks. We would agree that to these efforts might now be added the suggestion that the Indonesians may see support for talks as their best means of avoiding a difficult situation in the Fourth Committee.

2. Depending on the Indonesians' reaction, it may still be possible for them to gain support in New York for a resolution favouring or endorsing talks. Their prospects would presumably be enhanced if they were able to organise a hard-core of ASEAN-plus support which would give the initiative a regional flavour and thus perhaps help deflect any incipient African pressure for a pro-FRETILIN resolution.

3. It would also be necessary to try to engage Portuguese support at an early stage. Provided the Indonesians were seen to be supporting Lisbon's renewed bid to get talks under way with the three Timorese parties, it is possible that the Portuguese might be brought

¹ Document 252.

to assist in New York. You will be aware in this regard that the Portuguese are relying heavily on Indonesian cooperation to influence UDT and APODETI to adopt a co-operative attitude to talks.

For Jakarta

4. We realise that the Indonesians have been unreceptive to your previous attempts to engage them in substantive discussion on the UN aspects of the Portuguese Timor problem. But we tend to agree that it is time Indonesia set about trying to protect its position in New York. The considerations outlined in New York's UN4002 underline the need to bring the Indonesians to accept that they should put themselves behind proposals for a new round of talks between the Portuguese Government and the three Timorese parties. At a minimum, the Indonesians should be thinking of a Fourth Committee resolution which would support such talks.

5. The situation may indeed have reached the point where, as New York remarks, a resolution might now have to reaffirm the right of the Timorese to independence as well as their right to self-determination. This would pose an obvious difficulty for the Indonesians. But they may be able to get round the problem by using the formula devised during the Committee of Twenty-Four hearings in Lisbon, namely a reference to General Assembly Resolution 1514 without an explicit mention of 'independence'. In any event, if the Indonesians are to head off something worse they clearly must get their own piece of paper into the ring.

6. As opportunity permits we should also like you to take up with the Indonesians the question of the Portuguese prisoners held by UDT (see paragraph 10 of our CH274075²). As you know, Governor Pires returned to this question in discussion with Starey in Darwin on 6 October. The release of the prisoners would obviously improve the atmosphere and prospects for talks and could go some way to establishing a greater sense of rapport between the Portuguese and the Indonesians.

7. We feel that these matters are now urgent and should like you to take them up as soon as possible with the Indonesian authorities. Meantime, we are asking our UN Mission in New York to stay its hand, although we would agree that if an Indonesian initiative is to get off the ground soundings will need to commence shortly.

For New York

8. Please note the last sentence.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

² Document 248.

254 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN JOSEPH, HER TASNING AND KADRI

Canberra, 9 October 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

The *Indonesian Ambassador*, Her Tasning, accompanied by his Deputy, Mr Kadri, called on me on 9 October. The Ambassador said that he wished to have an off-the-record chat since 'at the local Embassy level' he sensed that relations between Australia and Indonesia were entering a critical testing period over Portuguese Timor. Australian policy to date had shown understanding of the Indonesian position and the difficulties in which Indonesia had been placed. But it was clear that public pressure in Australia was mounting on the Government to break with Indonesia.

[*matter omitted*]

Australian Policy

3. I said that I was glad the Ambassador had called. We might indeed be about to enter a critical period over Portuguese Timor. It was well that the air be cleared beforehand. As the Ambassador was aware, throughout the evolution of our policy on Portuguese Timor, the Australian Government had sought to give considerable weight to the Indonesian dimension. But a no-less-important ingredient of our policy had been the need to respect the right of the Timorese people to choose their own future. There may have been some confusion about the status of this second element in Australian policy in the period immediately following the Wonosobo talks. Parts of the Australian press had suggested that Mr Whitlam and President Soeharto had reached a decision that Portuguese Timor should be integrated into Indonesia regardless of what the Timorese might feel. But these reports were inaccurate. The records of the Wonosobo meetings showed quite clearly that President Soeharto and the Prime Minister had agreed that the wishes of the people should be paramount.

4. The self-determination aspect of Australian policy had later been repeated during the Australian-Indonesian officials' discussions in November last year, and of course it had been underlined in the letter sent by Mr Whitlam to President Soeharto in February of this year. There had been further mutual agreement on the importance of self-determination in the Townsville talks. Of course when Australia spoke about self-determination it had no illusions that a one-man, one-vote plebiscite would prove possible or even desirable. Such a pure act of self-determination had not been carried out in the other Portuguese territories. So why expect it in Timor? Nevertheless, Australia had always felt that there had to be some form of popular consultation in Timor.

5. Coming to the events of last August, I recalled that when the Ambassador had called on the Acting Minister on 26 August, Mr Whitlam had said that Australia would not wish to 'exercise a veto' over Indonesian policy.¹ I said that, speaking quite frankly, the Department had been surprised that Indonesia had not acted in August when there would have been a reasonable degree of international understanding for a 'humanitarian intervention' designed to separate the contestants and save the lives of innocent civilians. But in the event, Indonesia had hesitated, allowing FRETILIN to establish its *de facto* control and thereby bring an end to the civil war on its own terms. Indonesian intervention in current circumstances would clearly have much less international support.

¹ See Document 190.

6. I said that we were aware that Dr Mochtar had been disappointed at what he felt to have been a negative Australian response to the Joint Authority proposal. But in truth the moment for Indonesian intervention had passed even by the time Dr Santos arrived in Jakarta on 30 August. At the official level we had certainly seen some considerable difficulties in the Joint Authority and related intervention proposals. The important point, however, was that when Dr Santos arrived in Canberra he did not come with a firm Indonesian-Portuguese proposition. Australian Ministers had thus never really addressed themselves to the minutiae of what was intended.

7. But that was all past history. In regard to the current situation the Department agreed with the Ambassador that we were confronting what could be a difficult period in our relations with Indonesia. The Indonesian Government had outlined to us in Jakarta their plans for a sustained campaign against FRETILIN in Portuguese Timor. These plans envisaged not only the arming and training of UDT and APODETI forces, but the direct and escalating involvement of Indonesian forces as well. It was Australia's understanding that such direct involvement was already under way. We had assumed, for example, that Indonesian forces had been involved in the attack on Batugade on 7 October which had apparently now been re-taken from FRETILIN.

8. As long as the level of Indonesia's direct engagement in these operations was limited it would presumably be deniable and press and other interest would be tempered. But once the level and frequency of involvement passed a certain threshold, knowledge of it would become widely known, certainly in Australia, and we could expect pressure on the Government to denounce Indonesia's activities. There would always be a risk that Indonesian personnel might be captured and Indonesian complicity would then be exposed.

9. It was against this background that the Department tended to agree with the Ambassador that we were approaching a testing time in Australian-Indonesian relations.

[matter omitted]

12. *The Ambassador* commented that all that I had said confirmed his own fears. He would be very distressed personally if the Timor issue were to become a divisive issue between Australia and Indonesia. It was the bilateral relationship that was paramount. I agreed and said that I felt that the Australian Government should certainly wish to do its best to contain damage to the relationship, but as the Ambassador himself had recognised, there were important elements in the Australian community demanding a clear stand by the Australian Government against what they see as Indonesian aggression in relation to Portuguese Timor.

Talks, Portuguese Prisoners and United Nations Involvement

13. The discussion turned to the position of FRETILIN and the question of talks. I said that Australia had agreed with Indonesia that Portugal should not deal with FRETILIN alone. FRETILIN had gained its present position by force of arms; this was no act of self-determination. UDT and APODETI also had to be accommodated in the decolonisation process and in any new rounds of talks. We had been disturbed, however, to detect a moving away by the Indonesian Government from the concept of talks. UDT and APODETI had refused the Portuguese invitation to attend talks and General Panggabean had been quoted in Jakarta newspapers as no longer favouring talks. This reversal of Indonesia's attitude had placed the Australian Government in an awkward position. We had no exaggerated expectations about what a new round of talks might achieve, but it seemed important that no opportunity for negotiations should be shunned. It relieved domestic pressure on the

Australian Government if we could point to firm and unequivocal Australian and Indonesian support for negotiations. We therefore hoped that Indonesia would do what it could with UDT and APODETI to persuade them to attend the talks that Portugal was now trying to arrange in Lisbon.

[*matter omitted*]

Mutual Distrust between Portugal and Indonesia

17. This lack of trust and mutual suspicion between Portugal and Indonesia now appeared to be deeply engrained. Australia regarded it as a major obstacle to progress in Portuguese Timor. According to Dr Santos, Indonesia had deliberately frustrated his attempts to make contact with UDT. Santos had been particularly stung by the Indonesian action in detaining the Dove aircraft which had been sent from Atauro to Atambua in early September with a message from the UDT leaders. The Portuguese had also convinced themselves that Indonesia had deliberately obstructed the earlier Soares mission. The seeds of further distrust had been sown by the misunderstandings which arose during the first round of discussions in Jakarta on the joint authority proposal and the related proposal for a Portuguese-sanctioned Indonesian intervention. The latest example of misunderstanding had arisen over the plan developed by Dr Santos following his return to Lisbon and which, despite some obvious lacunae, had seemed to us to offer some prospect of mutual agreement between Portugal and Indonesia on the future of Timor. In the event we had been disturbed to discover that details of the plan, including those aspects relating to integration with Indonesia, had either not been conveyed to, or were being discounted in Jakarta. I concluded that if the release of the Portuguese prisoners did nothing else, it might go some way towards re-establishing a sense of rapport between Portugal and Indonesia.

ASEAN Involvement

I said that it seemed to us in Canberra that Indonesia's position in relation to Portuguese Timor had the support, if only tacit, of all of its ASEAN partners as well as other Asian countries like India. Yet, as far as I knew, Malaysia was the only country to have come out vocally in support. It would clearly help the domestic position in Australia if we could point to strong public support in ASEAN for Indonesia. It was perhaps a pity in this regard that the next ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting was still some month or two away. An ASEAN communiqué backing Indonesia over Timor would certainly strengthen Indonesia's hand internationally.

The Future

19. *The Ambassador* responded that Indonesia itself was highly suspicious of Portugal. Indonesia still suspected that Portugal was intending to hand over power to FRETILIN. This would be completely unacceptable to Indonesia. The Ambassador added that Indonesia's position was a highly principled one. Indonesia stood for genuine self-determination. Were FRETILIN and its platform of independence to be endorsed by the majority of people in a genuine act of free choice Indonesia would accept this.

20. I responded that, speaking very frankly, what the Ambassador had just said surprised me. We had been informed at very senior levels in Jakarta that for Indonesia an independent Timor was simply not acceptable and certainly not one under FRETILIN's control. This position had been communicated to us both before and after the events of August. The implication, indeed explanation, conveyed to us was that Indonesia would ensure, through

covert as well as overt means, that pro-independence parties would never win any act of self-determination and that Indonesia would take the steps necessary to ensure that FRETILIN's situation remained untenable. I said that there had always been the seeds of difficulties for Australian-Indonesian relations in this regard. For, as the Ambassador would be aware, the Australian Government had never accepted Indonesia's contention that an independent Timor, even under FRETILIN control, could in any way pose a threat to Indonesia. We had been unable to detect the slightest hint of Soviet or Chinese interest in the territory. We had always assumed that both Moscow and Peking would place their relationship with Indonesia above any ephemeral advantage they might feel was offered them in Portuguese Timor. Their studied silence on Portuguese Timor to date suggested that this assessment was a correct one.

21. I went on to speculate that FRETILIN appeared to be in a strong position in Portuguese Timor and was unlikely to be easily dislodged. If after some weeks FRETILIN was able to consolidate its control we could arrive at a point where Indonesia and Australia might both need to consider whether the reality of that control should not be recognised. Neither the Ambassador nor Mr Kadri rose to this bait.

[matter omitted]

Comment

23. As will be seen I responded to the Ambassador's request for a frank, no-holds-barred, discussion. While I did not go as far as to say this I tried to imply that Indonesia's current tactics run the risk of creating substantial problems for the Australian Government. In effect Indonesia appears to have decided on a course which offers the prospects of a protracted war of attrition with FRETILIN forces, which holds little chance of early success, but which will involve the use of Indonesian troops on a scale which cannot go undiscovered and can thus be expected to evoke criticism from the press and public opinion in Australia thereby giving rise to heavy strain on the Australian-Indonesian relationship.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxxiv]

255 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 9 October 1975

O.JA2309 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*For Renouf from Woolcott*

Thank you for your O.CH275467.¹ Some comments on the points you made in response to our JA2248² follow.

2. I agree that our policies must take account of principle and we have never suggested that they should not do so. But as I have argued before, and as the Prime Minister has said, there are circumstances in which our principles need to be tempered by a realistic assessment of our long-term national interest. All countries to a greater or lesser extent subjugate their principles at times to these factors.

3. It is a matter of assessments to be made elsewhere but I believe that the ASEAN countries, with the possible exception of Thailand, will stick with Indonesia even if the going becomes rough (your paragraph three). The four ASEAN Ambassadors here at any rate are confident that their governments will do so.

4. I agree that support for Fretilin offered by Mozambique and Guyana is ominous in that especially Mozambique's support could influence other Africans who do not know much about Portugal's colony in this part of the world. However Indonesia has made it[s] assessments of United Nations reactions and is prepared to ride out criticisms in the United Nations. It will of course act to blunt this criticism.

5. I am also surprised that Portugal has hung on as long as it has (your paragraph four). It may be we have been too hard on Portugal but no useful purpose will be served now by seeking to apportion between Portugal, Indonesia, Fretilin and UDT, responsibility for the present situation. But it is surprising that as of today the Portuguese Chargé d'Affaires here has still neither been informed from Lisbon of any change of attitude by Portugal to the future of Timor, nor been instructed to discuss this or the related question of talks at senior level with the Indonesians. It is also true that the Portuguese have, as Cruz has told Cooper and Dr Girao has told me, been hoping that Indonesia would invade Timor. But as I have said there is no point in trying to apportion the blame.

6. As I have suggested in a personal letter dated 4 October³ which you would not have received when your O.CH275467 was despatched the issue on the ground in Timor should be regarded as undecided at least for several weeks yet. Indonesia would certainly not agree that Fretilin is clearly in control in Timor or that arguments to the contrary simply appear to the world at large as a quibble; nor would diplomatic missions here. So far most of the world at large is seeking to avoid involvement in Timor. Fretilin won the early battles and has achieved a degree of control in the countryside. But the Indonesians maintain this has been achieved by force and a measure of intimidation. They regard Fretilin's control as temporary. Moreover, if Indonesia is determined not to accept a *de facto* Fretilin Government—which is the case—then Indonesia can in the long-term, if not in the short-term, make Fretilin's situation untenable,

¹ Document 251.

² Document 250.

³ On file NAA: A11443, [6]. The letter is long, and repeats points made in other documents.

even if a number of countries were to recognise Fretilin. The Indonesians may turn out to be wrong and Fretilin may consolidate its position in the whole of the territory. But I doubt this at present and it is premature to make such an assumption now. Much of the evidence in support of Fretilin's present position comes from persons who have spoken only with Fretilin leaders.

7. You say that Indonesia will have to allow for the 'fact' of Fretilin control in its own policy. As I have reported it does not accept Fretilin's control as more than temporary and if we were to urge them to do otherwise I believe that, at this stage, we would be firmly turned down.

8. It is true that Indonesia's best moment for action was at the end of August and it is somewhat ironic that, notwithstanding the Prime Minister's statement of 26 August, it was concern about Australia's reaction which played a part in the President's decision not to authorise direct intervention without a Portuguese request. In this respect our attitudes may have, to some extent, been self-defeating in that some will argue that Indonesian restraint then has led to the present situation.

9. Your point about public guidance (your paragraph 10) is noted. However, the Prime Minister and the Minister have decided that we should make what efforts we can to promote a wider public understanding of Indonesian policies and to act to limit the development of hostility towards Indonesia within the Australian community. While the comments in our paragraph 13 may not convince people, they were not of course intended to be comprehensive and should be seen in the context of other points we have made including those in my personal letter to you of 4 October. We are of course not in a position to judge this from here but from numerous visitors, letters and even from sections of the press itself we get the impression that most of the criticism has been stimulated by a relatively small number of politicians, journalists, academics and students and that it does not necessarily represent the views of the majority of Australians. Real damage to the Indonesian relationship would I suggest also invite a strong public and, indeed, political reaction which could harm the Government's standing.

10. I agree with your point in paragraph eight that what the Prime Minister told President Soeharto in Townsville was not intended to convey a 'carte blanche' to Indonesia; but nor has Indonesia interpreted it as such. I have made the point many times at various levels here that we think Indonesia exaggerates the threat an independent Timor would pose to it. But there is no doubt that the Indonesians themselves are convinced of the long-term dangers of an independent East Timor to them. Most of their immediate neighbours, with the exception of ourselves and possibly PNG, share this fear.

11. I hope that Ministers do not yet feel they need to consider whether the Government should sit tight and allow the mess to drift on or, as you put it, whether it should 'change course'. (Your para 11.)⁴

12. I think it is a time for steady nerves, a calculated assessment of our longer-term national interest, and for a continuing attempt to shape public opinion rather than react to it. A change of course now which, to the Indonesians, could only be in Fretilin's favour, would be at the cost of real damage to our relations with Indonesia and such damage would I suggest generate its own widespread criticism of the Government.

⁴ On 10 October, however, Woolcott suggested (Cablegram JA2336) a possible initiative in response to Renouf's paragraph 11. Unlikely as a solution by means of talks or through the United Nations might be, Woolcott agreed the effort should be made. He therefore suggested that Australia, with the other ASEAN countries, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand, either separately or collectively, might ask Portugal to request Indonesia and Malaysia to restore conditions in the territory to enable its people to determine their own future. An appeal at the same time to Indonesia to use its good offices to secure the release by UDT of the Portuguese hostages, and to give assurances about subsequent treatment of Fretilin leaders, might help persuade the Portuguese.

13. If the Government were however to come to the decision that it needed to change course because it could not contain criticism in Australia of its present policy then it would be imperative to inform the Indonesians as far in advance as possible of any intended change. Indonesia and President Soeharto look to Australia as their nearest and most important neighbour outside of the ASEAN context for support and understanding. They were very pleased with the Prime Minister's statement of the 26 August⁵ and would feel very let down by a retreat from that position. Our efforts would then have to be directed towards riding out the real damage I believe this would cause to the Australian/Indonesian relationship—and possibly to our standing in the South East Asian region—and to an effort to mend the fences in the years ahead after the dust of Timor settles.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

256 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 10 October 1975

O.JA2335 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I have reviewed the situation with Head of BAKIN, Yoga Sugama for over an hour and separately last night with Ali Murtopo. (Benny Moerdani is in Indonesian Timor for a week and I shall see him on his return late next week.)

2. I had in mind during these discussions your support for talks, the need for Indonesia to use its influence to secure the release of the Portuguese prisoners (O.CH276025¹) and the question of United Nations involvement (O.UN4002²). I also had in mind points made in the Secretary's cable to me CH275467 of 7 October.³

3. A full record of my discussion with Yoga is in safehand bag ex Jakarta 13 October. Main points from discussion are as follows:

- A) I told Yoga that it seemed to an increasing number of Australians that Fretilin was clearly in control of East Timor. What was BAKIN's assessment? Yoga claimed that Fretilin controlled only the major populated centres like Dili and Bacau and had little authority in the countryside. Even if Fretilin were as strong as it claimed to be—which he maintained was not the case—then Fretilin would have obtained its position by armed force. Yoga also asserted that Fretilin's present position was temporary and would not last. Yoga maintained that, despite Fretilin reports to the contrary, UDT and Apodeti were now in control of Batugade and the surrounding area.
- B) I raised with Yoga the point that Fretilin seemed to be gaining some international support, especially at the United Nations. Yoga tended to dismiss the importance of this but said that Sani had been instructed to try to convince the Committee of Twenty-

⁵ Document 191.

¹ Document 253.

² Document 252.

³ Document 251.

Four that what had happened so far in Portuguese Timor was contrary to the principles of decolonisation. Yoga added, after some persuasion, that a visit to Portuguese Timor by a delegation from the Committee of Twenty Four would be welcome provided it looked at the situation of the Portuguese Timor refugees in Indonesian Timor as well. (He would have difficulty in getting the agreement of others involved in Timor policy on this.)

- C) I raised again with Yoga Indonesia's attitude to latest Portuguese proposals for talks between the disputing parties arguing that Indonesia should use its influence to get UDT and Apodeti to agree to such talks and to explore the present prospects for a political settlement. Yoga was initially sceptical saying that it was not Indonesia's business to talk with Fretilin. This was for UDT and Apodeti.
- D) Yoga reiterated that Indonesia had not changed its stand that an act of self-determination should take place and that Indonesia would not achieve integration by force.
- E) When I questioned Yoga about the morale and resolution of UDT and Apodeti, Yoga said that they would fight on. They had no alternative.

4. Ali whom I saw socially generally adopted a similar line to Yoga except he was more positive about UDT's and Apodeti's capacity to regain control of East Timor before the end of the year. He was also slightly critical of what he said was readiness in some circles in Australia to accept uncritically Fretilin's claims, even wild allegations, of large scale Indonesian invasions including the using of jet aircraft, against Batugade. He said Batugade has in fact been taken by about 150 Apodeti/UDT troops. No aircraft had been involved. Fretilin was inventing these stories in an attempt to stir up international feeling against Indonesia and to attract support. Ali said he did not believe these tactics would work.

5. I hope to see Malik early next week following his return from New York. Please advise if there are points you or the Minister might want put to him here, additional to those in paragraphs four to seven of your O.CH276025. (As you know we have already canvassed these issues with a number of senior Indonesians, including Panggabean, Moerdani, Yoga, Ali, Tjan and Adenan—but not yet with Malik.)

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xiv]

257 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 13 October 1975

O.CH277826 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

We have carefully considered the proposal in your JA2336.¹ While there are some attractions in the proposal, there are also, as you say, some obvious difficulties.

2. For a start, the first of the premises in your paragraph 3 is not necessarily a valid one.²

¹ See note 4 to Document 255.

² Paragraph 3 listed four assumptions: Fretilin's control was unlikely to last; Fretilin's control was not the result of self-determination and gave it no right to decide the colony's future; Portugal could not re-establish control and sought an acceptable way of shedding its responsibility; and it was not in Australia's interests for the situation to continue, as it created regional instability and strained relations with Indonesia.

The JIO is currently putting the finishing touches on an assessment of the military options open to Indonesia. This paper will be sent to you shortly. It supports the conclusion that Fretilin is in a strong position in East Timor and is unlikely to be easily dislodged.

3. Current Indonesian tactics involving covert support for UDT and APODETI forays across the border have failed to consolidate a distinctive area of Portuguese Timor under UDT–APODETI control. The foreshadowed introduction of greater numbers of Indonesian forces might well result in a seizure of the border area, but would leave Fretilin in control of the capital, the international airport and the major areas of population.³ A protracted war of attrition would probably ensue with no early prospect that Fretilin's forces (estimated by JIO at 2,000 regular troops backed by up to 12,000 reservists) would capitulate. Fretilin could face food and other shortages for the population under its control but the Timorese peasants, used to living at subsistence level, would survive.

4. The foregoing leads to the conclusion that Fretilin control is an established fact throughout most of Portuguese Timor and that, short of overt Indonesian invasion with the introduction of major Indonesian forces, Fretilin will remain in control. If, as we understand their intentions, the Indonesians are not thinking in terms of introducing major forces into Portuguese Timor,⁴ it may be that rather than continuing with their present tactics they would be better served by seeking some agreement with Fretilin which might offer them hope of exerting predominant influence in Portuguese Timor.

5. At the present stage an invitation to Indonesia (and Malaysia) to intervene would be (and would be seen to be) an invitation to unseat the authorities in *de facto* control of Portuguese Timor. We think that the moment when such intervention would have been acceptable internationally has passed. There is no longer a civil war actively in progress which could justify intervention. The Indonesian-supported action has certainly helped to create an impression of disorder and confusion around Batugade but it has not undermined Fretilin's claim to be in effective and orderly control throughout most of the territory.⁵

6. As you know, in their talks in Canberra with Dr Santos on 1 September, Australian Ministers were not prepared to consider any proposal which implied the transfer to Australia of the responsibility for inviting Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor. We agree that that responsibility would be diluted were we simply a party to an ASEAN-plus invitation. But as you observe in paragraph 5 of JA2336, some water has passed under the bridge in the last six weeks. Ministers may feel that it would simply not be acceptable in Australia for the Government to appear to connive at an Indonesian takeover in Portuguese Timor whether or not we were acting in step or jointly with the ASEAN countries.

7. The fact that the invitation for Indonesian intervention might also impose restraints on the Indonesians and other conditions would be unlikely to make it acceptable to Australian public opinion. It would be clear to everyone that, once established in Portuguese Timor, Indonesia would be reluctant to give up her mandate until she could be assured that the process of decolonisation would proceed in such a way that integration became the only option. Some mechanism—like the previous proposal for a Joint Authority—might be established to which Indonesia could, in theory, be accountable. But in practice any such mechanism would be unlikely to function other than as a means of providing a cloak of respectability for an Indonesian takeover. Australian participation in such a mechanism could create acute problems in the

³ There are many handwritten marginal comments on the Jakarta copy, all in Woolcott's hand. Beside this sentence one reads: 'True. But it's only beginning'; beside the following sentence another reads: 'For the time being'.

⁴ A marginal comment here reads: 'They are now'; at the end of the paragraph there is 'No'.

⁵ A marginal note at this point reads: 'Wait 2 or 3 weeks'.

future if we were thereby expected to become guarantors of Indonesia's future good behaviour. We need to guard against a situation in which in addressing immediate problems we build much larger ones for the future.

8. As you say, our present thinking is still in terms of supporting talks between all parties, including, now, further Ministerial-level talks between the Portuguese and Indonesians. We also see the need to prepare for a debate in the United Nations, although as will be seen from our CH276025⁶ we do not regard U.N. action and support for talks as necessarily mutually exclusive. We have no exaggerated expectations of what any new round of talks might achieve. But nor are we wholly pessimistic. If it were to help improve the prospect of talks we might even now be prepared to put to Ministers the idea of offering an Australian venue—something which hitherto we have been reluctant to consider because of the reduced flexibility it could entail for our future policy options.

9. We appreciate that none of this offers much encouragement for the ideas outlined in your JA2336. If a regional dimension (which we agree could have considerable advantages in approaching the problem of Portuguese Timor) were to be sought, we wonder whether it might be achieved, at least after the event, by reviving the kind of proposal canvassed in our CH265548 of 10 September.⁷

10. New York's UN4031 and Lisbon's LB383⁸ are further indications of Portuguese preoccupation with the hostages issue. We would agree that if the release of the prisoners were to be included in the regional approach, this could be an added selling point to the Portuguese. The big difficulty remains that a regional approach like that described in our CH265548 implies that talks among the parties would reach some agreement and there does not seem to be much prospect of such an agreement.

11. Unless you see particular objections to these latter ideas (para 8 onwards), you might like to float them tentatively with Malik including the idea in our CH365548. The main emphasis of your discussion, it seems to us, should be on the need for Indonesia and Australia both to be seen to be supporting Portuguese efforts to get talks under way (CH275366⁹) and the need also to begin to consider how we should approach the Timor problem in the Fourth Committee (CH276025). We should also hope that the Indonesians would respond positively to the Portuguese Foreign Minister's latest offer for discussions at Ministerial level. Finally we should like you to ask Malik whether the Indonesians are doing anything to limit the growth of international support for Fretilin in countries like Mozambique, Tanzania and so forth.¹⁰

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

⁶ Document 253.

⁷ Document 220.

⁸ Both dated 10 October. Cablegram UN4031 reported Antunes raising the question of the hostages with both Sani and Salim in New York on 9 October. Antunes hinted strongly to Salim that Portugal would not agree to talks with Indonesia unless the hostages were released. Cablegram LB383 reported a Decolonisation Committee communiqué noting 'with sorrow' that repeated requests to the ICRC had not yet succeeded.

⁹ 7 October. It instructed the Embassy in Jakarta to urge the Indonesians to persuade UDT and Apodeti to attend talks, and in doing so to remind them that those parties' failure to accept the Portuguese invitation could be used in favour of Fretilin in any Portuguese initiative in the United Nations.

¹⁰ A handwritten note at the end of the document reads: 'We need to remind them of what the Indonesians believe our policy to be. If it has changed let's tell them'.

258 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 13 October 1975

O.JA2376 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

We have received from Tjan today, 13 October, more details of the Indonesian assistance to anti-Fretilin forces in Portuguese Timor reported in JA.2161 of 30 September.¹

2. One of the unanswered questions relating to the Indonesian operation in Portuguese Timor has concerned timing. As you know, the Indonesians had indicated to us earlier that no final deadline had been set. Tjan then recently told us that the operation should be completed by March next year. Ali Murtopo has recently spoken in terms of the end of this year (JA.2335²). Tjan has now told us that the objective was to complete the main operation by the middle of next month (including UDT/Apodeti's occupation of Dili). It was possible, however, that because of the problem of Indonesia's providing logistical support (without it being observed) and the setting-in of the wet season at this time, the anti-Fretilin forces would not complete their task until sometime in December.

3. Tjan said that the main thrust of the operation would begin on 15 October. It would be through Balibo and Maliana/Atsabe. (He was vague on the details.)

4. Tjan said that the President had recently approved a special budget for the Portuguese Timor operation. We in fact know this from other sources. (As previously reported, the President had earlier declined to do so.) Tjan observed that this was a major development. The absence of a special budget had been a handicap and had slowed down the implementation of the operation.

5. The President in approving the budget had made it clear that 'no Indonesian flag' could ever be used in the operation.

Comment

6. Tjan has been extraordinarily frank in informing us in advance of Indonesian plans. We have no reason to doubt that he is and has been giving us accurate information.³ On this basis it is clear that Indonesia is determined to prevent Fretilin consolidating its hold on East Timor and that, while Indonesia may for presentational reasons go along with talks with Portugal or between the parties and with possible United Nations activity, its basic objective from which it is showing no signs of being deterred, remains the integration of East Timor with Indonesia with as little cost to Indonesia's international reputation as possible.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

¹ Document 246.

² Document 256.

³ Half a line has been expunged here.

259 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 14 October 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

Jakarta telegram O.JA2376 of 13 October¹ reports that Harry Tjan has said that the Indonesian military effort in Portuguese Timor will be upgraded as from 15 October, the aim being 'to take Dili by the middle of November'. If Tjan's comments do reflect Indonesian decisions—and his comments are confirmed by other information we have—there has been an acceleration of the timetable for Indonesian intervention as we previously understood it.

2. A JIO assessment of the likely course of military events in Portuguese Timor is being prepared. This latest information on Indonesian intentions will be accommodated into that assessment. Tjan's remarks, however, do not really add very much to what we already know about Indonesian determination that the situation should be kept on the boil and indeed resolved by an Indonesian-directed operation. What we do not know is the extent to which the physical involvement of Indonesian forces can continue to be disguised or denied by the Indonesians, and the extent to which FRETILIN will be able to maintain its defences once significant advances are made by the anti-FRETILIN forces. So far FRETILIN has been holding together (but not making any progress) in the border area near Batugade.

3. There seems little doubt that the Indonesians are preparing to step up their activities. As we discussed on 9 October we shall clearly need to put Australian policy to close examination towards the end of this month.²

G. B. FEAKES

Acting Deputy Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii]

¹ Document 258.

² Her Tasning had sought an interview with Willesee that day to discuss developments adversely affecting Australian-Indonesian relations. He repeated his assertion that Indonesia would not invade East Timor. Willesee asked about press reports that Indonesian troops had entered the territory and whether Fretilin troops had entered Indonesian Timor. Her Tasning said there had been no significant troop build-up. Soeharto had instructed some reinforcement of normal border forces. Fretilin troops had crossed the border four times and one had been captured, but Indonesian troops had not entered Portuguese Timor. Indonesian activity was limited to 'providing advice' to refugees re-entering Portuguese Timor.

260 MINUTE FROM CURTIN TO FEAKES AND JOSEPHCanberra, 15 October 1975¹

CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACT

Fretilin

Fretilin's claims have to be taken very seriously. Its credentials as the legitimate representative of the people of Portuguese Timor are potentially strong in an international debate; as indeed they are within Portuguese Timor. Fretilin, moreover, is the sort of party we would have welcomed, even encouraged, any where else than in Timor. But Fretilin does not claim sovereign power, and it does not call for immediate independence. Indeed Fretilin is still sufficiently realistic (in terms of an assessment of Timor's human and physical resources, and in terms of not offending Indonesia too greatly) or sufficiently immersed in the 'colonial mentality' of dependency, not yet to be ready to say it wants to take over. It remains adamant that independence must come at the conclusion of the decolonisation process, but it still hesitates about taking the final plunge.

So it is not a question of formal Australian recognition of Fretilin. But we may be obliged to accord some recognition to what Fretilin has accomplished. This really means that we will have to take stock of what Indonesia is likely to have to do if it is to turn Fretilin out: unless Indonesia can act very quickly and with very little bloodshed, we will have either to acquiesce in a rather strong and perhaps fairly prolonged dose of Indonesian military action, or to make it clear that we cannot acquiesce in it. Our assessment of the military capability of Fretilin is critically important. It does not however seem likely that they will be pushed aside quickly and gently enough for one to turn a blind eye. This is very much a matter of judgement, but it may well be so. Our problem is that we may have to act before our judgement is tested.

In the end, whatever we might say along the way, we will have to accept whatever happens, but we should be able to seek Indonesian understanding of our wish to express disquiet. We would not be doing anything physically to prevent Indonesia from doing whatever it might believe it has to do. We would simply be asking the Indonesians to allow us publicly to dissociate ourselves from Indonesian military intervention. It would not be an easy diplomatic exercise, but we may have to try it. We would have to work hard to maintain a distinction between support for principles and support for Fretilin, and also to secure understanding that our inability to support Indonesian military intervention is not inconsistent with our friendship with Indonesia.

If we choose to publicly not acquiesce in Indonesian intervention it does not mean that we have to become indifferent as between an Indonesian East Timor and an independent East

¹ A handwritten note by Curtin in the margin explains: 'This was drafted early last week, but I would still like to have a Fretilin sketch on file. In the last five pages [that is, the section published here] I tried to draw some sketchy conclusions—partly, though perhaps not entirely . . . being overtaken by events'. Responses by both Feakes and Joseph commend the paper, and discuss the possibility of wider distribution of the section not published here, which analyses the origins and philosophies of Fretilin and UDT: the latter as the defender of traditional social structures, the former closer to mainstream anti-colonialist radicalism. ' . . . with independence always safely "two or three years ahead" the two parties were largely content to spend most of their time arguing with each other.' Curtin argued that Fretilin combined revolutionary and conservative elements, and that it was likely to have strong popular support. The paper includes portraits of some of Fretilin's leading figures.

Timor (or whatever else the people may decide they want). We would say publicly and firmly that, although we cannot agree that force should be used, we hope that the people of Portuguese Timor will choose to join Indonesia, and that we expect them to be given the chance to determine their own future. If Fretilin were to refuse to allow the people to do so we would express our strong dissatisfaction. If Indonesian military action were to follow Fretilin's refusal to allow the people to choose, we would deplore an unfortunate sequence of events. The ideal solution might be for the people to choose to join Indonesia and for Indonesia not to take out its vengeance on Fretilin leaders. But we will almost certainly not get out of it this easily.

If we are to be opposed to Indonesian military intervention and yet not be all the way with Fretilin, we have to explain to the Indonesians what we would in fact like to happen. We would have to argue very strongly for talks leading to the resumption of a decolonisation process (incorporating a genuine act of self-determination). This is, after all, precisely what everyone, including Indonesia and Fretilin, has been saying should happen. And we would be able to make it clear that 'integration' should be clearly put before the people as a legitimate alternative to 'independence'. As the supervision of a decolonisation program would almost certainly be beyond the resources of Portugal, and as a regional arrangement would probably be regarded by Portugal (and certainly by Fretilin) as being too obviously a device to ensure Indonesian take-over, resort to the United Nations seems inevitable. Indeed, any Australian statement of disquiet about Indonesian intervention would almost certainly have to be accompanied by an expression of support for United Nations involvement. As relations with Indonesia could very quickly become very difficult, the sooner United Nations action followed the better. If UN action were delayed too long, Indonesian military occupation might become an accomplished fact and we would have to leave our expressions of disquiet on record, having had to repeat them as the military operation unfolded (we would also have to do this if military action continued after the United Nations attention had been engaged).

In the United Nations it would be up to Indonesia to guide the debate in the direction of allowing Indonesia to have a major hand in the supervision of a decolonisation program. This would require diplomatic skill on Indonesia's part, but, if it had shown restraint in the period leading up to the point of United Nations involvement, the regional countries (including Australia) would be in a good position to lend diplomatic support to Indonesia and to ensure that the United Nations involvement was very much a regional exercise. If, however, Indonesia is presented in the United Nations arena as an aggressor, perhaps already occupying Dili, sympathy for Indonesia might be difficult to muster and effective regional involvement might not be easy. This would make things very difficult for Australia.

The argument for an Australian dissociation from Indonesian military intervention, and for early (rather than later) United Nations involvement thus does not have to be seen as an anti-Indonesian argument. The Indonesians would, initially at least, probably choose to see it that way. We would have to work hard to convince them otherwise. Similarly, the argument does not necessarily entail the total rejection of the Indonesian interpretation of Fretilin (as being at least potentially pro-communist) or of the Indonesian fears about an independent East Timor (as being at least potentially an unstable entity attracting unwelcome outside interest in the region). The point is simply that we may not be able to support the use of force to do away with Fretilin and its aspirations to East Timorese independence. It may be that Fretilin, if it is given the time required to put its thoughts together in a society where political development has stood still for a thousand years, will find some of the ideas advanced by the various schools of communist theory to be very attractive. Once the 'colonial structure' and

the 'colonial mentality' have been pushed aside there may be nothing else left. Timor is thus potentially a political theoretician's delight; and Fretilin's advice is coming mainly from the doctrinaire left. And (especially if Indonesia does not present itself as a friend) there is no reason why an independent East Timor, deep in political experimentation, and desperate for economic and technical assistance, should not look for friends beyond the immediate region. Put in rather less dire terms than the Indonesians tends to put them, Indonesian fears are not entirely without basis. The Indonesians believe that the region simply cannot afford the luxury of an independent East Timor. If an independent and politically radicalised East Timor were to make a go of it, with political and economic help not to Indonesia's liking, it would certainly become something for discontented Indonesians to look to.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii]

261 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN WHITLAM AND TUN ABDUL RAZAK

Canberra, 15 October 1975

SECRET

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor¹

23. The *Prime Minister* introduced this subject. He explained that FRETILIN was working through Australian private institutions to try to bring pressure on the Australian Government to underpin FRETILIN's position in Portuguese Timor. FRETILIN was trying to manoeuvre Australia into providing food, communications equipment, even support for FRETILIN's embryonic administrative structure. The Australian Government was resisting this pressure. Australia would not allow itself to be manoeuvred into taking sides in Portuguese Timor. Still less would it allow itself to be pushed into anti-Indonesian attitudes. Preservation of the Indonesian relationship was much more important than relations with Portuguese Timor.

24. The *Prime Minister* went on to refer to the activities of the Australian media. It had easy access to Dili and Baucau; it could not so easily visit the border areas. Thus it tended to present a one-sided picture of the situation. Radio Australia had been dubbed the 'Voice of FRETILIN'. In one sense Indonesia had itself to blame. It ran too closed a society. It denied access to journalists who had little idea of the plight of the 40,000 refugees who had fled into Indonesian Timor. Perhaps, of course, Indonesia was sensitive about its own activities; a few thousand Indonesian troops were probably now operating inside Portuguese Timor.

25. *Mr Whitlam* felt that Indonesia would need to take diplomatic steps to present its case internationally. In the present situation, FRETILIN could gain the sympathy of a number of

¹ A note on the record indicates that the leaders met for one hour in private: officials were present only for the second half of the meeting. The record of discussion is thus incomplete: issues covered in the record were also discussed in the private meeting and although remarks have been grouped under appropriate headings 'there was no particular chronology to the discussion'.

European countries. FRETILIN also had its links with the former Portuguese territories, now independent states, in Africa. Thus, for example, FRETILIN had managed to develop links with FRELIMO in Mozambique. It was possible that the Africans would rally to FRETILIN for the simple reason that Portugal had previously had colonies in Africa. The OAU might be induced to take up an attitude which would be contrary to Indonesia's interests.

26. The *Prime Minister* suggested that all this exemplified a more general point, namely that the regional countries had to guard against a situation in which countries or institutions outside the region presumed to dictate solutions to regional problems. This had happened for example in regard to Cambodia at last year's UNGA. It looked as though it might happen if President Marcos persisted in his approach to the Islamic Secretariat in relation to the Southern Philippines issue. The Prime Minister was now worried that African opinion might be mobilised against Indonesia in regard to Timor.

27. *Tun Razak* felt that Portugal was mainly to blame for the present position in Portuguese Timor. It should be doing more to try to retrieve the situation in the territory. The *Prime Minister* agreed: Portugal had acted irresponsibly.

28. *Tun Razak* suggested that an independent East Timor would be unviable. Malaysia sympathised with President Soeharto's concern that Portuguese Timor should become part of Indonesia. *Tun Razak* had every confidence in President Soeharto. He had moved very carefully so far. The *Prime Minister* agreed that President Soeharto was acting with patience and tact. He recalled that he had moved with similar, and ultimately successful, tact in displacing Soekarno in the mid-1960s.

29. The discussion then turned to Indonesia's proposals of last August for a Joint Authority and the related proposal for an Indonesian intervention force. The *Prime Minister* noted that these proposals had caused Australia some difficulties. The Portuguese had wanted to shed their responsibility for inviting in an Indonesian intervention force on to Australia and Malaysia. This had been unacceptable to Australia. It had also seemed to us that the Joint Authority would have involved Australia, as a participant, in assuming part of Portugal's colonial responsibilities in Portuguese Timor. This had been equally unacceptable. Nor had we much liked those elements in the Portuguese proposals which would have involved Australia acting as a kind of guarantor of Indonesian behaviour in Portuguese Timor.

30. The *Prime Minister* reiterated that Australia was not willing to take on a new colonial burden in 1975, the very year we had ended our colonial role in PNG.

31. *Australian officials*² asked about the possibilities of a regional initiative in relation to Timor. It was noted that the Opposition in Australia had proposed that Australia should have encouraged and supported an ASEAN initiative. *Tun Razak* said that the other ASEAN countries had not been approached by Indonesia to take any action. He implied that ASEAN would only act if President Soeharto requested this. The matter might be raised at the ASEAN summit or, before then, during the Foreign Ministers' meeting.

32. *Australian officials* wondered whether there might still be a role for regional countries perhaps at a later stage. For example, were something positive to emerge from the current Portuguese attempts to get a new round of talks under way, there could be value in considering whether the outcome might not be subject to some form of regional endorsement. It might be possible, for instance, to weave into any regional declaration an endorsement of Indonesia's special status in relation to Portuguese Timor as well as something to the effect that regional stability should not be disturbed. The advantage of such an approach might be that, if and

² Australian officials present were Parsons, Joseph, J. D. Anderson (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet) and M. W. B. Smithies (Department of Defence).

when the next crisis erupted in Portuguese Timor, there would already be a regional framework for approaching it and one which took account of the special interests of Indonesia. *Tun Razak* agreed that there could be value in these sorts of ideas.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

262 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 15 October 1975

O.JA2432 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

We are surprised that you seem to accept the view that FRETILIN control is an established fact (paragraph four of O.CH277826).¹ While for the present FRETILIN does hold most of East Timor, this assessment is² inconsistent with what we have been told here and reported to you about Indonesian intentions.

2. As far as the Indonesian Government is concerned, the *only* acceptable solution now to the future of Portuguese Timor is integration with Indonesia. President Soeharto wants this integration to occur with as little harm to Indonesia's international reputation as possible. He is still looking to Indonesia's regional friends, including Australia, for help and understanding in this regard.

3. We should face the fact that at this stage there are no signs that he is not prepared to escalate Indonesian involvement in the territory to the extent he considers necessary to prevent FRETILIN consolidating its hold on Portuguese Timor and to achieve integration, even if this should lead to international criticism of Indonesia.

4. As we reported in JA2161³ and JA2376⁴ President Soeharto has recently authorised a significant increase in Indonesian involvement (JA2376 would have crossed with your CH277826). The stepped-up operation begins today, as you know. Tjan has now given the following additional details about it.

5. All Indonesian forces operating in Portuguese Timor will be dressed as members of the anti-FRETILIN force. They have been assembling in Atapupu. Initially an Indonesian force of 800 will advance Batugade–Balibo–Maliana–Atsabe. It will then move towards Dili through Ermera. Another 800 will advance to Suai and proceed towards Dili through Same, Maubisse, and Aileu. An amphibious force, including some unmarked tanks, will land at Maubara and proceed on land to Liquica and on towards Dili. Further troops (to take the total up to 3800) will eventually go to Atsabe to support the other troops. APODETI and UDT troops will also be involved. The present intention is not to attack Dili but according to Tjan to force FRETILIN in Dili to surrender by isolating it. The airport is likely to be put out of action. For the time being, Indonesian and anti-FRETILIN forces will not be concerned with major operations in

¹ Document 257.

² One and a half lines have been expunged here.

³ Document 246.

⁴ Document 258.

the western part of Portuguese Timor. Logistic support for the operation is acknowledged as difficult and helicopters may be used.

6. It is of course clear that the presence of Indonesian forces of this order will become public. The Indonesians acknowledge this. The President's policy will be to deny any reports of the presence of Indonesian forces in Portuguese Timor. What they will do if a tank is captured or an aircraft is shot down or a sizeable number of prisoners are taken remains to be seen.

It is possible they will be said to be 'volunteers' or 'Timorese deserters' acting in response to UDT/APODETI calls for assistance and to enable refugees to return to their homes in East Timor.

7. We are not in a position to assess the likelihood of success for the Indonesian operation. The Indonesians are confident. They estimate the FRETILIN armed force at 5000, including reservists. If difficulties arise Indonesia will, we assess, escalate its involvement to overcome them.

8. There is, therefore clearly a substantial difference between JIO's foreshadowed assessment of the situation and BAKIN's. I consider—as I have suggested before—that in these circumstances it would be unwise to base our policies on assessments which may turn out to be false. We will know how successful present Indonesian plans have been in four to eight weeks. If these plans go well Tjan said Portuguese Timor would be fully integrated by next April. JIO assessments have been wrong in the past. So have BAKIN's. They are after all assessments and it would be prudent to see how the situation develops over the next few weeks before jumping to conclusions.

9. Meanwhile Indonesia will continue to portray its policy in as favourable light as possible on the diplomatic and public presentational level. Foreign Minister Malik's agreement to talk with his Portuguese counterpart is part of the pattern.

10. As seen from Jakarta, we need to address ourselves to the attitude we should adopt as fighting again increases in Portuguese Timor, which it should do from today.

11. On the basis of the Townsville talks, President Soeharto will assume that the Australian Government will make every effort to give Indonesia what support and understanding it can. The Prime Minister's Statement in the House of Representatives on 26 August⁵ confirmed this assumption. An example of the Indonesian Government's confidence that the Australian Government understands and is sympathetic with its objective of integration is the extent to which it keeps us informed of its secret plans.

12. The Indonesian Government is aware of the different views in Australia on relations with Indonesia and on the Portuguese Timor issue. It expects criticism in Australia. It expects the Government to react critically against the future of Portuguese Timor being decided without the wishes of the people of the territory being ascertained. But there is no doubt in my mind that the Indonesian Government's fundamental assessment of our position is predicated on the talks between Mr Whitlam and President Soeharto in Townsville. Particularly important to the Indonesians was the Prime Minister's view expressed in the Record as follows:—'He wished to reaffirm, however, that we strongly desired closer and more cordial relations with Indonesia and would ensure that our actions in regard to Portuguese Timor would always be guided by the principle that good relations with Indonesia were of paramount importance to Australia'.

13. While the way in which the situation has evolved—the collapse of Portugal's decolonisation policy and UDT and FRETILIN's resort to force—was not foreseen in Townsville, the President would I believe make the assumption that if the two main strands of

⁵ Document 191.

Australian policy, namely understanding of Indonesia's position and support for integration, on the one hand, and support for self determination on the other, were to become irreconcilable—as they appear to have become—then the Australian Government would attach more weight to the former consideration than the latter.

14. Indonesia is committed to ensuring APODETI and UDT wrest control from FRETILIN. I do not think they will turn back now.

15. I am seeing General Moerdani, who is just back from Timor, tonight, and Malik, who is at present in Bali, on his return on Friday and shall report further tomorrow.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, viii]

263 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN RENOUF, MILLER, ZAITON AND AZRAAI

Canberra, 16 October 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACT

Timor

10. *The Secretary* said that Timor presented a more complicated problem for Australia than it really warranted because of the internal political pressures in Australia. *The Secretary* explained that the left wing of the ALP, and some of the ALP moderates, support Fretilin's demand for the independence of East Timor. The Prime Minister, most of the Cabinet, as well as Mr Fraser and Mr Peacock, sympathise with Indonesia's integrationist aspirations. The Prime Minister gave expression to this view in his discussions with President Soeharto. However, the Secretary explained, it is a difficult policy to follow through in Australia. *The Secretary* reassured *Tan Sri Zaiton* that Australia had not aided Fretilin, although there could be no guarantee that there had not been some measure of private aid.

11. *Tan Sri Zaiton* said that Malaysia had hoped Australia would have been more forthcoming in its discussions with Santos. A positive attitude from Australia may have brought the proposed joint arrangements into existence. *Mr Miller* commented that Santos was not prepared to exercise the powers vested in him by the Portuguese Government. *Zain Azraai*¹ remarked that the result had been to get the Portuguese 'off the hook', and to transform the problem from a post-colonial to a regional one.

12. *The Secretary* said that Santos was basically afraid that if Indonesia intervened directly, Fretilin members would be massacred. This would be to deny what Santos sees as Portugal's 'mission to civilise'. He added that we had been surprised that Portugal had hung on so long, remarking that it seemed to be a question of Portuguese pride.

13. *Tan Sri Zaiton* said that Portugal appeared to be playing a two-faced game, wishing to wash their hands of East Timor on the one hand, and prolonging their withdrawal on the other. He added that, for the time being, Indonesia seemed content to play only a legal and

¹ Zain Azraai, Principal Private Secretary to Zaiton. Noor Adlan, Malaysian Deputy High Commissioner, was also present, as was A. J. Behm of the Malaysia/Singapore Section, DFA.

internationally proper role. Commenting on the Secretary's remarks, *Tan Sri Zaiton* said that Portugal seemed to be unwilling to abandon Timor, but was certainly looking for 'an easy way out'. He asked whether, in the event of a Liberal government coming to power, its approach to the Timor question would be 'more positive' than that of the present government.

14. *The Secretary* replied that a Liberal government's policy would probably be much the same. He said that the Prime Minister had told Santos that Australia was not prepared to assume Portugal's burden. *The Secretary* added that Mr Fraser might well go further than Mr Whitlam in supporting Indonesia's wishes to integrate East Timor into Indonesia. *Mr Miller* said that it had always seemed essential to Australia that the Indonesians and Portuguese talk together seriously, and that this may happen at the forthcoming Foreign Ministers' meeting.² *Zain Azraai* remarked that it is imperative that Portugal clarify its intentions regarding Timor, and that this must be resolved at the Foreign Ministers' meeting. *Mr Miller* said that according to sources normally regarded as reliable Portugal now accepts that eventual integration with Indonesia is the best solution to the Timor problem. The Australian and Indonesian Ambassadors in Lisbon have been so informed, but because of events and because of contradictory indications emanating from Portuguese officials in Lisbon and Jakarta, the Indonesians are very sceptical.

15. *Tan Sri Zaiton* commented that Portugal's internal problems were an additional distraction, and that he feared that a new government may quit Timor altogether or hand the problem over to the UN. *The Secretary* replied that this would aggravate the situation for both Australia and Indonesia, principally because the African bloc is likely to support Fretilin. He said that Indonesia needs to prepare well in advance. Because Indonesia is not held in high regard in the UN in regard to colonial issues, discussion of Timor could be nasty.

16. *Mr Miller* remarked that Fretilin seems to be in control of large areas at present. If Fretilin can hold on and maintain order, then the Indonesian case is weakened *de facto*. *Tan Sri Zaiton* said that he was very worried about the possible reaction in Indonesia, particularly were the Army to reduce or redirect its support for Soeharto because of the failure of his Timor policy. He said that the regional consequences of instability in Indonesia would be grave. *Mr Miller* asked whether an independent Timor would in fact represent a serious regional problem, or whether it would be so much a hostage to Indonesia that it would be effectively powerless. *Tan Sri Zaiton* replied that, although Malaysia and Australia are able to isolate the problem, Indonesia cannot. Emotion is involved: Indonesia could not tolerate an independent country in what it considers to be its area. It would also worry about the precedent for Ambon, the Moluccas, West Irian, etc. *Zain Azraai* added that the Timorese would not be prepared to lie low. They would inevitably aggravate the situation by provoking the Indonesians.

17. *Tan Sri Zaiton* said that Indonesia has not moved for ASEAN support, and that, were it to do so, it could be difficult for ASEAN to respond. It is Indonesia's problem, and Indonesia would need to initiate any discussion on the matter in an ASEAN forum. He asked whether the Indonesians had expressed irritation to Australia about Horta's reception by, for example, the Minister in Australia, adding that the Indonesians are not always frank on such things. *The Secretary* told *Tan Sri Zaiton* that in regard to Portuguese Timor in general Australia was satisfied that the Indonesians had been completely frank, and that both sides had been quite open. Although the Indonesians did not really understand the Australian system, they accepted that freedoms exercised in Australia should not upset intergovernmental relations.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, iv]

² Presumably a reference to the approaching meeting of Malik and Antunes at Rome on 3 November.

264 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 16 October 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

A further point which we must now address is how the questions 'Did the Indonesians advise us in advance?' and 'If so, what did we say to them?' are to be answered. As the Government will not wish to deny that it had received advice from the Indonesians several days before the major direct act of intervention began, it may be that you will want to consider ensuring that we now record our views with the Indonesians about military intervention. The Government's hope that there would be no military intervention by the Indonesians has, of course, been registered many times over the past year; but you may want it to be done again.

2. If so, we would suggest that Mr Woolcott be instructed to inform the Indonesian authorities at an appropriate level (as the information has come from Tjan we would leave this to Woolcott to decide) that we are very grateful for having been kept so closely informed, but that we wish again to express our disappointment that the Indonesian Government has in the end seen it as being necessary to resort to large-scale military intervention. We should draw attention to the dangers of the intervention. We could also add that our position has been firm throughout in terms of seeing integration as the best outcome of a process of decolonisation in Portuguese Timor, provided this were also the wish of the Timorese people themselves. But we had hoped that the Indonesian Government would have persisted in attempts to achieve its objective through diplomatic means. Mr Woolcott would need to add that his statement was to be taken as a formal expression of disapproval and that it is likely that the Australian Government would need to refer to this fact in the inevitable public debate that would follow in Australia when the full extent of Indonesian involvement becomes public knowledge.

3. A draft telegram is attached for your consideration.¹

ALAN RENOUF

Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iii]

265 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 16 October 1975

O.JA2461 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*Lisbon for Cooper; UN New York for Harry and Campbell*

I had a long and very frank discussion with General Benny Moerdani last evening, 15 October. General Moerdani had returned the previous day from a visit to Timor, including Batugade.

¹ Willesee noted: 'Agree'. The telegram is published as Document 268.

2. On the operations which were launched yesterday, 15 October, General Moerdani confirmed what Tjan had already told us and which we reported in our JA2432.¹ Moerdani said that during his visit he had confirmed his impression that Apodeti and UDT only had about 200 of what he would call good front line troops. Another 800 would need several months training before they could fight effectively. In these circumstances there was no alternative to a higher level of Indonesian assistance than the President wanted and both Apodeti and UDT had requested this. There would be casualties. Already one Indonesian soldier had been killed, nine wounded and two were missing. General Moerdani added that all the Indonesians involved would be 'volunteers'. Each would have signed a document to this effect. Most would be ethnic Timorese. Initially, they would not penetrate beyond a line roughly from Liquica in the north through Aileu to Same in the south. He expected to see results by the end of this month.²

3. I asked whether there was not some alternative to a course of action which would involve substantial Indonesian assistance which would be likely to become public and which, in turn, could stir up further widespread criticism of Indonesia in Australia. General Moerdani said 'no'. As I would know it had been decided that Indonesia would not accept the consolidation of Fretilin control in East Timor and was not prepared to live with an independent East Timor under Fretilin control. It was easy for stable countries or distant countries to take the view that East Timor should be independent. What happened in the Indonesian Archipelago was of little consequence to countries in Africa and parts of Europe. But, looking ahead five or ten years, what could happen in East Timor was, by contrast, vital to Indonesia. Indonesia had its principles too and orderly decolonisation was one of them but it also had to give precedence to preserving its hard won national unity and its future national security.

4. I said that as he would know Australia could not condone the use of force by Indonesia to achieve its objectives even if we understood and sympathised with these objectives. General Moerdani said he knew this. Australia and for that matter other countries had three options; to support Indonesia, to oppose Indonesia, or to keep quiet. General Moerdani said that he, the President and others owed Mr Whitlam a great debt for the understanding he had shown, of Indonesia's position and for the helpful position he had adopted. The President greatly valued this. But he also appreciated the difficulties the Government faced. If the Australian Government could not support Indonesia publicly in the months ahead, then he hoped that we would adopt the third option and keep quiet.

5. I asked General Moerdani what Indonesia would do if the going got tough and the UDT/APODETI/Indonesian force encountered really stiff resistance from Fretilin. I added that some Australian officials would assess that Fretilin had already established its control in East Timor and they would resist strongly attempts to wrest control from them. General Moerdani said 'I am aware of this but we will do what we have to do'. He added that, in the long run, Fretilin could not sustain its control. He did not believe it was popular in the countryside, especially in the most densely populated area in the central west of Portuguese Timor where nearly 400,000 of the 600,000 population lived. He could understand people in Australia and elsewhere thinking that Fretilin had established its control. In fact it had but temporarily and by force. Indonesia

¹ Document 262.

² Sunarso told Rodgers on 17 October that Indonesia preferred to use its own men because of lack of military capability of refugees from Portuguese Timor and of UDT and Apodeti. There were two brigades in Indonesian Timor (6000 men) and another 1000-1500 from Portuguese Timor who might be used in military operations. Sunarso said there was only one brigade of indigenous Timorese in the Indonesian army, but non-Timorese 'looked like the locals anyway'. The Indonesians planned to push simultaneously along the north and south coasts, trapping Fretilin between; they did not expect Fretilin to last more than two or three months.

had been slow to react and its handling of the situation had been 'clumsy'. He added 'I am a soldier not a politician. If I had been authorised to do so, I could have tied up Timor in a week. But the old man hesitated and would not let us do what should have been done. He looks 50 years ahead when Indonesia will really be a major power and he does not want Indonesians then to look back on him as a President who could be called a bully or an aggressor'.

6. I posed the direct question whether, given this and the President's restraint in recent months, he would, if the going became really tough, draw back or agree to the escalation of Indonesian involvement. General Moerdani said that the President had already authorised on a contingency basis intervention at brigade or divisional strength if a third country involved itself in Timor. He was not sure whether the President had addressed himself to what he would do in the circumstances I had described. Moerdani said that while the going might get quite tough he did not believe that Indonesia would draw back. It was committed to a certain policy and a certain course of action. He was in command of the operation and he certainly would not draw back.

7. I asked again whether Indonesia was prepared to accept the likely reaction in Australia, in the United Nations and possibly in some other countries to an obviously Indonesia backed attempt to wrest control from Fretilin. He said simply 'Yes'. But he added that Indonesia, perhaps belatedly, would do much more to undermine Fretilin's claims and to present its own case more effectively in the United Nations and in Africa than it had so far done. He would be briefing the Indonesian delegation in New York next week and Joao Carascalao would be visiting countries in Africa and New York to put the UDT/Apodeti side. Perhaps the reaction would not be so strong in any case. The situation in Timor would be confused by claims and counter claims, by Fretilin allegations and Indonesian, Apodeti and UDT denials. The major powers with the possible exception of China would avoid as far as possible involving themselves. Most countries were not interested in the future of Timor.

8. Tjan had said that the plan was to isolate Dili and to secure Fretilin's surrender. Was this practical? Did they expect Fretilin to surrender without a fight? Moerdani's reply was slightly different from what Tjan had told us. He said that he doubted whether Fretilin would actually surrender. Its position would simply become untenable and if talks were to take place between the parties Fretilin's position would be weaker. (I think Moerdani still nourishes some hopes that some Fretilin leaders will come to realise that their only hope lies in cooperation with Indonesia but this hope is not shared by others involved in Timor policy, including Tjan.)

9. Moerdani asked me about Australian policy. Would Mr Whitlam and his Government 'stand firm' especially given its present domestic difficulties? Malik had told him that there could be some weakening of Australia's support for Indonesia. (I do not know whether Malik got some hint of this in New York or from Her Tasning in Canberra but it is the first reference we have had here to this.) Moerdani said he understood the Government's problems but he hoped we would stand firm and not turn out to be 'fair weather friends'. Australia's attitude was very important. Malaysia and neighbouring countries would, as far as possible, support Indonesia. The major powers with the possible exception of China would say nothing. Australia was 'white'. Mr Whitlam had great standing overseas and the Australian Government's reaction would influence other governments including some in the third world. I said that I was not aware of any change in Australian policy at this stage. The Prime Minister's statement in the House on the 26 August³ was still our most recent definitive statement of policy. As far as I knew the Government stood by what was said on this occasion and by what the Prime Minister had said to the President in Townsville.

10. The fact remained however that the two main strands of our policy, namely support for the Australian/Indonesian relationship and understanding of Indonesia's wish to see the integration

³ Document 191.

of Timor into Indonesia on the one hand, and support for the principle of self-determination, on the other, now seemed difficult if not impossible to reconcile, given the way in which the situation had developed. Moerdani said that he believed that in a few months' time the most populated area of Timor would declare itself in favour of integration with Indonesia. Once this had been 'organised', journalists and others could come in and see for themselves. There was no reason why this should not work out. The people were Timorese on both sides of the island.

11. I raised the question of talks. I said that while the Australian Government regarded talks between the parties and between Portugal and Indonesia as desirable and while we regarded United Nations involvement as more or less inevitable, Indonesian policy seemed to be conducted on two levels. Speaking frankly, was this the case? (As you know we have consistently maintained this position in our reporting.) Moerdani said 'yes'. Malik would meet the Portuguese Foreign Minister probably in Rome in the first week of November. Talks between Portugal and the three parties might also take place before or after the Rome talks. But this would not affect the continuing operation on the ground except in so far as Fretilin's position in any talks would be weakened. I said that this implied that the Indonesians were not prepared to explore seriously with Portugal whether there was still the possibility of a political settlement which would accommodate Indonesia's interests. Moerdani said that Indonesia would be 'correct' with Portugal and talks would go ahead. But he simply did not believe that the basis for a political settlement satisfactory to Indonesia existed, given Fretilin's present attitude and Portugal's continuing domestic problems.

12. Moerdani also said some action was proceeding in Timor on the political side. He had decided Indonesia's support for UDT was likely to backfire. UDT represented the former Portuguese middle class interests. Apodeti was now emerging as the stronger political force. General Moerdani said that the emphasis on anti-communism in the public attitudes of UDT, KOTA and TRABALISTA could ultimately cause the socialist countries to react. The Anti-Communist Movement's name would be changed as well as the anti-communist emphasis in its public pronouncements about Fretilin.

13. I asked about the twenty-three Portuguese hostages. General Moerdani said they were still in Indonesian Timor. This was a problem. UDT should take them back to Portuguese Timor but Indonesia could not leave it to UDT. If it did so, some would probably be killed, especially the Major, who it was alleged had supplied Fretilin with arms. A formula needed to be found. Indonesia could not allow any of the Portuguese to be executed as General Panggabean had told me but continuing to hold them especially in Indonesia could be counter-productive.

Australian Overflights of Timor

14. General Moerdani then raised the question of overflights which Adenan had raised with Dan the previous day (our JA2429). He said that Indonesia was concerned that a Neptune had 'buzzed' Kupang at an altitude of less than 2,000 feet on the 3 October. A Caribou had also violated Indonesian airspace over Atapupu on the 2 October. Was the Neptune carrying out a reconnaissance? Indonesia had been extraordinarily frank with myself, Dan and Taylor in taking us completely into their confidence. It would be regrettable if, notwithstanding this, we found it necessary to conduct intelligence operations against Indonesia and to violate Indonesian airspace. I told General Moerdani that we had enquired about these flights on the basis of what Adenan had said. I also said that we greatly appreciated the frankness with which he and Tjan in particular had spoken to us. This was important. If our relations were going through a period of some complexity and possible strain we each needed to know where the other stood.

Demonstrations

15. In this context I also raised the question of demonstrations. I said that 'the eye for an eye' approach which Adenan had foreshadowed to Dan could be counter-productive. Our societies were different. While we could not prevent peaceful demonstrations Indonesia could and did control them. There were forces in Australia which were opposed to the Australian/Indonesian relationship and would like to see the Soeharto Government brought down. They were not necessarily numerous but they were active. They saw in the Timor situation an issue which they could use to stir up hostility towards Indonesia. If Indonesia re-acted here to every demonstration and action staged by these groups in Australia it would be playing into their hands. General Moerdani said he knew this. Occasionally student groups would be allowed to make representations to us [but] these would be carefully watched. He did add, however, cryptically that if the going got really rough then the situation might get out of control and activist groups might be exploited by other influences as they had been at the time of *Malari* riots in 1974. But he believed he could prevent this happening.

16. I have cabled Moerdani's views at some length as they may be timely if JIO's assessment (your O.CH277826⁴) is not yet complete and because I believe they accurately reflect Indonesia's present policies and intentions at an important stage. He also has control of the operation on the ground. It is necessary to keep in mind however that the President and Malik will be adopting different positions in public.

17. In these circumstances I can only repeat my earlier comments that, in the next few weeks, we are going to need steady nerves and to keep our assessment of our longer term interests in this region in front of us.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

ANTI-INDONESIAN DEMONSTRATIONS

On 1 October a group of some fifty students occupied the ground floor of the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra. They were peacefully removed after two hours, when they moved on to protest outside Willesee's office. Protests of this nature—anti-Indonesian and generally pro-Fretilin—continued for some time, culminating in the attacks on Indonesian diplomatic property reported in Document 318. The demonstrators were mostly students and union members, with the addition of representatives of Churches, aid organisations and ex-servicemen who had served in Timor during World War II. Also included were several Australian organisations devoted to the cause of Timorese independence, such as the Campaign for an Independent East Timor, the Australia–East Timor Association, the Friends of East Timor, and the more extremist Friends of Fretilin. The motivation behind these groups was as often linked to a general anti-Indonesian sentiment, as Woolcott argues above (Document 265), as to concern for a free Timor.

The Australian Embassy in Jakarta was particularly anxious about this issue given the threats of retaliation from the Indonesians. On 2 October Dan received several delegations of Indonesian students protesting against the intrusion into the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra the previous day and threatening reciprocal action if the Australian Government could not guarantee to prevent any further incursion. Thereafter demonstrations in Jakarta followed each student protest in Australia, although never to the extent of occupying or defacing Embassy property.

⁴ Document 257.

266 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEECanberra, 17 October 1975¹

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

Jakarta telegram JA.2432² received last night (15 October) contains more detailed information about the stepping up of plans for Indonesian military intervention referred to in the Department's submission of 14 October.³

*[matter omitted]*⁴

5. JIO assessments are being studied to take into account the further details provided by Tjan. The most recent assessment has been based on an area smaller than that sketched by Tjan. In our view, the assessment casts doubts on the effectiveness of Indonesian logistics for an operation aimed at the quick surrender of territory all the way to Dili. However, in this Department's view, this analysis may have to be revised in the light of what appears to be the clear determination of the Indonesians to put into the effort whatever may be required by way of additional forces.

6. In any event, it is clear that the Indonesians are now beginning a major operation aimed at taking over Portuguese Timor. They are quite firm about achieving this objective. Our Embassy believes that there is no prospect of their turning back. President Soeharto will go on escalating Indonesian involvement to the point where success is achieved.

A JIO 'Current Outlook' dated 16 October is attached.

Conclusions

7. It thus seems inevitable that we will have to reach difficult policy decisions on how best to react to escalating Indonesian military intervention. Tjan says that the Indonesians will be dressed as anti-FRETILIN forces (and that the tanks will be unmarked). But the nature and extent of Indonesian involvement will soon become apparent. In turn, this involvement will evoke criticism from the press and sectors of public opinion in Australia and pressure on the Government to condemn the Indonesian intervention.

8. The Australian Embassy in Jakarta reports that Indonesia expects unfavourable criticism from Australia and for the Government to react critically 'against the future of Portuguese Timor being decided without the wishes of the people of the territory being ascertained'. But the Indonesians hope that the Australian Government will make every effort to understand the Indonesian position (paragraphs 10–13 of JA.2432). Indeed in a later telegram Jakarta reports General Moerdani as expressing the hope that, if Australia cannot offer public support for Indonesia, it would at least remain silent.⁵ We nevertheless believe that we should be working towards a public expression to the Indonesians of our extreme disappointment that the situation in Portuguese Timor has developed in such a way that the Indonesian Government has

¹ This copy, on which the Minister indicated his agreement, is dated 17 October. Some other copies are dated 16 October, thus indicating when drafting began and explaining the reference to JA2432 being received 'last night (15 October)'.

² Document 262.

³ Document 259.

⁴ Omitted matter summarises information in Document 262.

⁵ Document 265, paragraph 4.

apparently found it necessary to seek to resolve the issue by force, and that we remain firm in the belief that the people of Portuguese Timor should be allowed to decide their own future. While stating our disappointment at the Indonesian action, we should also seek to attach responsibility, where it is due, to the political parties, including FRETILIN, for having failed to keep the decolonization process on a peaceful path. We could also express our regret that the Portuguese have failed to keep the situation under control. In any event, whatever censure we have to direct at the Indonesians, we should seek to prevent, so far as we can, long-standing damage to our relationship with Indonesia.

9. We believe that we should keep the Indonesians informed of such statements as we intend to make. We should seek to impress upon them that, as a matter of firm principle, we have to speak up for the right of the people of Portuguese Timor freely to decide their own future. While we will not be doing anything physically to prevent Indonesia from doing whatever she believes she has to do, we must go on record to repeat our opposition to the use of armed force. We would hope that the Indonesians would understand this position, and that they will equally understand that our attitude is in no sense 'anti-Indonesian'. We should urge the Indonesians themselves publicly to reaffirm their commitment to the principle of self-determination in Portuguese Timor. We should say that their decision to intervene militarily in Portuguese Timor has precipitated the inevitable strains on our relationship about which we have been warning them for the past twelve months, but that the Australian Government recognizes the overall importance of the long-term Indonesian–Australian relationship and will be doing its best, in difficult domestic circumstances, to contain the damage to that relationship.

10. In other words, we should react to Indonesian intervention along the lines of policy approved by you in July when responding to Mr Woolcott's dispatch on Portuguese Timor.⁶

11. There are still some acute difficulties in the course of action now proposed not only in domestic terms but also in our relations with Indonesia. To the extent, for example, that Indonesia continues to deny involvement of its troops well after the extent of this involvement has been exposed, it will be the Australian Government that would be publicly disputing Indonesia's claims. Still we do not believe it will be possible to remain silent beyond a certain point, which point would be essentially a matter for judgement in the light of day-to-day developments.

Australians in Portuguese Timor

12. Another serious matter for consideration is the presence of Australians in Portuguese Timor. There are a number of journalists, some outside Dili, and the ACFOA team arrived in Dili on 16 October, after having been given the normal consular warning that the Australian Government could not guarantee the party's safety in Portuguese Timor. There are in addition other Australians working on humanitarian aid projects. We do not believe that we need take steps today to initiate a withdrawal or to suspend further charter flights into Dili. However, depending on the timing of Indonesian deployments, the security situation inside Portuguese Timor could deteriorate rapidly. We will therefore begin planning immediately with the Department of Defence on the possibility of a further evacuation of Australian citizens from Portuguese Timor. Planning might need to be put into effect as early as next week.

⁶ See Document 152.

13. *It is recommended* that you agree that we proceed as proposed in paragraphs 7-11 in relation to public reaction to the inevitable exposure of Indonesian intervention, and in accordance with paragraph 12, in regard to possible evacuation of Australians from Portuguese Timor.⁷

ALAN RENOUF
Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii]

267 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 17 October 1975, 2.30 p.m.

O.CH279714 RESTRICTED IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor—Missing Journalists

Following item was carried on this morning's ABC News:

Begins:

FRETILIN leaders in Dili have reported that Indonesian armed forces crossed the border into East Timor yesterday and took at least two towns and killed more than forty FRETILIN troops. An ABC reporter in Dili Tony Manati says five Australian newsmen are missing in the region. FRETILIN's Secretary for Foreign Affairs Jose Ramos Horta said in Dili last night that Indonesian forces had swept through the town of Balibo, burning it out and decimating the force of fifty FRETILIN soldiers there.

He said seven soldiers escaped on foot and made it back to Dili last night.

The soldiers said the five Australian television newsmen, three from Channel 7 in Melbourne and two from Channel 9 in Sydney, were caught somewhere in action.

Ends.

2. We understand from Channels 7 and 9 that the five missing T.V. personnel are:

Greg Shackleton
Gary Cunningham
Tony Stewart
Malcolm Renny
Brian Peters

3. Grateful you make urgent enquiries of the Indonesian authorities as to any information that may be available about these missing persons.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, i]

⁷ Willesee approved the recommendations without written comment. Cablegram CH279965 (17 October) repeated paragraphs 7-11 to Jakarta, and noted that Willesee had also sought and received Whitlam's endorsement. The cablegram instructed the Embassy to raise with the Indonesians the problem posed in paragraph 11, and to discuss with them 'whether their interests are best served by denying their military involvement in Timor', and suggested: 'they do have a case for intervention which they could put persuasively. Were they to do so, it would certainly ease the problem referred to . . .'

268 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 17 October 1975, 4.58 p.m.

O.CH279966 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

For Woolcott

Thank you for your O.JA2461.¹

We believe that it is important that, while expressing to the Indonesians, our appreciation for being kept informed of their intentions, we now register again with the Indonesians our views on military intervention.

2. We should therefore like you to express at an appropriate level—as Tjan and Moerdani have provided the most immediate information we leave this for you to decide—the Government's extreme disappointment that the Indonesian Government has in the end seen it as being necessary to resort to large-scale military intervention. You should add that our position has been firm throughout in terms of seeing integration as the best outcome of a process of decolonisation, provided that this were also the wish of the Timorese people themselves. But we should have hoped Indonesia would have persisted in attempts to achieve its objective through diplomatic means.

3. In making these points to the Indonesians, we should like you to say that your remarks should be taken as a formal expression of disapproval of Indonesia's actions and that it is likely that the Australian Government would need to refer to this fact in the inevitable public debate that would follow in Australia when the full extent of Indonesian involvement in Portuguese Timor becomes public knowledge.

4. You should say further that on the basis of information provided by the Indonesians and our own independent assessments, we believe that the Indonesians could be under-estimating the political strength and will of FRETILIN and the degree of resistance FRETILIN is likely to mount. In our view FRETILIN forces are capable of sustaining a resistance sufficient to force Indonesia into a level of military intervention which Indonesia may not now foresee and which in any event could not be credibly disavowed. Indonesian involvement would become more exposed the deeper the penetration.

5. While it seems clear that the Indonesians are not to be deflected from their immediate military purposes, it is still in our view most important, in view of the uncertainties which lie ahead, that they should be pursuing other options including new rounds of talks, preparing for UN involvement, and possibly bilateral dealings with FRETILIN—and not just for 'presentation reasons'. Australian policy has acknowledged and respected Indonesia's major interests and we should hope that Indonesian policy will be developed flexibly and responsibly in the light of the evolving local and international realities.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

¹ Document 265.

269 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 17 October 1975, 2.35 p.m.

O.JA2483 RESTRICTED IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Missing TV Crews

Gerald Stone of Channel 9 in Sydney rang the Embassy this morning and spoke to Dan about the two TV crews apparently caught in the fighting yesterday 16 October at Balibo in Portuguese Timor between FRETILIN and APODETI/UDT forces. Stone said he understood that FRETILIN had retreated from Balibo and that if the Australian TV crews 'had not been killed' they may have sought refuge in a fortress at Balibo.

2. Stone asked whether the Embassy had received any reports about the Australians. We said we had not. We told Stone we intended to make enquiries when we called this morning at the Foreign Ministry and 'at another place concerned with Portuguese Timor matters' (Tjan at Centre for Strategic and International Studies). Stone said he would call back at 1400 hours Jakarta time (1700 hours Sydney time).

3. Accordingly Dan called on Akosah (Foreign Minist[ry]) and on Tjan. We asked that urgent enquiries be made. (Tjan in fact had already sent a cable to the border since we had alerted him by telephone.) Both made the point that any information could only be made available to the Indonesian authorities through APODETI/UDT since Balibo is in Portuguese Timor. We said we understood this completely.¹

4. We have just received your CH279714.² We shall give the names to the Indonesian authorities as soon as possible.

5. In case Stone is unable to contact us you may care to ring him and also advise Channel 7 what we have done.³

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, i]

¹ Tjan had also informed the Embassy that day that anti-Fretilin forces had overrun Balibo at about 0900 hours and Maliana at 1030 hours on 16 October. 180 Indonesian personnel had been involved and there had been little Fretilin resistance. Moerdani was very pleased with progress so far (Cablegram JA2490, 17 October).

² Document 267.

³ Channel 7 and Channel 9 had also approached the News and Media Section of DFA in Canberra, seeking information and assistance. A press release reported Willesee's concern and his instructions to the Department to make enquiries through all channels open to it.

270 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON

Canberra, 17 October 1975, 8.51 p.m.

O.CH280023 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Timor—Access to Darwin by Portuguese Ships

*Ref. O.LB398*¹

The Portuguese Embassy has formally sought diplomatic clearance for a call at Darwin by the *Joao Roby* on 18 November. They have confirmed this date with Lisbon and say they now have the information we require to consider the request at a technical level. Although the later arrival takes some of the urgency out of the issue their wish to use Darwin as a regular re-supply base places us in a difficult position.

We take the point in para. 7 of your LB403 as we had earlier taken the points in your LB366.² But the Portuguese really expect too much of us; in return they show little awareness of the sensitivity of our relations with Indonesia. When the Portuguese Timor crisis is over and done with, the Portuguese will have withdrawn to Europe, whereas Australia will have to continue to live with Indonesia as its largest and closest neighbour. We should be disappointed if the Portuguese could not see this point and accept that, rather than create problems for us in our relations with Indonesia, they should suffer the minor logistical inconvenience of using ports other than Darwin. If their ships cannot go to Indonesian ports, then why not Manila or Macau?

We should like you to speak to Cruz in these terms. You might say that, while we wish to be helpful we do not wish to push our support for them to the point where it might lead to suspicions in Indonesia that we are somehow conniving with 'white' Portugal against Indonesia. You will of course be aware of the racial undertones which have been evident in some of the remarks by Indonesian leaders to Woolcott.³

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, viii]

¹ 15 October 1975. It pursued an earlier request for resupply facilities at Darwin for a second Portuguese vessel. The *Afonso Cerqueira* had arrived in Darwin on 1 October to serve as a reinforcement of Portuguese sovereignty over Timor. It proceeded directly to Atauro where it operated as the Government of Timor's radio contact, a morale booster for the Portuguese troops, and as a symbol of Portugal's continued presence in and commitment to the colony. Canberra had agreed, with some reluctance, to allow *Afonso Cerqueira* use of resupply and communications facilities in Darwin. That agreement was given partly for fear that Australian access to NATO 'material' might be put at risk if the Portuguese request were denied (Cablegram CH274603, 3 October). Following the second request Cooper was instructed (Cablegram CH278463, 15 October) to suggest that the Portuguese should rotate their vessels between other ports in the area. Cablegram LB398 noted that the second vessel would merely replace *Afonso Cerqueira*, and that the presence in the area of a Portuguese vessel was important for the morale of the administration on Atauro. Alternative ports were either too far away, or politically difficult in that they were in Indonesian territory or involved passage through Indonesian waters.

² In Cablegram LB403 (15 October) Cooper reported a meeting with Crespo, who had thanked him for Australia's help, and added ('significantly', thought Cooper) that Portugal would not be able to maintain a presence in Atauro without logistic support from Australia. Cablegram LB366 (2 October) had warned that the Portuguese might be even more disposed to opt out of Timor if assistance was not given to the *Afonso Cerqueira*.

³ Document 270 provoked a heated response from at least one officer in Canberra. A marginal comment reads: 'If we say it is Portuguese responsibility and that they must/should accept responsibility for what is happening in Timor—why not provide assistance in this *small* way, para.3 is rubbish'.

271 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 17 October 1975, 4.20 p.m.

O.LB405 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I asked Cruz this morning if he had had any advice from Atauro about the press report that Australians were actively assisting FRETILIN forces. Cruz replied 'no' but that Macao had reported that the statement had been issued at the request of the Government of Timor. I said that there now seemed little doubt that the statement had been authorised by Pires.¹ If the allegations about Australian involvement were true, I could understand Pires reporting the facts to Lisbon and perhaps suggesting that Lisbon should take the matter up with the Australian Government. What I could not understand was why Pires had instead chosen to release the information in the form of a press release. This seemed not only irresponsible but positively mischievous. Cruz agreed and said they were as puzzled as we were as to why Pires had acted as he did. Cruz undertook to get in touch with me as soon as they received an explanation from Pires.

2. Cruz asked me about this morning's reports of an Indonesian 'invasion' of Timor. Were they true? I said that since we had no official observers in the area we, like Portugal, were dependent on press and radio reports which of course had been officially denied by the Indonesians. We were however concerned about the whereabouts of five Australian T.V. personnel and we were making urgent enquiries in Jakarta about them. Cruz said they likewise were concerned about the two Portuguese T.V. men who were reported to be in the area.²

3. Cruz said they had heard 'absolutely nothing' from their Embassy in Jakarta about allegations of Indonesian military involvement in Timor which had added a new dimension to the situation.

4. I asked Cruz if the reports turned out to be true, would it prejudice the prospects for the Rome talks? Cruz replied: 'Probably. I don't see how Melo Antunes could go to Rome to negotiate with Indonesia over Timor if meanwhile the Indonesians had decided to resolve the question by force. After all, the Portuguese Government had enough domestic problems without inviting further criticism by going to Rome. As it was, pro FRETILIN supporters were planning a demonstration in front of the Foreign Ministry at 1500 hours today, and such pressures on the Portuguese Government would undoubtedly increase if Indonesia had in fact decided to pursue its objectives in Timor by military means'.

5. Subsequent midday radio reports from Dili speak of invasion by Indonesian troops involving '199 armoured cars, 3 helicopters, and bombardment by 9 naval vessels', and quotes a FRETILIN spokesman as criticising 'the silence of the Portuguese Government in the face of the Indonesian attack and the violation of territory still under Portuguese sovereignty'.

¹ The statement appeared on 13 October, accusing Australians of supplying arms and other military assistance to Fretilin. It had been issued by the Portuguese authorities in Macao at the request of the Government of Portuguese Timor.

² Cablegram LB406 (17 October) reported a Portuguese news broadcast in which a Fretilin Department of Information spokesman said the Portuguese TV crew had taken refuge in the Catholic Mission in Maliana. Fretilin did not know the fate of the Australian crews, but had asked Pasquier of the ICRC to investigate. A file note by Curtin on the same day records a telephoned request to the ICRC in Darwin for any information regarding Australian citizens in Portuguese Timor, making special reference to the journalists. Pasquier had flown to Dili, but was due back in Darwin that evening.

Comment

6. As seen from Lisbon, Indonesia may now be on the way to winning the war in Timor but of losing the diplomatic battle. Despite President Soeharto's restraint, as Indonesian military involvement becomes more and more obvious Indonesia is likely to be accused of aggression in Timor and of violating its professed support for self determination. (However, as Jakarta has made clear, the Indonesians have taken this into account and presumably are prepared to ride out the international consequences.) As for the Portuguese, Indonesia's action may provide Lisbon with an excuse to abandon Timor to its fate on the ground that Indonesia has pre-empted any possibility of self determination for the people of Timor.

COOPER

[NAA: A1838, 3038/11/64, ANNEX]

272 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 18 October 1975, 3.30 p.m.

O.JA2495 SECRET PRIORITY

Australian Journalists in East Timor

As you will know¹ it now seems likely that at least four and possibly all five of the Australian journalists were killed in the fighting around Balibo. The Ambassador sought information about them from Malik this morning as did Dan again with Tjan. If true, this is a sad and dreadful development. This incident could have serious consequences and inflame Australian public opinion if it appears that Australian casualties are the result of Indonesian intervention.

2. More than two weeks ago we reported (O.JA2161 of 30 September²) that Indonesia intended to escalate its involvement in Portuguese Timor, and that there would be an upsurge in the fighting and that Fretilin control as seen by Indonesia was temporary (see also JA2248 of 3 October³).

3. We also reported to you as early as 23 September the likely use of guerrilla tactics by UDT/Apodeti and the dangers for charter flights (JA2018⁴). On several occasions we have reported the hostility in refugee/UDT/Apodeti circles in the border area to Australians and, more recently, (O.JA2379) we warned that UDT forces would probably kill Darby if he fell into their hands.⁵

4. In these circumstances we assume that the Department has firmly discouraged Australians from visiting East Timor including the border area and warned them of the dangers of so doing. In your CH269940 of 22 September you advised us that Charter flights (such as those taking Australian Journalists to Timor) would only be suspended *inter alia* 'if the security

¹ Less than half a line has been expunged here.

² Document 246.

³ Document 250.

⁴ Document 240.

⁵ 13 October. The warning came from Tjan.

situation in Timor were to deteriorate to a point which made such flights hazardous'. We assume that this matter is being constantly reviewed.⁶

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

AIR TRAVEL TO TIMOR

On 12 September DFA had advised the Department of Transport that it was unable 'to assess definitively the situation in Portuguese Timor, but believes there may still be risks for aircraft going there. Certainly the safe passage of such aircraft and their passengers could not be guaranteed'. Provided owners, crew and passengers understood the risks, however, DFA would not object to charter flights to Timor, since the Portuguese had lifted a ban on journalists and the Portuguese Ambassador was issuing visas. Flights would be subject to conditions including carriage of adequate fuel to permit return without landing at Dili, pilots having sole responsibility for a decision to land after assessing operational suitability, and arms or warlike stores not being carried. Passengers were to be warned that they were travelling at their own risk and should have evidence of visa or authorisation from the Portuguese authorities. Pilots were to keep in radio contact with Darwin, and to brief airport authorities on conditions relevant to operational safety on their return.

Miller informed Renouf on 20 October that since 15 September, under a standing instruction of the Department of Transport, pilots and passengers of all charter flights from Darwin to Portuguese Timor were warned that they would be travelling at their own risk. Pilots were shown the warning when they lodged flight plans, and the Airport Director endeavoured to warn passengers orally, although this was not always possible. The Channel 7 team of three left Darwin by SAATAS flight on 10 October, having been delayed by one day by a temporary suspension of SAATAS' charter. It had been confirmed that the pilot received the warning, and that Shackleton, at least, was warned during negotiations leading up to the flight clearance. The Channel 9 crew travelled by private aircraft on 11 October, organised by Dr Whitehall of the Australian Society for Inter Country Aid (ASIAT). The pilot, Sydney businessman Milton Grant, was shown the warning, as was Whitehall, but the aircraft left without customs clearance or visa check, and passengers were not warned.

The Channel 7 team had applied for visas to the Portuguese Honorary Consul in Darwin, and each signed a declaration that he understood the Portuguese Government took no responsibility for their safety or well-being. No such declaration had been sought from the Channel 9 journalists. They were presented to the Honorary Consul as members of Whitehall's party, which was deemed to be covered by an earlier declaration signed by Whitehall and other ASIAT principals.

All journalists enquiring from DFA about travel to Portuguese Timor had been advised that the situation there was uncertain and dangerous, and that the Australian Government might not be able to assist them should the need arise.

⁶ The text on the cable form was authorised by Woolcott's own signature. Cablegram CH280046 (19 October), addressed personally to Woolcott from Renouf, protested that 'the tone and language used in Telegram 2495 regarding Australian journalists in East Timor is quite inappropriate and unacceptable and is resented here. I want to know by return telegram who authorized such a message'. Woolcott, who had been away from Jakarta on an official visit, replied on 22 October (Cablegram JA2568) that he accepted full responsibility for the message and regretted any resentment caused by its wording: any apparent implied criticism of Canberra was certainly not intended. 'Purpose of telegram was to express view that in present circumstances Australian citizens should be firmly discouraged from visiting East Timor area especially the border areas and warned of the dangers. We are aware that this is being done'. Document 272 and the subsequent exchange have been substantially misquoted in the press.

273 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 19 October 1975, 9.15 a.m.

O.CH280045 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Australian Journalists in Timor

*Ref. O.JA2495*¹

We need confirmation of this development.² In other words we need the Indonesians to inform us of what has happened.

2. Please therefore approach the Indonesians again and inform them that, according to reports by FRETILIN soldiers, the five Australian newsmen took shelter in an old fort at Balibo which was later subject to a direct hit by an artillery shell. Could the Indonesians confirm this?

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

274 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 19 October 1975. 10.15 p.m.

O.JA2497 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

The instructions in your O.CH279965¹ and O.CH279966² pose difficulties for us and before I act on them further I want to be sure that the issue to which I refer below has been fully taken into account by the Department and the Minister.

2. It may be ironical but perhaps we are too well informed as a result of the confidence shown us by Tjan and Moerdani. We probably know things that only those two Indonesians know that we know. Her Tasning has not yet been informed of what is really happening in East Timor. Nor has Sani. Possibly even Malik is not aware of all the details.

3. It would be difficult for us to make the representations in the form you suggest in CH279966 to Moerdani and Tjan. (Moerdani has in any case left for the United States.) Two invaluable sources of information to us and to the Australian Government which we have carefully nurtured could well dry up in the future.

4. If we are to make the representations in the form you suggest at other levels, for example to the President or to Malik or to senior officials, we would place Tjan and Moerdani in a most difficult position vis-à-vis their Government. Moreover we would simply receive a bland denial that there had been large scale intervention.

5. For the same reasons I am most concerned at the implication in your telegrams under reference that Ministers may feel obliged to make a public statement on Indonesian military

¹ Document 272.

² Half a line has been expunged here.

¹ See note 7 to Document 266.

² Document 268.

involvement. So far Indonesia is continuing to deny direct intervention. Even if these denials lack credibility, Indonesia is likely to maintain them and beyond Dili and Australia and perhaps Portugal they will at least maintain doubt and confusion about the situation. Are we going to state publicly that Indonesia at the level of the President and the Foreign Minister is lying? In these circumstances such statements by Australian Ministers could presumably only be made on the basis of intelligence³ or on the basis of information given to us here in the strictest confidence and reported by the Embassy. The Government would presumably not want to risk exposing the former sources; nor would it, I hope, want to see the credibility and future use here of the Ambassador, Minister and Political Counsellor undermined. I would therefore suggest, to use a phrase current in Australia at present, that the Government 'tough it out' for the time being—or at least until Indonesia admits a degree of direct involvement—and cast any comments on Indonesian intervention it feels obliged to make in terms of widespread *media reports* of Indonesian involvement.

6. Indonesia will of course say that it feels bound to assist refugees who want to return to their homeland and UDT and Apodeti forces which have requested their help. They will probably admit to the presence of Indonesian 'volunteers' helping to undo a situation which they will say Fretilin has created by force and intimidation with arms given to them by the Portuguese Army. But I would not at this stage expect Indonesia to go beyond this publicly.

7. I also have some doubts about the representations you suggest in paragraph four of your O.CH279966. If we press your views that Fretilin is capable of sustaining a substantial resistance, the degree of which Indonesia has underestimated we could court two reactions. First we are likely to be told that because our contacts are mainly through Dili, we may ourselves over estimate Fretilin's strength. (One week ago it seemed that the Department was regarding Fretilin's control as an established fact.) Secondly, such representations if taken seriously could have the effect of encouraging Indonesia to increase the level of its direct involvement to deal with an opponent stronger than anticipated. As already reported I have in any case already made these points to General Moerdani with the latter reaction.

8. We can certainly put again forcefully to the Indonesians that they should be pursuing other options, including new rounds of talks and preparing for possible United Nations involvement. And we could also suggest the possibility of bilateral dealings with Fretilin, something which Moerdani has referred to obliquely once or twice. As you know we have done so on a number of occasions and at different levels in recent weeks. While our frankest contacts regard such activity by Indonesia as being mainly for 'presentational' purposes, the fact remains that if the going gets really tough on the ground in East Timor and the international reaction is harsher than Indonesia anticipates, the option to attempt a political settlement would still exist. I shall put this view firmly to Malik when I see him. So far the stumbling block to these options has been Portugal's distrust of Indonesia and Fretilin's belief that it can sustain independence in the face of combined UDT, Apodeti and Indonesian hostility.

9. In these circumstances and until you have replied to this telegram I would propose to cast our representations here in the context of media reports. In other words, in representations we make, except to Moerdani (who is now away for at least a week) and Tjan (to whom we would prefer not to make them for the reasons given) we would prefer to say 'if media reports of large scale Indonesian military intervention are true, then the Australian Government would be extremely disappointed, etc . . .' I propose to adopt this line with Malik and unless otherwise instructed, with others with whom we discuss Timor, at least for the time being.

³ Half a line has been expunged here.

10. I should add—although I am sure you are aware of this—that the Indonesians will be irritated by what they will regard as an attempt on our part to have our cake and eat it; to let the Australian public know that we disapprove of Indonesia's action (which they see as being in our long term interests as well as their own and those of the region) but, at the same time, not to allow this to affect our basic relationship with Indonesia. I suspect this will not work.⁴

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/12/4, i]

275 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 19 October 1975, 10.55 p.m.

O.JA2498 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I called on Malik today, Saturday 18 October. I regret to report that the outcome was pretty unhelpful. Normally he has received me alone and we have talked easily and frankly but on this occasion he was flanked by Djajadiningrat, Alatas and Adenan all looking fairly stone-faced. I took this to have been deliberately contrived.

2. I said that I wanted to talk about Timor. The Australian Government was concerned about the strains which could be placed on our relations by the way in which the Timor situation was evolving. If there was substance in the quite widespread media reports that Indonesia had resorted to large scale military intervention in East Timor then the Australian Government would be 'extremely disappointed' that Indonesia had found it necessary to adopt this course.

3. I added that the Australian Government could not condone a resort to unilateral action in East Timor by Indonesia as the Prime Minister had said in his letter to President Soeharto of the 28 February. Although we had consistently seen integration as the best outcome of the decolonisation of East Timor we had always hoped that this would be achieved through political means.

4. I have known Malik off and on for a number of years and have always got on well with him personally. This is the first occasion on which I have seen him react with some anger.

5. As predicted in my O.JA2497¹ Malik first blandly denied direct Indonesian military intervention. His advisers remained poker faced, including Adenan who had clearly implied Indonesian involvement to Dan. Malik said that Indonesia had never wanted the situation which had arisen. It had sought and was still seeking a political solution. The restoration of order in East Timor was 'the urgent priority' if the 'opportunity for proper decolonisation was to be reestablished'. It was Portugal, UDT and Fretilin which were in different ways responsible for creating a situation which was intolerable to Indonesia. It was to them that representation should be made.

6. Malik then became obviously angry and agitated. He said the Australian Government was showing 'weakness'. He had read in the Indonesian press only that morning that Tun Razak, a guest in our country, had been subject to demonstrations and abuse. While the Government, on the one hand, sought to assure Indonesia of its friendship and understanding

⁴ Whitlam wrote on the front page: 'I find this convincing'.

¹ Document 274.

it had, on the other hand, permitted the occupation of the ground floor of the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra and allowed regular anti-Indonesian demonstrations. Fretilin was given a free hand and Horta was allowed to use Australia as a 'second home'. He used Australia to conduct anti-Indonesian propaganda and stir up Australian students. 'Who is paying for Horta's cables? What sort of a visa does he have which enables him to enter Australia at will?' he asked rhetorically.

7. Malik went on to say that anti-Indonesian demonstrations, the reports of Australians fighting with Fretilin forces, the reports of the supply of arms to Fretilin from Australia, the generally pro-Fretilin attitude of the Australian media, the concentration of Australian assistance in the Dili area, the facilities offered to Portugal and, by contrast the lack of concern for the real problems of 40,000 or more refugees in Indonesian Timor, must damage the Australian/Indonesian relationship and cast doubts on the strength of Australia's stated wish for close friendship with Indonesia. Reverting to Razak's visit again and linking it to what he called Australian support for Fretilin, Malik added we were risking isolating ourselves from our neighbours.

8. I tried to sooth Malik down. I answered each of the above points as best I could and I quoted some of the helpful points Razak had made in his speech to the National Press Club about Australian policy in South East Asia. I also attempted to put our treatment of Horta and public opinion in Australia in a more balanced perspective. However, Malik said the Government, especially the Prime Minister, had been helpful in the past but more recently not enough had been done to support Indonesia and to prevent the growth of biased pro-Fretilin activities. Malik said 'that the Australian Government should act more firmly' to support relations with Indonesia.

9. Malik then turned to what he called the 'violation' of airspace by Australian aircraft. (Unfortunately your O.CH280022² had not been received by the time I saw Malik.) He also said that Indonesia had 'firm evidence' that 'Fretilin agents' were attempting to buy arms in Darwin and Melbourne as well as in Hong Kong and Macau. Malik said a 'shipment' of arms had reached Dili from an unknown source recently. This would only prolong the fighting. He asked that we check very carefully every plane that leaves Darwin for Portuguese Timor. He added that a small Australian aircraft had landed in Occussi about two days ago. What was its purpose? I said that I knew nothing of these latter matters but would report them to Canberra. The plane which landed at Occussi could have been Favaro's.³

10. Malik repeated that Indonesia could not escape the conclusion that the Australian Government had allowed a pro-Fretilin attitude to develop. Fretilin had established its position through the use of armed force and intimidation. Why were we not more critical of this? Why did we not press Portugal to invite Indonesia to restore peace since they could not do it themselves and the conditions for some arrangements for self-determination? Why did we not

² 17 October. It reported a detailed discussion in the Department of Defence with the Indonesian Military Attaché in Canberra regarding Indonesian accusations that a Caribou had violated Indonesian airspace on 2 October, and a Neptune had 'buzzed' Kupang on 3 October (see Document 265). Defence officials had pointed out that the Caribou, with Red Cross markings and on ICRC duties, had not entered Indonesian air space. The Neptune had been given Indonesian diplomatic clearance for a flight plan which included a slight change of course over Kupang, where it had experienced difficulty in contacting the control tower. This difficulty might have occurred because Kupang had not been informed by Jakarta in advance of the flight.

³ On 20 October Tjan informed the Embassy that he had received a detailed briefing on the meeting with Malik, and that BAKIN and HANKAM were preparing a memorandum listing 'Australian sins'. Besides those listed by Malik, it would include the presence of Australian submarine, HMAS *Oxley*, in waters near Dili early in September. Embassy officials denied *Oxley* had been near Dili on the relevant dates (Cablegram JA2535, 20 October). A comment at the end of the cablegram recalled information from the Indonesian Deputy Chief of Naval Staff to the Australian Naval Attaché on 15 September that the vessel was not *Oxley*, and that Indonesia had been given full details of *Oxley*'s passage through the Lombok Straits and west along the north coast of Madura on the relevant dates.

use our regular contacts with Fretilin to impress on them that they would not get away with their attempt to consolidate the position they had obtained by force and to exclude other parties from a settlement? Also their present anti-Indonesian attitude was doomed to fail. Their hope in the longer run lay in agreement with Indonesia.

11. I said to Malik that I was sorry that he was adopting this attitude. As he knew well Australia was a very free society and the Government had public opinion and domestic pressures to contend with. Malik said that while we might think otherwise so did Indonesia. There was growing resentment of what seemed to be the increasing criticism of Indonesia. Only yesterday he had personally intervened to prevent student groups which had genuinely and on their own initiative sought to demonstrate outside the Australian Embassy from doing so. Indonesia was trying to help us. Why could we not try to be more helpful to them?

12. Malik said that we should realise that developments in Portuguese Timor were of much greater importance to Indonesia than they were to Australia. Although it was close to us, what happened in Timor could not affect Australia's stability. This was not true of Indonesia. In these circumstances 'it was wrong' to criticise Indonesia because of pro-Fretilin pressures in Australia. No other country in the region was doing so. I said it was not a question of pro-Fretilin pressure. Rather it related to support for the right of the East Timorese to decide their own future. We got back to the impasse that Indonesia would accord them this right once peace and order were restored.

13. I said that the issue was more complex than he was suggesting. We would welcome the association of Timor with Indonesia but it was not possible for us to agree to the issue being decided by force. Our attitude was in no way anti-Indonesian but we felt obliged to urge Indonesia to reconfirm its commitment to the principle of self-determination in East Timor.

14. At this stage his mood seemed to change a little. Malik said that Indonesia still wanted to settle the issue on the basis of 'the parties coming together' in a political settlement and arranging some act of self-determination if it were possible to do so. Malik added that at his meeting with Antunes in Rome he intended to urge the Portuguese to continue to accept their responsibilities. He still seemed [to] nourish the hope however that Portugal could be persuaded to ask Indonesia to restore peace and order at that meeting and referred to the earlier proposals for a joint authority, including Australia and Malaysia, to supervise the restoration of peace and order. If this prospect arose again he hoped Australia would 'adopt a positive attitude'. Malik repeated that no act of self-determination was however possible while Fretilin had control and 'had the guns'.

15. I said that the Australian Government would be glad to hear that Indonesia was still pursuing the option of talks with Portugal and an attempt to bring the three parties together with a view to arrangements for the people to determine their own future.

16. I referred briefly to the possibility of United Nations involvement and the need to prepare for this contingency. Malik was unresponsive saying only that he did not see what the United Nations could usefully do.

17. Malik had another appointment. In conclusion I said that our relationship was going through a period of some strain and that I hoped we could keep in touch and be frank with each other. Malik said 'yes' but repeated his belief that the Australian Government should do more to help Indonesia and to reduce assistance to Fretilin. We should give UDT and Apodeti and the plight of the refugees more weight.

18. Before leaving I also raised two other matters (China and ASEAN) which are reported separately and the question of the five missing Aus[tralian] journalists. I said that we were

very concerned about the whereabouts of the journalists and the absence of any official information about them as they had been in the Balibo area when fighting had flared up there. Malik said although they were in Portuguese Timor, Indonesia would do what it could to ascertain, through its contacts with Apodeti and UDT what, if anything, they knew about them. Malik said that a number of Australians in East Timor reportedly wore Fretilin uniforms. He hoped the journalists who were presumably with Fretilin forces had not been so dressed as, if so, they could have been mistaken for Portuguese supporters of Fretilin by UDT forces.⁴

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

276 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 20 October 1975, 10.30 a.m.

O.JA2505 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Australian Journalists in Timor

Ref. O.CH280045¹

Naturally we understand the need to have confirmation of this development.² As advised in our JA2495³ the Ambassador raised the subject with Malik and Dan with Tjan *after* we had seen the reports.⁴

2. Since then we rang Tjan about the matter on Saturday evening, Sunday morning and first thing this morning. We rang General Adenan Saturday evening and Sunday evening. They say they fully understand our concern and have promised to advise us if any information is received.

3. We propose calling on Tjan and Adenan again this morning. We shall urge them to tell us.

4. The following item appeared in *Kompas* this morning 20 October:

'4 Australian Journalists Killed at Balibo?

UDT/Apodeti troops which succeeded in capturing Balibo and Maliana on Thursday found four white men's corpses in the ruins of a Chinese trader's house . . .

UDT leader, Lopez da Cruz, told journalists in Batugede on Friday he could not say whether the four were Australian journalists who, according to latest reports, were in Balibo. But he admitted that near the corpses there were written markings with the words 'Australia', so it might be said they were Australians or Australian journalists. Until Friday afternoon, there had been no official pronouncement on this . . .'

5. We shall report further.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

⁴ On 19 October *Antara* reported the meeting, and Woolcott's official request for Indonesian assistance in the search for the journalists, who 'Australia believed . . . had been detained by the Apodeti and UDT troops'. Malik had stated after the meeting that if requested Indonesia would send a team to search for them.

¹ Document 273.

² Half a line has been expunged here.

³ Document 272.

⁴ Half a line has been expunged here.

277 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 20 October 1975, 3.08 p.m.

O.CH280286 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Australian Journalists in TimorRef. O.CH280045,¹ O.JA2498²

We understand from Joseph's telephone conversation with Dan that you will have been following up urgently with the Indonesians the *Kompas* report about the discovery of four bodies in the Balibo area.³ Meanwhile, on the basis of the information in paragraph 18 of JA2498 we have advised enquirers that the Indonesians have agreed to help ascertain the fate of the journalists. We should like to go further so that we could advise enquirers of the other action which Malik said the Indonesian authorities are taking and to attribute to the Indonesian authorities his comments about Fretilin uniforms. We should not want to attribute any of this information to Malik personally but generally to the 'Indonesian authorities'.

2. Further immediate action will depend on the results of your enquiries about the *Kompas* report. If it is still appropriate, however, we should like you to ask the Indonesians whether they would agree that a member of the Embassy might visit Indonesian Timor as soon as possible to help with enquiries about the missing journalists. In response to questions in the Senate on Tuesday 21 October, the Minister would want to say that the request to send somebody to Indonesian Timor from Jakarta had been put to the Indonesians. Even before we learned of the *Kompas* article the Minister was also proposing to make it clear that the Australian authorities had grave fears for the safety of the journalists.

3. You will appreciate that in our view, for a variety of reasons, it is clearly in our interests and the Indonesians' interests that they inform us of the fate of the journalists. If after a time it becomes apparent that they will not tell us the truth, then the next best course would be for them to confirm to us that the UDT and APODETI forces were not holding the journalists prisoner.

[4.] We appreciate that the Indonesians may hesitate to tell us the truth for fear of a sharply anti-Indonesian reaction in Australia. There is, of course, that danger, which the Government would do its best to moderate. But on the other hand if uncertainty about the fate of the journalists drags on, we can expect concern about them to build up and to be a continuing source of trouble in our relations with Indonesia (just as the Sharman case has proved in our relations with Laos⁴). You will also appreciate that the Government would feel that it has a duty to inform the next of kin as soon as it possibly can of the journalists' fate.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, i]

¹ Document 273.

² Document 275.

³ See Document 276.

⁴ Neil Sharman, an Australian freelance journalist, went missing in Laos in September 1974. The last known sighting of him was in a communist prison in Khamkeut in December of that year. Despite continuing efforts of the Australian Government, Lao officials proved unwilling to proceed with investigations into his disappearance.

INFORMATION FOR NEXT-OF-KIN

Early information available to DFA was no more than that given in the first sentence of Document 272, which gave no basis either for confirmation of the deaths of the journalists, or for identification. All that DFA officers could do until more became known was to avoid raising false hopes. On 17 October, in publicly noting instructions to his Department to make all possible enquiries, Willesee stated that he was 'very concerned' about reports that the two news teams were 'missing in an area where fighting had been reported'. On the same day consular officers of DFA were instructed to respond to enquiries about the missing journalists as follows: 'We are trying to obtain information but we have nothing as yet'. Enquiries had by then been set in train in Jakarta and through the ICRC, and inconclusive reports were already being received from Fretilin sources.

Within days various reports of the deaths appeared in the Indonesian press. On 20 October all families were informed by DFA telegram of a Kompas report of that day that the UDT commander had found the bodies of four male Europeans at Balibo. The families were told that the report had not been substantiated but that Australian authorities would follow it up. On 22 October G. W. Shannon of the Consular Section rang relatives to inform them that Johnson had left Jakarta en route for Kupang. It was hoped he could reach Balibo by the following day; there his aim was to establish whose bodies had been found, and what had happened to the fifth man. Shannon thought it would be one or two days before any information could be provided. He expressed DFA's regret for the delay, and asked whether DFA could help in any other way. All said no.

On 25 October, with Johnson still unable to get to Balibo, and no more definite information available, Shannon began preliminary discussions with the relatives regarding their wishes for the remains and personal effects. Following receipt of Document 297, all next-of-kin were told on 26 October that information in Jakarta indicated all five were dead.

In the absence of the official confirmation expected daily in Jakarta, Consular Section's difficulties remained. E. H. Hincksman wrote to the Indonesia Section on 30 October: 'We continue to receive enquiries from the relatives but have had nothing further to tell them since last Sunday morning (26 October). Some of the relatives have said there may be "trouble" about the lack of information we a[re] providing them with on the progress of investigations. Could we please have advice each day on what we can tell the relatives'. Consular difficulties were further complicated by differences in nationality: Cunningham was a New Zealander and Rennie and Peters were British, although only Peters' family were not in Australia at the time. It was also necessary to deal with more than one person in some families.

On 30 October, to coincide with a memorial service for the five men, Willesee sent a telegram to all next-of-kin: 'In both my official capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs and more personally as the father of journalists who have reported from war zones in the past I wish to salute the passing of the five Australians who ventured to seek out news from the dangerous area of present conflict in East Timor. I pay tribute to their courage in pursuit of their profession and offer the sincerest sympathy of myself and my family to their families'.

278 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 20 October 1975, 3.27 p.m.

O.CH280318 RESTRICTED ROUTINE

Overtime

For Woolcott

You may not appreciate how serious the financial situation in Canberra is—further payment of overtime can only be at the expense of non-payment of salaries.

2. In present circumstances time will have to be spent on essential work, such as Timor, at the expense of other things. We recognise this must mean a consequent decline in output and efficiency.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/10/1, i]

THE SUPPLY CRISIS: OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 1975

When the Whitlam Government was returned to office in May 1974 the position in the Senate was evenly balanced: the Government and Opposition parties had 29 Senators each; Michael Townley, independent Senator for Tasmania, supported the Opposition; Steele Hall, independent Senator for South Australia, supported the Government. This balance shifted on the death of the Labor Senator Bert Milliner in June 1975, when the Premier of Queensland, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, used the casual-vacancy provision of the Constitution to appoint a Senator opposed to the Government. The Labor Party challenged the appointment and on 1 October the newly appointed Senator Field was given a month's leave. This was enough, however, to give control of the Senate to the Opposition.

On 16 October 1975 the Liberal–National Party Opposition, along with Senator Townley, voted to delay the passage of the Government's budget through the Senate by a majority of one. This vote was the culmination of a growing Opposition campaign against the Government, focused initially on discrediting several ministers and later in a general attack on the Government's financial probity. The aim of blocking supply was to force the Government to a general election, a move resisted by Whitlam on the grounds that a Government could only be defeated on the floor of the House of Representatives. The result was constitutional deadlock and a growing atmosphere of crisis.

With the eventual passage of supply uncertain, all Commonwealth Government departments were obliged to impose stringent limitations on spending. DFA measures included restrictions on cable facilities for some posts as well as the overtime ban reported in Document 278.

279 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA AND LISBON

Canberra, 20 October 1975, 5.37 p.m.

O.CH280475 SECRET ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Starey, the Department's current Liaison Officer in Darwin, accompanied RAAF flight (ICRC supplies) to Dili on 17 October, returning the same day. He was authorised to carry out such consular functions as might have proved necessary in the light of the stepped up fighting in Portuguese Timor. His visit has not yet been publicly announced.

Following is his report:

Begins

My visit to Dili on 17 October passed without attracting attention. It proved possible to spend over an hour in Dili itself as there were no formalities at the airport. I travelled in a Red Cross vehicle from the airport to ICRC headquarters and return.

2. Dili was very still on 17 October. There was virtually no traffic, (only army jeeps) and very few pedestrians. If I had had the time, I am sure that I could have walked unchallenged all over the town. My time was in fact spent in the privileged section of Dili, where the villas were deserted. The airport reception for the Hercules was large and friendly. (No plane of this size had previously touched down at Dili.) The crowd, about half of whom were in some sort of uniform, simply gaped.

3. There was no sign of anti-Australian sentiment. In view of the unstructured nature of my visit, I took care not to make my presence known to Fretilin. This required a measure of finesse at both the ICRC headquarters, where the Military Commander Lobato¹ paid a call, and on return to the airport, where President Amaral was holding court. Other members of the visiting party, notably Pasquier (ICRC) and Gp. Capt. Hitchens (RAAF), conversed with Lobato and Amaral.

4. From immediately related accounts of conversations by Pasquier and Hitchens, together with an exchange I had with Dunn (ACFOA), at the airport, I report the following:—

- A. Fretilin, as of 17 October, conceded the loss of Batugade, Balibo and Maliana.
- B. These losses, and the conviction that Indonesian forces were involved in the campaign, had dismayed the Fretilin leadership, particularly in terms of the defence of Dili. An immediate reaction had been to send 500 elite troops to the disputed area, which, taken together with previous similar reinforcing actions, left Dili without adequate defences.
- C. The Fretilin leadership was now thinking in terms of a taking to the hills type of operation. They were confident that this could be sustained over a long period, albeit with heavy losses on both sides.

5. President Amaral, according to both Pasquier and Dunn, claims to have sent a message to President Suharto asking for talks. I can see no reason for Amaral having said this if it were not true. (In this connection Pasquier is a completely reliable witness.) Amaral is reported by both as stating that a protracted conflict would necessarily involve huge loss of life, and that this must be averted. The presence of Dunn in Timor at this point adds a further complication to the issue. He talked of remaining there virtually come what may. Last night, I was informed by Carvalho (Portuguese Mission, Darwin) that Dunn and his ACFOA colleagues visited Atauro on 19 October.

¹ Rogerio dos Reis Lobato, military commander of Fretilin, later Minister of National Defence for the Democratic Republic of East Timor and Commander-in-Chief of the East Timor National Liberation Armed Forces.

6. As for the five Australian T.V. journalists missing in the Balibo area, the present indications are not good. Fretilin radio communications between Dili and Balibo, plus the accounts of seven Fretilin soldiers who deserted the front for Dili, suggest that the five journalists may have been trapped in a house struck by mortar or artillery fire. While this is less than conclusive evidence, we must face the fact that all contact with them has been lost, at least on the Fretilin side.

[matter omitted]

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, i]

280 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 20 October 1975, 3.00 p.m.

O.JA2523 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Australian Journalists in Timor

Ref. O.JA2505¹

Dan called on General Adenan (Foreign Ministry) this morning. Akosah (Asia and Pacific Directorate) was also present, as was an official from HANKAM.

2. Adenan said they had received no information about the five Australian journalists. They had made enquiries, but no information had come to light. We mentioned the *Antara* report of the Ambassador's meeting with Malik which contained the following: 'Malik explained following the meeting that if requested Indonesia would send a team to seek the missing journalists'. Dan said that if this were really necessary we would of course wish Indonesia to send such a team. Adenan said that such a step was not necessary because Indonesia was already making enquiries at the border.

3. We drew their attention to the reported statement of UDT leader Lopez da Cruz in today's *Kompas* (JA2505). We also said that foreign journalists in Jakarta had this morning picked up a report that a message had been received in Jakarta (it was not from da Cruz) to the effect that four bodies of Europeans had been found at Balibo. (This report has probably been filed already.) We also told them that a Fretilin soldier had reported seeing the destruction of the villa on top of the fort in which the Australians had been hiding (*Sunday Times* of Western Australia, 19 October, report on page 9).

4. Adenan said that the evidence seemed to be building up that the five were indeed dead. The Indonesian authorities would continue to make enquiries but there was always the possibility that no confirmation of the deaths would be received.

5. Dan said that if the situation seemed at all likely the Australian Government may decide to send a special team to Portuguese Timor to investigate. Senator Willesee had made it clear in a press statement today that the Department of Foreign Affairs would leave no stone unturned until the fate of the missing five had been established. Moreover we were actively considering the need to send an Australian Embassy officer to the border to investigate.

6. The suggestion that an Australian investigatory team might be sent to Portuguese Timor produced the intended effect. Adenan and Akosah immediately argued strongly against the idea. (It would be too dangerous for the team; they could not enter Balibo, etc.)

¹ Document 276.

7. Dan repeated that we *had* to have advice about the journalists and quickly. We hoped that the Indonesian authorities would be able to convey to us a message from UDT/Apodeti about the journalists. The Indonesians would be acting only as messengers. Another possibility would be for Lopez da Cruz to send a message to the Australian Embassy or to the Australian Government along the lines of the report in *Kompas* (the whereabouts of the fifth Australian would also have to be explained).

8. Adenan accepted that more efforts would have to be made by them to get us the answer. Dan said we wanted advice by today and Adenan replied that he would do his best.

9. We also repeated the above to Tjan. (Tjan has been particularly helpful on this exercise and has been applying considerable pressure on our behalf in the right quarters.) He told us that four bodies of Europeans had been found at Balibo. He did not know whether they had been identified. (This information should not be used in any public statements.)

Comment

10. It is hardly necessary to say that the Indonesians are extremely concerned about this matter. They are frightened that if they convey the news they will be implicated publicly. But they now realise that if they do not get word to us soon, we may be obliged to do things which will make matters very awkward for them (for example, the prospect of an Australian search team being sent to Portuguese Timor).

11. Concerning this latter point, you know that we were not authorised to make this suggestion to them. But under all the circumstances, including no fewer than eight previous enquiries by us (including the Ambassador with Malik), we felt the need to underline our determination to get an answer by applying as much pressure as possible. For the moment, however, it may be as well not to refer in any public statements to the possibility of an Australian search team (that is, if you approve of the idea in the first place).

12. We shall follow up actively.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

281 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 20 October 1975, 4.20 p.m.

O.JA2532 CONFIDENTIAL AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Australian Journalists in Timor

Ref. O.CH280286,¹ O.JA2523²

For the time being at least we think it would be best not to attribute to Indonesian authorities the comments about Fretilin uniforms. After all, Malik said only that he 'hoped' the Australian journalists had not been dressed in Fretilin uniforms.

2. Such public reference by us would not serve any useful purpose. It may even encourage the Indonesians to make a final decision never to reveal what happened to the five Australians. That is, they may feel we are trapping them into acknowledging publicly that they know important details of what actually occurred. (Tjan mentioned in confidence today that at least one of the 'European' bodies had been destroyed beyond recognition in the fighting.)

¹ Document 277.

² Document 280.

3. As already reported we raised with the Foreign Ministry today the possibility of an Embassy officer going to the border to make enquiries about the journalists. There was no objection raised and we can take this as tacit approval for such a visit. We have in fact already asked Johnson (who as you know is now in the Political Section after having spent some months in the Consular Section) to prepare for a visit.

4. In addition to the other points put to the Indonesians (JA2523) we argued that uncertainty about the fate of the journalists would only help to make matters worse in our relations with Indonesia. We also made a very strong plea for early advice for the sake of the next of kin.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

282 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 21 October 1975, 8.00 a.m.

O.JA2536 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Australian Journalists in Timor

Ref. O.JA2523¹

General Adenan advised us last night that he regretted he still had no news of the missing journalists. He said he had raised the matter at a meeting of the Committee on Timor on 20 October and it had been agreed to expedite enquiries on our behalf. He hoped he could tell us something today.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

283 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 21 October 1975, 2.30 p.m.

O.JA2558 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Australian Journalists in Timor

Ref. O.JA2536¹

General Adenan has just rung to say he is confident he will be able to give us news of the five missing Australian journalists by this evening (Tjan has also indicated this to us.)

2. He asked about our plans to send Johnson to Kupang. We said that if we received final word tonight about the fate of the journalists we would of course cancel the visit.

3. Earlier, Adenan had told us that the Indonesian authorities had received a report from the Timor border area which referred to 'rumours' about the discovery of four bodies of Europeans in the Balibo area.

¹ Document 280.

¹ Document 282.

4. We mentioned to Adenan consular aspects. We said that the wishes of the next of kin would have to be ascertained concerning the remains and personal effects.

5. *Comment:* We assume that special arrangements can be made to have the remains/personal effects brought to the border by UDT/APODETI. We shall explore this as soon as formal advice has been received of the journalists' fate. In the meantime, grateful for any advice concerning possible consular requirements.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

284 TELEGRAPH MESSAGE TO CANBERRA

Darwin, 22 October 1975, 11.28 a.m.

O.CE747 SECRET ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor—Political Situation

For Feakes/Joseph; from Starey

1. The following assessment is mainly derived from indirect sources and is made without the benefit of intelligence available in Canberra. It reflects, apart from my brief visit to Dili on 17 October, conversations over the past three weeks with media representatives, ICRC/Red Cross officials and the Portuguese Mission in Darwin. While the picture that emerges is far from complete, some important aspects of the situation can be set down, and their implications discussed.

2. Firstly, Fretilin exercises effective control over most of Portuguese Timor, with the increasingly important exception of the disputed border areas. The armed manpower available to Fretilin has been augmented from a basic core of 3,000 regular soldiers to a total of around 30,000 men, necessarily mainly composed of hastily armed and undertrained militia. These latter troops have proved somewhat unruly and have, I believe, now been temporarily disarmed. This force would be less than formidable in the absence of an adequate supply of arms. But evidence proffered to me suggests that the pro-Fretilin forces are in possession of an extraordinarily large supply of arms and ammunition. It appears that the Portuguese stockpiled an arsenal of considerable proportions. For example, one eyewitness account is of a cache of 500 boxes of 1,000 rounds each of small-arms (SLR) ammunition, and of huge quantities of 81mm mortar rounds. Fretilin is understood to have taken steps to disperse its arms holding.

3. Secondly, Fretilin appears to have presented itself quite effectively to the people as the standard-bearer of nationalism, democracy and freedom from foreign domination. While popular understanding of the issues at stake is undoubtedly at a very low level, and tribal loyalties loom as large as ever, there appears to be general acceptance of the Fretilin/freedom nexus. A probable explanation for this is that Fretilin was the only one of the major parties which worked seriously at grass roots level prior to the recent politico/military developments.

4. The Fretilin leadership is now presenting, for whatever reasons, a moderate face. The key figures are Vice-President Lobato¹ and Secretary-General Fernandez. (President Amaral is generally regarded as little more than a figurehead.) Lobato and Fernandez claim to stand for social democracy at home and a neutral stance in foreign policy, including close diplomatic

¹ Nicolau dos Reis Lobato, Vice-President of Fretilin, later Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

and trade links with Australia and Indonesia. Horta is pictured as a shrewd pragmatist intent on preserving his place in the Fretilin leadership. There are several extreme left ideologues in and around the Central Committee, the most important of whom is Alkatari. At present, however, their influence on policy making is very limited.

5. The current mood of the Fretilin leadership is described as being a mixture of defiance and apprehension: defiance in the sense of a conviction that a point of no return has been reached, and that attempts to subjugate Fretilin militarily will be contested to the bitter end by means of protracted guerrilla warfare: and apprehension in the sense that Fretilin has so far failed to attract widespread international support, particularly in the region itself. (Not much comfort is taken from the endorsement of the Indo-China states and some African countries.) Coupled with this sense of isolation is the realisation that food, and particularly fuel, supplies are running down. (With regard to the latter there is now no daytime electricity or night time water supply.)

6. It is against this background of military and political success, coupled with anxieties about the future that the Fretilin leaders view their projected bilateral talks in Lisbon. They have let it be known to media and ICRC representatives that their major objective will be to persuade the Portuguese to return to Timor, and to preside over an orderly decolonization program. They believe that at such time as the people are able to express their will through democratic means, they will declare for independence. They were asserting, at least until the most recent flare-up in the border area, that the only alternative to a program leading to an act of free choice was a unilateral declaration of independence by a Fretilin government, and the defence of that action by arms. The above appears to me to represent the essence of the situation as seen through Fretilin eyes. It would be imprudent to under-estimate Fretilin's readiness to make sacrifices, its degree of popular support, or its ability to wage a prolonged guerrilla resistance in the rugged Timor terrain. In other words, the prospects for a rapid and relatively peaceful incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia would seem, despite Fretilin's approach to Suharto for talks, very poor.

7. A fundamental change of political approach on the part of key Fretilin leaders would of course radically alter this picture, but I cannot comment on that possibility except to say that no evidence of it has yet come to light in Darwin. It is apparent that the critical point of the current Timor crisis is not far away. A crucial factor will be the degree to which the various interested parties adhere to their present policy objectives.

8. In this connection, and in view of known Indonesian fears about the possible emergence of a communist enclave on their border, it seems at least feasible that Indonesia's and Australia's interests would best be served by an early end to hostilities and the institution of talks, bilaterally or collectively, between Portugal, Indonesia and the major Timorese protagonists. Such talks would be especially timely while moderation prevails in the Fretilin leadership, and before the latter is driven to the point of taking to the hills, for there can be no doubt that Fretilin leaders are now fully alive to the intensity of Indonesian interest in the situation and that this awareness would temper the Fretilin stance in talks about Portuguese Timor's political future. In other words, would it not be better in the continued absence of a decisive Indonesian military thrust to take over East Timor, for the search for a satisfactory long term solution to be now pursued diplomatically rather than have the situation on the ground deteriorate into a bitter, and probably indecisive, civil war, in the course of which Fretilin would presumably fall completely under communist control.²

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

² A marginal note from Woolcott to Dan reads: 'I think we need an updated Indonesian assessment of FRETILIN'.

285 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 22 October 1975, 12.20 p.m.

O.JA2580 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Missing Journalists

*Ref. O.JA2558*¹

General Adenan has just advised Dan that no further news had been received from Timor about the journalists.

2. We asked Adenan why it was taking such a long time for them to convey a message from UDT/Apodeti. After all, UDT leader, Lopez da Cruz was reported in the press two days ago as having said that four bodies, possibly Australian, had been found at Balibo.

3. Adenan said that they had sent a message to Lopez da Cruz requesting him to advise us officially of the discovery of the five (or four) bodies and of their identity. This message would be conveyed to us through the Indonesian authorities. Word had been received in Jakarta yesterday that such a message was on the way (JA2558).

4. Adenan said he was at a loss to know what the hold-up had been. The Indonesian authorities in Jakarta were making further urgent enquiries this morning. He still hoped he would have something to give us today.

5. We have given Adenan the details concerning the three Channel 7 men set out in paragraph 3 of CH281029.²

6. We asked Adenan to send an urgent message to Governor El Tari in Kupang about Johnson's visit. He undertook to do this.

7. Please inform Maher (Channel 7) (Telephone Melbourne 693975 or 690771) and Cornford (Telephone Melbourne 421785) that we are still awaiting confirmation. Both have rung the Embassy. Gerald Stone (Channel 9 in Sydney) had also rung us earlier.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

¹ Document 283.

² 21 October. It also reported discussions between representatives of Channel 7 with the Department and with the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra. Both Channels had offered to send representatives to Indonesian Timor to assist; Department officials had suggested to Channel 7 that they should delay at least until Johnson had reported.

286 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN JOHNSON AND EL TARI

Kupang, 22 October 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: Missing Journalists*[matter omitted]*

2. Johnson explained to El Tari, who said that he had not been informed that he was coming, that Johnson had been sent to Timor by the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia under instruction by the Australian Government, to attempt to ascertain the fate of five missing Australians. Could the Governor use his good offices with the President of the UDT to forward a message to the border area?
3. The Governor replied that Balibo was not in Indonesian territory and that UDT and Apodeti were not subject to direction by Indonesia. Johnson said that we understood the position of the Indonesian Government, but since there was no way of confirming reports about the five missing journalists from the other side of the border, and since El Tari had transmitted messages in the past, the Australian Government would be grateful if a message could be passed to da Cruz.
4. El Tari agreed to send a message but said that he could not tell how long it would take to obtain a reply. In the case of a previous message, it had taken ten days for a reply. As the Governor seemed to be downplaying the urgency of our need for confirmation of the fate of the journalists, Johnson stressed that we regarded this as most urgent and mentioned in passing Australian need to consider press reports on this question as well as to consider the families of the missing men. El Tari then agreed to forward a message as quickly as possible. Johnson should give a message to Lede in the morning. But no reply would be likely to be forthcoming in under 5 days. It could take longer.
5. During the conversation, the Governor noted that Radio Australia reports were infuriating the refugees in the border areas. The refugees did not understand Australia's attitude and thought that Australia and Radio Australia were supporting Fretilin. The refugees could see that aid was not being given to them by Australia.
6. Johnson briefly outlined Australia's position on Portuguese Timor, that the matter was primarily between Portugal and the three parties concerned, with due regard to Indonesia's predominant interest. Australia was providing humanitarian aid. Australia was not responsible for the acts of individual Australian citizens. The Governor assured me that he understood our position. But the refugees did not. Johnson asked about popular views in Kupang. He replied that educated and politically aware people understood the Australian position, but that 'stupid' people and uneducated people did not, but took Australia's unwillingness to become involved, and the acts of individual Australians, as an indication of support for Fretilin.
7. The Governor stressed the concern of the Indonesian people over the events taking place in Portuguese Timor. Fretilin was communist. After Madiun and G30S,¹ Indonesia was naturally concerned over the presence in Timor of communism. Major Mota and other young Portuguese officers had engineered control by Fretilin in Portuguese Timor. Communism could spread to

¹ El Tari's references here are to two significant events in modern Indonesian history. Madiun refers to a communist uprising in Central Java in 1948. G30S refers to the *Gerakan Tiga Puluh September* (the '30 September Movement') uprising of 1965, a pro-communist putsch within the military, the failure of which sparked the power struggle between Sukarno and Soeharto and Soeharto's eventual assumption of the Presidency in March 1967.

Australia. For example, fifty agents could infiltrate Australia from Portuguese Timor and begin to subvert Australia, which could become red.

8. On the question of Johnson's going to Atambua, the Governor confirmed that there were no commercial flights. It would be 'difficult' for him to go to and be in Atambua, and also dangerous because of the attitude of the refugees.

9. The Governor agreed to assist in returning personal effects, etc. if it should prove that the five missing journalists were indeed dead.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

287 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 22 October 1975, 5.19 p.m.

O.CH281608 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

*Ref. O.JA2498, O.JA2497*¹

For Woolcott

Although the interview with Malik was a difficult one—and we are interested to note from the first paragraph of your JA.2498 that Malik apparently intended it to be difficult—we are glad that you have been able to speak to him about the Australian reaction to Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor. That reaction should be kept in the context of the last two sentences in the third paragraph of the submission quoted in our CH.279965,² which refers to the responsibilities of the political parties, including Fretilin and Portugal, for the situation which has developed in Timor.

[*matter omitted*]³

It would obviously be desirable to avoid an argument developing with the Indonesians over these points but while we appreciate that there are aspects of our policies towards Portuguese Timor which, with some justification, they may not like, we need to avoid difficulties with them which are based on lack of information on their part or distortions of fact.

3. We are concerned that Malik should have mentioned that Indonesia had firm evidence that Fretilin agents were attempting to buy arms in Darwin and Melbourne as well as Hong Kong and Macau. The Government is on public record as saying that the export of arms to Portuguese Timor would not be permitted. We should be grateful if the Indonesians would tell us what the firm evidence is that they have in mind. All aircraft leaving Darwin for Portuguese Timor are already being searched (although we think that it would be impossible for the light

¹ Documents 275 and 274.

² See note 7 to Document 266.

³ Omitted paragraphs include responses to Malik's criticisms of Australia: the Government had not 'permitted' demonstrations; it had publicly condemned Australian assistance to Fretilin forces in Timor, reports of which might be grossly exaggerated; aid was to be given to refugees in Indonesian Timor; Horta had no privileged access to the Australian Government which had adopted a policy of receiving all Timorese political leaders; Australia had criticised the Portuguese withdrawal and had given assistance to help them maintain their hold on Atauro, and to the Santos mission.

aircraft which are used between Australia and Portuguese Timor to carry quantities of arms which could be significant, given the Portuguese stocks which have fallen into Fretilin's hands).

4. We appreciate the difficulties you raised in JA.2497 and can confirm that they were considered by Ministers when they came to their decisions. In a sense, as is reflected in paragraph 5 of the submission quoted in our O.CH279965, the question is one of timing. In this connexion, we can confirm that Ministers will want to avoid expressions of disappointment about Indonesian action in Portuguese Timor as long as possible, and we think that your suggestion that (when the stage is reached that some such expression has become unavoidable) reliance should be placed on widespread media reports is a good one.

5. Our O.CH279965 and O.CH279966⁴ indicate to you how the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister are now thinking about Portuguese Timor. We leave it to you to judge how and when that thinking can be conveyed to the Indonesians. We take your points in paragraph 3 of JA.249[7]⁵ about making representations to Moerdani and Tjan.

6. We do not want you to 'press' the view that Fretilin is capable of sustaining protracted resistance against the Indonesians but merely at some stage to raise it again as a possibility which we suggest the Indonesians might take into account. It is for you to judge how and when this possibility might best be mentioned to the Indonesians. Again, timing will be all important. We should want to avoid the risk that your remarks be misinterpreted by the Indonesians as an indication of Australian support for Fretilin. We should also want to avoid a coincidence with the expressions of disappointment mentioned above. The development of the military situation in Timor will obviously affect the readiness of the Indonesians to entertain ideas about the range of[f] courses which might allow their interests in Timor to be furthered—and perhaps the present moment is not propitious. There are other similar ideas in which, depending on how the situation develops, the Indonesians may see certain advantages. For instance, it is possible that once a sizeable area of UDT–Apodeti control were established in Portuguese Timor there might be advantages in and openings for pressing forward with talks between the Timorese parties at a time when Fretilin might be expected to be susceptible to the need for an accommodation in some way with Indonesia.

7. It has been our belief, since the Prime Minister's first conversations with President Soeharto, that the Indonesians had been prepared for a reaction in Australia to Indonesian policy towards Portuguese Timor which, in a sense, would run parallel with the two or more levels on which the Indonesians themselves are conducting their policy. In other words, we have thought that the Indonesians had understood that it would not be possible for Ministers to remain silent if it became obvious that Indonesian forces were engaged in Portuguese Timor and indeed you have reported as much qu[i]te recently in JA.2432 (para 12).⁶ It might be worth taking Tjan over some of the ground covered on this point in your earlier reports.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

⁴ Document 268.

⁵ The original reads '2'. Cablegram JA2492, however, concerns an unrelated matter.

⁶ Document 262.

288 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 23 October 1975, 8.20 a.m.

O.JA2594 UNCLASSIFIED IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Missing Journalists

The following item datelined Atambua of 23 October appeared in *Antara* this morning: Francisco Lopez da Cruz, chairman of the UDT Party, said yesterday that he had accepted an Indonesian request for the search for Australian television newsmen who were reported missing in Portuguese Timor.

Quoting reports from the commandant of the UDT troops which joined in the attacks to capture Balibo town on 16 October da Cruz explained that the joint troops of UDT, APODETI, KOTA and TRABALISTA had encountered strong resistance by FRETILIN troops from a house located on the way toward the bastion of the FRETILIN forces.

After defeating the FRETILIN troops and capturing the whole town of Balibo they then found a number of corpses in the house.

Meanwhile, Thomas Gonçalves, who commanded APODETI troops in the attacks, reported that the house turned out to have been the basis of defence of FRETILIN troops.

He said that the house could be captured only when it had been seriously damaged. At least fifteen people were killed inside the house which caught fire during the attacks.

He pointed out that the corpses had been burnt so badly that it was quite difficult to make identifications. He believed, however, that several of them were white men who assisted FRETILIN troops.

Gonçalves explained that words 'AUSTRALIA' were found scribbled on the inside walls of the damaged building and the Australian flag was painted randomly on the walls.

He added, however, that he and his troops gave no attention to the scribbles since they still encountered strong resistance from the remaining FRETILIN members.¹

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

¹ Another version of the statement, in Indonesian, was published in the Indonesian language paper *Suara Karya*. On 24 October Johnson was given a photocopy of yet another version by El Tari's secretary. It included an additional final paragraph stating that the journalists 'are not of our responsibility' but were a concern of Australia, and of Portuguese and Fretilin forces, who were responsible for the journalists being there. The original of that copy was signed by Gonçalves, Jose Martins and Lopes da Cruz, and was dated Balibo, 22 October.

289 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TAYLOR AND AKOSAH

Jakarta, 23 October 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

I referred to Malik's Press Conference on 22 October in which he was reported to have answered questions about the five missing Australian journalists by saying that he was not 'a grave digger'. I said that if this were reported in Australia, it could cause great offence. Akosah said he also had been concerned about the interview. He didn't think that Malik meant to be offensive. He used Indonesian slang which could not be easily translated into English and the humour of the slang was probably not appreciated by English speakers. What he was saying, Akosah said, was that he did not know anything about the bodies because he did not bury them. I said that regardless of how the remark came across in Indonesian humour, foreign journalists would, of course, have to translate what Malik said into English and it seemed that there was no other translation for 'tukang kuburan' than 'grave digger', 'grave attendant' or 'grave worker'. In the present quite difficult state of Australia/Indonesia relations, it was important that Australian public opinion was not moved in an anti-Indonesian direction by such statements.

2. Asked about the reported statement that Lopes da Cruz had accepted an Indonesian request to search for the missing journalists, Akosah said he had no more details than were in the press. He said no answer had come to the Foreign Ministry's enquiries. He added that he had questioned Gen. Adenan closely about whether Indonesia had any information about the bodies and Adenan had said that they did not.

3. I told Akosah that Johnson had gone to Kupang with instructions to see the Governor, and, if necessary, to ask the Governor if he would forward a letter from Johnson to Lopes da Cruz asking for positive information about the bodies he was reported in *Kompas* as saying had been located at Balibo. I gave Akosah the message to the Governor (see attached)¹ and asked informally whether it would be possible for the Foreign Ministry to send the message. We did not know whether Johnson had yet delivered a letter to the Governor and if he had not, we thought it would be useful for him to have a text from us. We would have used normal communication channels but understood that they were not wholly reliable. Akosah said he would make enquiries and let me know as soon as possible. (I later spoke to Johnson on the phone. He had delivered a letter to the Governor, so Mr Blount asked Akosah if he would not take any action on the message I had left with him. When he spoke to Mr Blount, Akosah said that the message from Johnson was a good idea and should help.) Akosah said that there was considerable resistance from 'our neighbours' (BAKIN) to giving us any assistance on the question of the journalists. Foreign Affairs argued that, in terms of Indonesia's relations with Australia and with other countries in the region and of importance to them, Akosah said, they were fully aware of the political importance of the journalists.

4. I gave Akosah the details in Canberra's cables CH281199 and CH281644.²

5. I read Akosah the context of Fretilin's messages to Channels 7 and 9 about Radio Kupang reports that UDT forces had captured and killed five Communist journalists (CH281628).³

¹ Not published.

² Both of 22 October. One provided detail to assist in identification, the other listed types of information required.

³ Both channels had received messages from Amaral, reporting broadcasts from Radio Kupang and expressing sympathy. Horta had rung Channel 7 with similar reports, including the claim that the journalists had been in a 'hut' in Balibo with the Australian flag painted outside.

Akosah said that his enquiries so far suggested that Radio Kupang had not made these broadcasts. After all, it would not be in Indonesia's interests for it to do so. He said he would let me know if he got any firm information about the supposed radio broadcasts.
[matter omitted]⁴

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

290 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 23 October 1975, 1.50 p.m.

O.JA2612 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Missing Journalists

As you will know, each day the Foreign Ministry has held out hopes that we will receive news of the fate of the five Australians. Each day we are disappointed.

2. Dan spoke again to General Adenan this morning, referring to the apparently promising development reported in *Antara* (JA2594).¹ Adenan did not sound very encouraged. He merely said that the Timor Committee would be meeting today and that he would raise the subject again.

3. A source in the Foreign Ministry implied to Taylor this morning that while the Foreign Ministry argued strongly in favour of Indonesian help to us in this matter, there were influential elements in the Indonesian Government which believed that Indonesia should not be involved in any way, even in the role of messenger. (Information Minister Mashuri was reported in *Antara* on 21 October as having said in reply to a question that, while the Indonesian Government felt sympathy for the Australian journalists, 'it was not Indonesia's business because the territory fell under Portuguese sovereignty'.)

4. We suspect that a message to us from Lopez da Cruz (or anyone else from UDT/Apodeti) confirming the fate of the five Australians could be produced at the drop of a hat. The 'influential elements' in Jakarta are clearly preventing us from receiving it.

5. [Another source]² said that 'certain quarters' of the Indonesian Government felt it unwise for Indonesia to play any role at all in this matter. We covered the ground in detail with him, emphasising the need for us to be advised quickly of the fate of the five. Could not Lopez da Cruz be asked urgently to send us a cable direct (i.e. not through official Indonesian channels) or a message to the Embassy officer (Johnson) in Kupang? [The source] would take the first opportunity to raise the matter informally with the President.³

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

⁴ Omitted paragraphs deal with Taylor's response to some of the Indonesian complaints against Australia. Akosah gave Taylor a list of nine Australians who, the Indonesians claimed, were assisting Fretilin.

¹ Document 288.

² One and a half lines have been expunged here.

³ One line has been expunged here.

291 CABLEGRAM TO NEW YORK

Canberra, 23 October 1975, 6.45 p.m.

O.CH282275 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

*Ref. O.JA2462*¹

We take it that Campbell already has enough briefing for his discussion with Moerdani. It seems to us here that the main points that we need to get over to the Indonesians about United Nations involvement in Portuguese Timor are:—

- (a) We think that some sort of United Nations involvement in Portuguese Timor at some stage relatively soon is inevitable.
- (b) In these circumstances, we should like to exchange ideas with them about how the problem of Portuguese Timor might be approached in the United Nations.
- (c) There is no Australian planning to take an *initiative* in the United Nations on Portuguese Timor.

Despite the rather negative response we have met with in conversation with Foreign Ministry officials in Jakarta on point (b), there are other signs that the Indonesians may in fact have taken it on board and are moving towards some contingency planning about discussion of Portuguese Timor in the United Nations.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

292 MINUTE FROM CURTIN TO FEAKES

Canberra, 24 October 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: Australian Television Teams

Mr Starey yesterday spoke with Mr Gomes, leader of the Portuguese television team which came out of Timor several days ago after having been at Balibo:

2. Gomes and his team left the Australians at Balibo a matter of hours before the attack on the town. He tried to talk them into leaving but they said that they were war reporters and were thus going to report the war. The few FRETILIN survivors later told Gomes in Dili that they had seen the Australians in the Balibo fortress just before the fighting (after Gomes had left). They too had urged them to go, but they had decided to stay.
3. Though he has no proof, Gomes is convinced that the Australians are all dead. He finds it very difficult to believe the Indonesian/UDT/APODETI accounts of their deaths.¹

¹ 17 October. It advised that Moerdani would be in New York on 24 or 25 October, and would like to see Campbell while there. In the event Moerdani did not contact Campbell, during what was presumed to be a very brief visit.

¹ See Document 288.

4. In the first place, he cannot understand why they would have been in the house where they are reported to have been found. The Australians had decided to put signs and flags on the house as an 'act of bravado'—to make sure the Indonesians were aware that they had been in Balibo; not as a means of protection. They were in fact living in another house in a different part of the town. The house where the signs were placed was near the edge of the town where the Indonesians were expected to mount their attack (and in fact did so); it was thus where the action was expected, but it was somewhat hidden and thus a poor vantage point. Gomes would have chosen almost any other place as a press (or military) vantage point. The house was a fair distance from the fort and it was unlikely that the Australians would have headed off for the house (where they were in any event not staying)—in a dangerous area—at the last moment.
5. Gomes thus does not believe that the Australians were killed in the house where their bodies are said to have been found. He 'guesses' that the bodies were taken there after the flags and signs were found.
6. Gomes also 'wonders' why the Indonesians did not publicly report the deaths until 'five days later'.
7. (Starey did not ask Gomes whether the house was a FRETILIN strong-point, as suggested by UDT/APODETI. Gomes had visited the house and would presumably have commented to Starey if it had been a strong-point. But perhaps it was taken over by the FRETILIN soldiers after Gomes left.)²
8. Gomes has film of the house and of the Australians at Balibo. He would be willing to make this available if it is needed. He could be contacted through the Foreign Ministry in Lisbon.
9. Starey commented that Gomes is a very 'sharp' journalist, fluent in English. He was disappointed that he could not see the Minister but accepted the reasons without any fuss.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, i]

293 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TAYLOR, RODGERS AND SUNARSO

Jakarta, 24 October 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

Mr Taylor opened the conversation by referring to the various reports concerning the fate of the five missing Australian journalists in Portuguese Timor. He told Sunarso that Johnson (Third Secretary), who is currently in Kupang, had received from the Governor's office a statement issued by UDT, Apodeti and KOTA leaders. It said that while UDT, Apodeti and

² Cablegram JA2648 (24 October) reported publication (in *Berita Yudha*, a paper it described as having close ties with BAKIN) of a photograph showing 'a group of bedraggled soldiers standing outside a house with four columns enclosing an open verandah . . . A drawing of an Australian flag on the outside of the house . . . is clearly visible'. Parts of the word 'Australia' were visible above the flag and at the side of the house, which was intact, although sheets of roofing had been dislodged. It appeared there had been a fire. A caption identified Thomas Gonçalves and his father, and Lopez da Cruz. A paragraph at the end of the cable, later crossed out, notes that 'the intact condition of the house' raised questions concerning the nature of the death of the five Australians, the location of their remains and personal effects.

KOTA forces were mounting their recent attack on Balibo Fort, they had come under fire from a house. They had blown up the house and it had caught fire. Subsequently, 15 bodies had been found inside the house. Some of the bodies, the statement said, were of white men. (See JA2652.)¹

2. We referred to a photograph in *Berita Yudha* of 24 October which reportedly showed the house in question. While far from conclusive, the photograph suggested that damage to the house had not been as extensive as implied in the UDT/Apodeti/KOTA statement.

3. We made it clear to Sunarso that pressures could develop on the Australian Government which might create difficulties in our relations. Sunarso would be aware of the Ambassador's meeting with Malik in which the Ambassador had explained that if press reports of Indonesian involvement in Portuguese Timor were correct, the Australian Government would be extremely disappointed.² Elements in Australian society unfriendly to Indonesia were already active on the Timor issue. The fate of the missing journalists was an emotional issue which would further inflame these feelings. In addition the Australian Government was concerned to provide the next-of-kin with advice which would end the uncertainty they were now experiencing.

4. Taylor mentioned that the Embassy had been in close contact with the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs over the missing journalists. Although we had been told several times that an answer would soon be forthcoming, it had not eventuated. Could Sunarso help?

5. Sunarso said in reply that the Indonesians understood our concern in the matter. They would like to help if possible (later he intimated the public difficulties for the Indonesians in being seen to be too well informed). Sunarso said that the fate of the journalists was not yet clear. He said that the person who had real authority in this matter was General Benny Moerdani (who is currently out of the country). Subsequently, Sunarso said that Moerdani would have to authorise the reply that came to us on the question of the missing journalists. Sunarso, who is himself travelling abroad, would meet Moerdani in Tokyo on 29 October and would arrange to pass any available information on to us.

6. Taylor said that we hoped that a reply might be had before then. Moerdani had been out of the country for some time. Surely someone else could authorise a reply? Sunarso repeated that the final authority in the matter lay with Moerdani.

7. Sunarso volunteered that if UDT/Apodeti had been accompanied by Indonesian forces during the assault on Balibo (which he said they had been), then there was no likelihood that the journalists had been captured and then killed. If they had been killed, it would have been during the battle. (He mentioned that the Indonesians had recoilless rifles and these may well have been used during the attack on the house.)

8. Taylor re-emphasised our anxiety to obtain hard information on the fate of the journalists. If they were dead, we would wish to recover what personal effects we could and we would want to satisfy Australian legal requirements as to the nature of death and so forth. We would also, of course, want to satisfy the wishes of the next-of-kin concerning the remains. Sunarso replied that he understood this.

9. In reply to a question as to whether it would help the investigation if Johnson went to Atambua, Sunarso said that Atambua was a 'closed' area.

10. Taylor then asked Sunarso about the situation on the ground in Portuguese Timor. Had Fretilin proved stronger than the Indonesians had anticipated? Sunarso said that Fretilin's

¹ Cablegram JA2652 (24 October) reported a telephone conversation in which Johnson provided the text of the statement he had been given (see note 1 to Document 288). The Embassy in Jakarta commented that the final paragraph of the statement was 'a clear indication . . . that UDT/Apodeti/KOTA are not prepared to co-operate'.

² See Document 275.

strength had come as something of a surprise. But he said that he did not at this stage have a lot of information about the situation on the ground.

11. On the question of outside assistance for Fretilin, Taylor drew Sunarso's attention to the difficulties for us which reports about Australian assistance for Fretilin (such as the recent report from Macao which was not true as far as we knew) might pose. Sunarso said that he was well aware of the difference between the Australian Government's attitude towards Portuguese Timor and that of certain individuals and groups in Australia.

12. Taylor asked about the Indonesian position in regard to talks. Sunarso indicated that there were two streams of thinking in the Indonesian position. On the one hand, if the talks went ahead next month, it was the Indonesian intention that anti-Fretilin forces would control the area bounded by Balibo/Maliana and Bobonaro prior to the talks. This area of control by the anti-Fretilin forces would be used to demonstrate that Fretilin was not in complete control of Portuguese Timor. The Indonesians would hope for a return to a Macao-style decolonisation procedure which would eventually lead to a referendum, the result of which Indonesia would 'influence'.

13. On the other hand, if the talks did not eventuate or did not lead to a satisfactory decolonisation process, Indonesia would have to increase its level of activity on the ground. It would do this. Indonesia had made a commitment and would stick to it. We pointed out that the Australian Government could not condone Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor. We referred to the Ambassador's representations to Malik that if Australian press reports about Indonesian military involvement in Portuguese Timor were correct then the Australian Government would be very disappointed. Taylor told Sunarso that Australia hoped very much that talks between the interested parties on the future of Portuguese Timor would soon eventuate.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

294 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN FERNANDEZ, HER TASNING AND MATIAS

Canberra, 24 October 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

At the Minister's United Nations' Day reception, the Portuguese Ambassador spoke to me about the conversation we had had earlier in the day about support from Darwin for the Portuguese corvette *Afonso Cerqueira*, when we were joined by the Indonesian Ambassador.

2. The Portuguese Ambassador told the Indonesian Ambassador that we had been talking about the difficulties of the Governor of Timor and of the possibility that he might pack up and go. The Indonesian Ambassador said that Indonesia hoped that the Governor of Timor would remain at Atauro until the UDT had control of Dili. There was then some desultory conversation about whether Fretilin would be able to continue guerrilla action from the mountains around Maubisse after UDT had captured Dili. The Portuguese Ambassador then left.

3. I explained to the Indonesian Ambassador that I had been talking to the Portuguese Ambassador about our refusal to provide clearance for the *Afonso Cerqueira* to visit Darwin

from 26 to 29 October because of 'Swift Swing'¹ and that the earliest that we could contemplate a visit to Darwin by the Portuguese corvette was 4 November and this would be subject to decision by the Minister for Defence. I also expressed our view that the Portuguese corvette should not rely exclusively on Darwin for re-supply but should also use other ports. I added, however, that the Portuguese argued that other ports were too far away and that there was a strong risk that the Governor would pack up and leave Atauro if re-supply at Darwin was denied. I asked about the comment which the Indonesian Ambassador had made to the Portuguese Ambassador of the importance of the Portuguese Governor remaining at Atauro from the Indonesian point of view. The Indonesian Ambassador said that this was so, because, while the Portuguese Governor remained the sovereignty of Portuguese Timor rested clearly with Portugal, and that once he departed Fretilin might be able to claim some international status.

4. I pointed out that, if this was the Indonesian position, it might be important to them that we continue to provide re-supply for the *Afonso Cerqueira* at Darwin. We had been concerned, however, about continuing to provide this re-supply because of Indonesian suspicions. The Indonesian Ambassador said that he would send a cable to Jakarta immediately about this and would be in touch with us further. In the meantime, he hoped we would maintain our present position on the visit of the *Afonso Cerqueira*.²

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxxv]

295 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 24 October 1975

O.UN4145 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

United Nations: Portuguese Timor

Sani met with other ASEAN delegations, Australia (myself and Campbell) New Zealand, Fiji and Japan at ambassadorial level on 24 October to brief them on the Indonesian position on Timor. He informed the meeting that he would be participating in the talks in Rome on 1 and 2 November then return to Jakarta for consultations and possibly take an on-the-spot look at Timor.

2. Sani said that while the immediate objective was to keep Timor a regional question and avoid premature discussion in the UN he wanted the ASEAN-plus group to be well informed with a view to regional participation in the eventual United Nations consideration of the Timor problem in the Fourth Committee with perhaps participation on a wider basis thereafter. He stressed that his approach was informal only and he proposed to follow-up on his return from Jakarta subject to any instructions from the Indonesian Government on regional participation

¹ A combined naval and air exercise.

² This report was cabled to Jakarta. Taylor informed Tjan, who confirmed that Indonesia did not want too much assistance given to the Portuguese, but agreed there were good arguments for giving sufficient assistance to keep them on Atauro. Her Tasning later reported advice that Jakarta was indifferent as to whether the Governor remained on Atauro or not, and did not wish to offer advice on use of Australian facilities by the *Afonso Cerqueira* (Cablegram CH283994, 29 October). The Foreign Ministry subsequently advised the Embassy in Jakarta that 'modest use of Darwin' in order to retain Portuguese presence would not cause difficulties with Indonesia, provided Portuguese ships or planes were not assisting Fretilin (Cablegram JA2809, 31 October).

which he might by then have received. The group reacted sympathetically but cautiously; several suggestions were made that it should be put to the Portuguese in Rome that there was a regional interest amongst delegations concerned in New York and that they would look to Portugal to discharge its responsibilities in relation to Timor, seeking any necessary help in restoring order from countries in the region and not simply putting the problem in the lap of the U.N.

3. Sani made some persistent but friendly digs at Australia over our reluctance to become involved in the problem, but indicated nevertheless that Australia had been following the situation very closely with Indonesia and Portugal. I expressed our hope that Indonesia and Portugal would succeed in working out in Rome a plan for restoration of order, and resumption of decolonisation with all the parties involved. I agreed with the objective of confining the problem to the region as long as possible.

[*matter omitted*]

HARRY

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

296 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 25 October 1975, 4.20 p.m.

O.JA2657 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor—Australian Journalists

I saw General Adenan this morning, 25 October. I said that I was surprised to find on my return from a two day visit to Bandung that we still had received no hard information on the fate of the journalists.

2. Adenan said that the Indonesians had still received no message from UDT or Apodeti via Kupang in response to Indonesian enquiries.

3. I said that while we appreciated Indonesia's point that Balibo was in Portuguese Timor the action in which the journalists were believed to have been killed had been mounted by UDT and Apodeti forces, the fact remained that Indonesia had contacts with these forces and I would have thought it was in Indonesia's own interests to use its good offices to press them for any early response. We all had obligations to the next of kin. I also said that any documents or personal effects which might have been found in Balibo could, through Indonesia's good offices be given to Mr Johnson in Kupang or sent to Jakarta. Adenan said that they had this in mind also.

4. Adenan said that he very much regretted the delay in obtaining an answer for us. He was pressing for one and hoped that we would have some definite information 'very shortly'.

5. Adenan asked whether we had asked the Portuguese Government about the fate of the journalists since they were legally in Portuguese territory. In reply I said that I would assume that we had made approaches to the Portuguese authorities but, as he would know, this would be a useless formality. The only way in which we could obtain positive information was from UDT and/or Apodeti through Indonesia's good offices.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

297 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 25 October 1975, 5.40 p.m.

O.JA2659 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Missing Journalists

Since I spoke to Adenan Taylor has spoken again to Colonel Sunarso, Liaison Officer in BAKIN.

2. Sunarso has just confirmed to Taylor that the five missing journalists died in the house in Balibo. He said the house had been hit by mortar fire. Apparently there had been a sizeable amount of kerosene in the house because the mortar caused considerable fire which burned the bodies.

3. Asked about positive identification Sunarso said he had seen (in Jakarta) two passports (Shackleton's and Rennie's) and two notebooks which were in good condition. He said these items had apparently been in a container blown clear of the house when the mortar exploded. We asked for these and any other items belonging to the five that might exist. If they were in Jakarta they could be given to us, if in Timor to Johnson. Taylor stressed that we wanted to ensure that the bodies of the deceased were dealt with in accordance with the wishes of the next-of-kin. Sunarso said he would check on these points.

4. Sunarso gave us photocopies of one handwritten page from a reporter's notebook and two handwritten pages from a letter dated 15 October. From its contents it seems that the letter was written by one of the Channel Nine men. We shall send by Monday's bag unless you want us to cable the texts. One extract (undated) suggests that the journalists remained in Balibo after FRETILIN forces had 'abandoned the town', the letter dated 15th October refers to having 'suffered a few heavy bombardments . . . mainly mortars which quite honestly frighten . . . me'. This does raise the question of why they remained.

5. Sunarso said it was his personal opinion that the delay in confirming to us the journalists' deaths resulted from a lack of coordination within the Indonesian Government. (But see JA2612.¹)

6. Sunarso stressed that his advice on the deaths was not a formal official response to our requests. General Yoga, Head of BAKIN, or Foreign Minister Malik would inform me officially in the next few days. Taylor stressed the importance we placed on getting clear official confirmation of the deaths as soon as possible.

7. Sunarso's advice raises the problem of what you can now tell the next-of-kin. We discussed this with him. He said he would not want anything you said to be linked with the Indonesian Government or with this Embassy (which would imply that the Indonesian Government was involved). You might consider saying, however, that new information you have received suggests that all five are dead and that you expect to be able to confirm this officially soon. We will not mention this to enquirers here until you have done so and we can refer to what you say.

8. I shall, of course, raise the matter of personal effects and the remains of the bodies, if any at this stage, when I am officially informed and we shall continue to follow up with Sunarso and other contacts.

9. Taylor and I spoke to Johnson in Kupang again this morning. He said it seems his movements have been restricted to the town of Kupang.

¹ Document 290.

10. Since drafting the above Sunarso has rung to say that Yoga will see the Ambassador on Monday morning.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

298 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN JOHNSON AND LEDE

Kupang, 25 October 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: Missing Journalists

Mr Johnson spoke with Mr Lede, the Governor's assistant, on 25 October 1975. He opened the conversation with the words, 'Didn't you go home yesterday?' Mr Lede then said that on Radio Australia's Indonesian news broadcast the previous night, he had heard a report about the house in which the bodies had been found. A picture of the house with the writing 'Australia' on the wall, he said, had been published in *Angkatan Bersenjata*. Lede asked if this did not mean that Mr Johnson could return.

2. Mr Johnson pointed out that no reply had yet been received from UDT/Apodeti. A reply should not be long in coming as the letter from Balibo dated 22 October had arrived here on 23 October.¹ Mr Lede asked whether the report did not mean that these were the missing journalists. Mr Johnson replied that the position was still the same: we were not yet sure.

3. In any case, the matter would be by no means settled if it should be established that the bodies of the missing journalists are in Balibo. There would then be a consular aspect to the case, as there had been for example following the Pan Am crash in Bali last year. Admittedly Balibo was not in Indonesian territory, but there was certainly no way of reaching it from Portuguese Timor.

4. Whereas he affirmed that Mr Johnson might stay in Kupang if he wished, Mr Lede asked him as he had the day before, to take up the question of returning to Jakarta when he telephoned that morning. Mr Johnson undertook to do so, but pointed out that he had been sent there by the Australian Government for a particular purpose and that he must attempt to complete this task. Lede said that he understood this, but repeated an earlier assurance that, if Mr Johnson did return, the Governor's office would most certainly forward any information or material to the Embassy. Mr Johnson thanked him but made the point that such transmission would as he himself knew take some time as it would probably be by post (he had earlier expressed unwillingness to take the responsibility for telex at our expense because of possible corruption of the text), whereas Mr Johnson could transmit any information quickly by telephone.²

[matter omitted]³

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

¹ See note 1 to Document 288.

² In Cablegram CH283681 (28 October), Canberra requested a further approach to the Indonesians for permission for Johnson to travel to the border to interview UDT/Apodeti about the fate of the journalists. Marginal notes on the Jakarta copy suggest Johnson make the request to El Tari, with a view to collecting personal effects as well as conducting the interviews.

³ Omitted paragraphs concern Lede's refusal to allow Johnson to travel to a swimming pool 10 km outside the city.

299 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 27 October 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Sensitive Information from the Indonesians

In discussion with the Secretary and me you raised the question whether it was in Australia's interests that the Embassy in Jakarta should continue to receive from the Indonesians (in particular Mr Harry Tjan and General Moerdani) the very sensitive information we are receiving from them about Indonesian plans for military involvement in Portuguese Timor. You feared that by giving this information to us the Indonesians put the Government in a position of conniving with them in their military intervention in the territory. Your fear is certainly well founded, although the Indonesians may in part also have it in mind that, by providing us with full information about their intentions, they are reducing the risk that our reactions to their policies in Portuguese Timor might be based on misunderstandings.

2. We do not think that we should at this stage discourage the flow of the information we are receiving through the Embassy in Jakarta from Tjan and Moerdani. Our reasons are as follows:—

- (a) The flow of information to us has been going on for months and to stop it now would not substantially reduce the impact of any charges against the Government that it was conniving with the Indonesians. Furthermore we are on record as warning the Indonesians against a military solution to the problem of Portuguese Timor. (A list of occasions when we have spoken to the Indonesians against military intervention in Portuguese Timor has been prepared along with a list of relevant public statements.) We think that, if the Government were charged with conniving with the Indonesians, these warnings could be used to good effect to rebut the charge.
- (b) The information we are receiving from Tjan and Moerdani is invaluable. It very often gives us an insight into Indonesian thinking *before* decisions are made and enables us to judge the strength with which the Indonesians hold their views.¹
- (c) Contacts with Tjan and Moerdani are not one-way. They give us the opportunity to influence Indonesian thinking before Indonesian positions have hardened. They also enable us to keep Tjan and Moerdani informed of developments in Australian thinking in an informal and intimate way which it is not altogether possible to do with the Foreign Ministry—and the Foreign Ministry, in any event, is much less influential in the formulation of Indonesian policy on Portuguese Timor than are Tjan and Moerdani.
- (d) For us to take our distance from Tjan and Moerdani now, a move which would be necessary if we wished to cut off or reduce the flow of information from them, might be misinterpreted by the Indonesians as indicating that we wished to change the relationship the Australian Government has hitherto pursued with Indonesia. There are a number of rubs and strains in that relationship arising out of Portuguese Timor. We think that if possible we should avoid adding to them.
- (e) Our relations with Tjan and Moerdani (and other important Indonesian sources with whom our relations would be affected if we drew away from Tjan and Moerdani) go beyond Portuguese Timor matters. There may be other areas of the Australian–Indonesian relationship which could become problems now or later. We should want to maintain close relations with Tjan and Moerdani for important reasons not connected with Timor.

¹ Eight lines have been expunged here.

3. I *recommend*, therefore, that you agree that we should not take steps at this stage to reduce the flow of information to us from Moerdani and Tjan; but we shall keep the matter under review.²

G. B. FEAKES
Acting Deputy Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii]

300 LETTER FROM DA CRUZ TO JOHNSON

Batugade, 27 October 1975

Further to my previous letter and in response to your last letter dated also October 23, 1975 I do have the honour to add some more considerations to those already stated as far [as] the searching for Australian citizens is concerned.

I do have concentrated some more details, not so much positive, related to the village of Balibo after the fights erupted over there. As trying to perform some eventual help to you here is the result of our investigations.

1. On the wall of one house in Balibó has been painted by hand the following inscription:
First, the word AUSTRALIA
Below, a rough drawing of the Australian flag
Very close to these, was written in Portuguese:
‘[Faleng tango tili]¹ Falentil está sempre ao lado do povo maubere’
2. I do question myself whether the people of that house were journalists or not. This is a point to clarify having the inscriptions in mind.
3. According to the words written in Portuguese ‘[Faleng tango tili] Falentil está sempre ao lado do povo maubere’ Fretilin must be responsible for any Australian citizen present at Balibó at the time.
4. Also it must be questioned the real meaning of those inscriptions as they may mean a form of publicity to be demanded to Fretilin, as this is traditionally a political tactic of the leftist groups.
5. Meanwhile, I inform you that UDT and APODETI have been requested by the Government of Jakarta to find out any possible documents of the Australians. If there are any the same will be sent directly to the same government.
6. For all the regrettable situation that our territory is facing this moment we are now expecting that the Australian Government take the necessary steps to stop Australian citizens to come and fight side by side with Fretilin and fight and press the Timorese people.

For the opportunity this is all I can supply you as information to your searching.²

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

² Willesee noted his agreement.

¹ The words in square brackets have been added from a copy repeated in Cablegram JA2828 on 3 November. In Cablegram JA2838 of the same date the words were translated ‘roughly’ as ‘Volunteers are always siding with the people of Maubere (Fretilin Timor)’. It added that the first words (in square brackets) were Tetum, the remainder Portuguese, and that Fretilin frequently used the word ‘Maubere’ to refer to Timor.

² Johnson did not receive the letter until 3 November. See note 1 to Document 319.

301 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 28 October 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

In a discussion with Mr Feakes on 23 October you expressed the view that the time was approaching when you might feel obliged to express in the Senate the Government's 'extreme disappointment' about Indonesian military action in Portuguese Timor. In the face of mounting public evidence of Indonesian involvement, you felt that Australian silence, if it were maintained, could be construed as complicity in what Indonesia is doing.

2. As you know, the Department itself has been preparing the ground for a possible Government statement critical of Indonesian actions. However, in my submission to you on this subject on 17 October,¹ I noted that there were still some acute difficulties. To the extent, for example, that Indonesia continued to deny the involvement of its troops it would be the Australian Government that would be publicly disputing Indonesia's claims. Even so, we agreed that it would not be possible to remain silent beyond a certain point.

3. The question is whether that point has yet arrived. You will want to decide the answer mainly in terms of developments in Australian domestic opinion. It is also relevant, however, that the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mr Adam Malik, answering questions from Indonesian reporters in Jakarta on 23 October, is reported in Australian newspapers to have confirmed that Indonesia is giving military training to UDT and APODETI forces. The admission could both increase the pressure for an Australian statement of opposition to Indonesian military involvement and ease the difficulties in making such a statement since it would not now take place in the context of Indonesian denials of all involvement. Nevertheless, I feel that Malik's reported remarks provide very uncertain grounds on which to base a statement of our own. His confirmation of military training is reported to have been a 'nodding of the head' in answer to questioning 'on the run'; he also went on to deny that Indonesian troops or military advisers had been sent into Portuguese Timor or that Indonesian arms had been supplied to UDT-APODETI forces. The Embassy in Jakarta states: 'We do not think that it can be said that Malik has now "admitted a degree of Indonesian military involvement in Portuguese Timor"... the Indonesians would deny any such claim and it would in any case be unfair to attribute the status of an "admission" to the situation which occurred.'²

4. My more general concern is that it may not be the most propitious timing to be criticising Indonesia when publicly Indonesia has reverted to its earlier policy of supporting talks between the Portuguese and the three Timorese political parties and when Mr Malik has announced his agreement to meet for talks with his Portuguese counterpart probably in Rome next week. I also have in mind that our relations with Indonesia are under enough strain as it is from the actions of non-government bodies in Australia, the latest example of which is the 'black ban' organized by the Seamen's Union on Indonesian shipping. Thus far, at least, the Indonesian Government has sought to prevent the problems which have arisen spilling over into governmental relations. But it is also clear that some influential Indonesians are unconvinced of the distinction to be drawn between the actions and policies of the Australian Government and those of groups which are agitating against Indonesia. We do not know quite what the

¹ Document 266.

² Cablegram JA2692 (27 October).

Indonesian reaction will be but there might be an intense one if and when the Australian Government adopts a public stand openly critical of Indonesia. We do not know what further damage to our relations with Indonesia would ensue. Our feeling is that it would be rather more serious than we would have thought a few months ago.

5. There are several other considerations to be borne in mind:

- (a) Australia would be the first among Indonesia's neighbours to criticize her over Timor; and none of the ASEAN countries shares our views.
- (b) The regional environment is rather an unhappy one for us at the moment. Apart from stresses and strains in our relationship with Indonesia over Portuguese Timor, we are having difficulties with Malaysia over students and with the Philippines (and Singapore) over textiles. Relations with the Singapore Government are not very good at the best of times. We should need to hope that the Chinese and the Vietnamese do not pick up and elaborate upon any statement we make critical of Indonesia over Timor.
- (c) The Portuguese may not welcome a critical statement from us just before they enter into talks with the Indonesians. The Portuguese Government is under some pressure over Timor from its extreme left-wing opponents. They have so far avoided any critical reference to Indonesian military involvement in Portuguese Timor.

6. The foregoing is not meant to reverse previous advice that we might be approaching a point where some statement critical of Indonesia will be necessary. Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor, however, has proceeded at a slower pace than had been foreshadowed when drafting our earlier submission. As a result, domestic criticism (and not withstanding the resolution adopted at the weekend by the ALP State Conference) is still relatively mild. We need to take care that a critical statement from the Government now may not increase anti-Indonesian feeling and reactions among interested groups in Australia, giving rise to pressure for further critical statements. In other words, we may now be at the top of a slippery slope. Our aim must still be to *contain* damage to our relations with Indonesia.

7. Another point is that if and when a statement is made I should hope that it would not be confined to criticism of Indonesian actions. At least as much blame for the present situation rests with Portugal, which has throughout, failed to accept its responsibilities in Portuguese Timor. Even more responsibility can be attached to the Timorese political parties whose immaturity and self-serving actions brought about a collapse of the decolonization process in the first place. I should think that any balanced statement on developments in Portuguese Timor should include a review of how that collapse came about.

8. The attached notes³ indicate what I would have in mind if you decide to express a view critical of Indonesian military involvement in Portuguese Timor. In view of the importance to our relations with Indonesia of what is proposed, I suggest that we should give Mr Woolcott the opportunity to comment. There may also be advantage in his letting the Indonesians know in advance of what you have in mind to say.

ALAN RENOUF

Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii]

³ Not published.

302 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 28 October 1975, 5.25 p.m.

O.JA2727 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor—Australian Journalists

After considerable pressure I was able to see General Yoga, Head of BAKIN, late this morning 28 October. Rodgers accompanied me. I was with him for a little over an hour. He was evasive and the meeting was pretty unhelpful as you will see.

2. In response to Yoga's rhetorical question 'What brings you here', I emphasised that the Australian Government had a pressing need for authoritative confirmation of the deaths of the journalists, for information about methods of identification and for assistance in retrieving any remains and personal effects. I passed on to Yoga the contents of your cable O.CH283038¹ drawing his attention to the fact that the families of two of the journalists would like the bodies returned to Australia if possible.

3. Yoga's initial response was to read out to me the recent statement by UDT/Apodeti and Kota leaders which Johnson was given in Kupang on 24 October (O.JA2652).² He implied that the Indonesians had no information additional to this. I said that this was quite unsatisfactory.

4. I reiterated our pressing need for authoritative information and mentioned to Yoga that Col. Sunarso (Foreign Intelligence Liaison in BAKIN) had spoken to Taylor on 26 October. Yoga stressed that the situation was not as easy as it might seem. He emphasised the communication difficulties in the Balibo area and said that contact between the Indonesians and UDT/Apodeti/Kota was not easy. There was also fighting in the Balibo area. Yoga asked 'how can we get an authoritative report'? He said that while it could be presumed that there were passports/papers which might be retrievable, there could be real problems with personal effects. In all likelihood these would probably have been stolen. One had to remember that many of the local population were 'half savages'.

5. I said that we needed to be frank with each other. He knew that I knew Indonesia had close and regular contact with UDT and Apodeti. We did not want to emphasise this publicly but we did want Indonesia to use these contacts so that the Australian Government could say what it must be able to say publicly without further delay.

6. I added that it seemed to be in Indonesia's interest that the matter be cleared up as quickly as possible. The loss of the journalists had coincided with media reports in Australia of direct Indonesian involvement in the fighting in East Timor. Sections of the media in Australia might interpret the situation to Indonesia's disadvantage. Yoga contested that it was in Indonesia's interest to do so. Balibo was not in Indonesian territory. He also drew attention to the Minister's reply on 22 October to a question from Senator Poyser³ in which the Minister had referred to the dangers of travelling to Portuguese Timor.

7. When pressed further Yoga said that he felt the reporters were positively dead as the house in which they were located had come under a mortar barrage and had been a Fretilin command post. He also said that Indonesia would do what it could to help. This was the only

¹ 27 October. It reported suggestions that Johnson might return to Melbourne to tell next-of-kin whatever he could, and that some were considering travelling to Jakarta. While discouraging these suggestions as unlikely to be helpful, the Department stressed the need for fullest information possible on the condition of the remains, personal effects, and methods and reliability of identification.

² See note 1 to Document 293 and Document 288.

³ ALP, Victoria.

promise he could make. I replied that we were assuming that the men had been killed and that our main concern now was to establish the facts, to obtain positive identification and to carry out the wishes of the next-of-kin as regards disposal of the remains and the return of any personal effects.

8. Subsequently I raised the question of a possible visit by Johnson to Atambua or even to Balibo to try to clear the matter up. Yoga agreed that a visit to Atambua might yet be of use. However Balibo would be more difficult as Johnson would need the protection of Indonesian troops near the border and UDT/Apodeti/Kota forces in Portuguese Timor. At this stage Yoga did say that the best solution would be for the remains to be taken to Atambua if this could be arranged. (This was the most positive indication from Yoga that the Indonesians might put pressure on UDT to assist in bringing the remains to Atambua.)

9. Yoga was evasive about the question of the notebooks and the two passports which we have been told are in Indonesian possession (O.JA2659).⁴ He said that he was 'not sure' whether the passports were in Jakarta. He said he would need to check with HANKAM. I said we had been told they were here. He repeated he would have to check. I said that one of the extracts from the notebooks which had been passed to us by Col. Sunarso suggested that the five journalists had stayed in Balibo after Fretilin had withdrawn. This was certainly foolish but also it might be seen to be inconsistent with the suggestion that the journalists had been killed during a battle at Balibo between Fretilin and the forces of UDT/Apodeti and Kota. Yoga would not be drawn on this.

10. On the question of possible press speculation in Australia about how the journalists might have been killed, in view of what appeared to be relatively minor damage to the house as indicated in a photograph of the house published by the Indonesian press, Yoga replied that those who doubted this should stand inside a similar style of house when mortars came through the roof. He volunteered that if there was speculation that the journalists had been captured and killed then this speculation was quite wrong. It was based only on Fretilin propaganda. The Indonesian Government and Army were not on trial. It was trying to help us establish the facts through its good offices with UDT and this was not simple.

Comment

11. As you know Dan, Taylor, Johnson and I have now made numerous approaches to the Indonesians at different levels, without much success. It is clear that the Indonesians on the one hand are very sensitive to accusations in Australia of Indonesian involvement in the killings and about their undoubted influence over and support for UDT and Apodeti.

12. Also they are not disposed to be helpful because of what they believe to be a widespread degree of support for Fretilin in the Australian media.

13. In addition, the Javanese have like the Chinese that mixture of sensitivity, pride, arrogance and inwards lookingness which can lead to a retreat into their shells and to avoid facing or to ignore the attitude of another country if it suits them to do so. I suspect they may have reached this point in relation to the journalist issue and that the truth of this incident may never be established. They also place a lesser value on human life than we do and may believe, wrongly, that the issue will die down. We are continuing to try to disabuse them of this.

14. I am at a loss to know what to suggest in addition to keeping the pressure on Indonesians here (which could become counter productive) for the information we want and, possibly, asking Johnson or Rodgers to go to Balibo itself via the Indonesian border. This however

⁴ Document 297.

raises its own difficulties, e.g. the possibility of the Fretilin counterattack on Balibo, the fact that UDT might not agree to help, that Indonesian agreement and assistance would be required, and, presumably, the formal need to obtain Portuguese approval.⁵

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

303 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN FEAKES, JOSEPH, CURTIN AND HORTA

Canberra, 28 October 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

Mr Horta said that he was aware that Portuguese Timor would find it difficult to attract attention during the Australian 'political crisis'. However 'Australia' knew that Indonesia had intervened in Portuguese Timor. He thanked the Department of Foreign Affairs for its 'diplomatic efforts' and said that Australia had done 'far more than Portugal'. The Portuguese television team had evidence of Indonesian intervention on film. This would be shown in Europe, and perhaps also Australia.

2. Fretilin had done its best to talk to Indonesia and was prepared to send a delegation to find out 'what they want of us'. Fretilin was not a threat to Indonesia and was not a 'communist' organisation. Fretilin was in fact a 'nationalist movement' and the 'moderate wing' was in full control. Indonesia did not want to come to any understanding with Fretilin. Rather it wanted the situation to 'continue to deteriorate'.

[matter omitted]

5. Fretilin had responded to the Portuguese call for talks. There had, however, been no Portuguese reply to the Fretilin message of acceptance. *Mr Feakes* asked whether Fretilin would attend talks which UDT and Apodeti also attended. *Mr Horta* said it would be up to

⁵ On 29 October the Embassy instructed Johnson to make another approach to El Tari for permission to visit Atambua, while the Embassy itself approached BAKIN and the Foreign Ministry. Cablegram JA2765 (30 October) noted that Willesee had referred in the Senate on 29 October to the possibility of Johnson trying to get to Balibo. Woolcott had advised him by telephone not to seek to cross the border unless instructed by the Embassy and confident of his personal safety. The Embassy requested further advice. Canberra replied (Cablegram CH284860, 31 October) that Willesee very much hoped the Indonesians would agree to fly Australian Embassy officers to Atambua, having noted the difficulties of getting to Balibo, as described in this paragraph. The ideal solution would be for remains and personal effects to be brought to Atambua. It suggested that Rodgers might join Johnson in Kupang, 'in view of the delicacy of this operation', since Rodgers knew the area 'and we were pleased with the reports he prepared following his earlier visit'. The Embassy replied (Cablegram JA2810, 31 October) that consideration had already been given to sending Rodgers to Kupang, but there was no point in having both Rodgers and Johnson 'sitting in Kupang', especially as staff in the Embassy were 'pretty stretched'. It was hoped the Indonesians would agree to supply a plane, preferably from Jakarta; if there were prospects of achieving something, Rodgers might join Johnson the following week. Woolcott added, however, that Johnson was the best Indonesian speaker in the Mission, had recent consular experience and was handling the situation very well. He had been sent on the basis of his ability to handle the job, not because of his rank. The delays and difficulties he was experiencing had not been anticipated when the decision had been made.

Portugal to talk to UDT and Apodeti. When the Portuguese had worked out an 'agreement' with UDT and Apodeti, Fretilin would talk to them. However, Portugal was doing nothing to promote talks.

6. *Mr Feakes* said that the Australian Government would like all three parties to take part in talks and work towards a return to something like the Macao Agreement. *Mr Horta* said this could happen if Indonesia kept out. 'Some kind of Macao-style agreement might then be possible'. The 'superiority' of Fretilin would have to be recognised, but the other parties would be permitted to function. The old UDT leaders had no 'credibility'.

[matter omitted]

12. *Mr Feakes* asked how Fretilin saw the future. *Mr Horta* said that everything depended on Indonesia which would eventually take over through a 'full' military operation. Fretilin would eventually run out of ammunition and Indonesia would move in. It might take only two to four weeks, but Fretilin might hold out until the end of the year. The wet season would not greatly hold up the Indonesian advance.

13. Fretilin would 'go to the mountains' when the Indonesian advance became unstoppable. Then things would get serious and the fighting would go on 'for years'. Moreover, Indonesia having failed to respect East Timor's sovereignty, Fretilin would not feel obliged to respect Indonesia's sovereignty. Fretilin would organise the Indonesian Timorese against the Indonesian Government. There had already been a minor rebellion in the Lakmanas region where some Indonesian Timorese had joined Portuguese Timorese refugees in expressing their displeasure with the Indonesian authorities.

14. *Mr Horta* said that Fretilin would be prepared to sign a military agreement with Indonesia allowing Indonesia to patrol the land and sea boundary of an independent East Timor.

15. *Mr Feakes* said that the Australian Government hoped for a political solution. Could Fretilin drop its reservations about talking to UDT and Apodeti—a roundtable discussion, involving the three parties and Portugal and perhaps also Indonesia? *Mr Horta* said that Indonesia had made it clear that it would not talk to Fretilin. *Mr Feakes* noted that this was in relation to bilateral (Indonesia/Fretilin) talks proposed by Fretilin.

16. *Mr Horta* said that the 'real UDT' was in Dili. It was against 'integration'. What would Indonesia's reaction be to the 'real UDT' taking part in talks? *Mr Feakes* said that the Indonesian Government would expect the UDT group now in the border area to take part in talks. *Mr Horta* again suggested that there was doubt as to the identity of the UDT party. The UDT people based on Portuguese (rather than Indonesian) Timor should be accepted; they remained loyal to the UDT platform of independence.

[matter omitted]

21. *Mr Joseph* asked whether Fretilin would be prepared to allow the Portuguese administration to be re-installed. *Mr Horta* said that there was 'no way' Fretilin would give up all it had won. Would UDT have done this if it had come out on top? *Mr Feakes* said that if Fretilin did want talks to succeed it would have to make some concessions. *Mr Horta* replied that there would be a Portuguese High Commissioner who would be the titular commander of the armed forces. But the Timorese army would remain under arms and the fact would be that it would be a pro-Fretilin army. *Mr Joseph* said that the army had been politically neutral before August 1975; now it was not. How could a Portuguese decolonisation program operate with a Fretilin army exercising actual control of the territory? *Mr Horta* simply repeated that the army was 'ninety-nine percent pro-Fretilin'. *Mr Curtin* asked why the army had taken two weeks to react against UDT in August. *Mr Horta* said that it had simply obeyed the orders of

the Governor. The Central Committee of Fretilin had not called on the army to act until Lt Col Gouveia had prepared 300 men for an assault on Fretilin in Aileu.

22. *Mr Joseph* said that UDT seemed to have been a little surprised by the extent of its success after 10 August. The situation could perhaps have been restored by the Governor. Why had he left for Atauro? *Mr Horta* said that the Governor had made a mistake in not asking the army to restore order immediately.

23. *Mr Joseph* said it was unlikely that Indonesia would be able to accept a solution based on a Portuguese High Commissioner and a Fretilin army. What was Fretilin prepared to give up? *Mr Horta* asked whether Fretilin was expected to acquiesce in a return to a '1974 situation' with Indonesia free to intervene as it chose. *Mr Joseph* suggested that this had not amounted to very much interference.

24. *Mr Joseph* asked whether *Mr Horta* wished to comment on the deaths of the five Australian journalists. *Mr Horta* said he had been with the Australians in Balibo on 11 October, just before the fighting broke out. They had been staying in a house 'opposite' the house in which their bodies had allegedly been found. This latter house had been used for the storage of fuel. It was not the sort of place the Australians would have sought refuge in. *Mr Curtin* asked about the distance between the two houses. *Mr Horta* said it was about 100 metres.

25. *Mr Horta* said he believed the journalists had been shot. He said that Radio Kupang had announced that the Australians had been taught a lesson because they were 'communists'. Australia was said to have been trying to destroy Portuguese Timor, Papua, the Australian aborigines, etc. The broadcasts had been repeated many times.¹

[matter omitted]

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

¹ In accordance with Government policy of receiving Timorese leaders, Willesee saw Horta, who also met Peacock and Matias. Her Tasning had been instructed not to see him, but was informed of his calls on Willesee and DFA (Cablegram CH283994, 29 October).

304 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Dar es Salaam, 28 October 1975

O.DS1444 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Timor

In a half-hour conversation this morning, President Nyerere informed me that a Fretilin delegation yesterday had talked to him along the lines on which Vieira had spoken to me earlier (O.DS1437¹): that Machel² had told him Tanzania accepted Fretilin's position: and that he understood that Fretilin wanted the Tanzanians to persuade the Portuguese to recognise Fretilin as the Government of Timor.

2. Nyerere had first indicated that he saw no reason not to accept Fretilin's argument but after hearing me speak, at his request, along the lines of O.CH283399,³ and listening intently, indicated that except for his need to take account of Mozambican views the issue was an academic one for him. He considered that UN members should satisfy themselves on the position on the island and suggested that Australia should encourage the Committee of 24 to visit it.

3. An alleged statement by the Indonesian Deputy Foreign Minister that Indonesia would not accept a left-wing government in Timor seems clearly to have provoked the Tanzanians.

4. My impression is that Nyerere has not yet taken a firm position and that if there were some movement generated from the region he would stay his hand regarding Fretilin's appeal. At the same time he appeared not to be over-concerned that there should be clearly recognisable self-determination or with Indonesia's susceptibilities, and to be prepared to recognise Fretilin if he were satisfied that it had effective control. This assessment may need to be varied after I have seen the Indonesian Ambassador who was summoned to see Malecela⁴ this morning on the same subject.

TRUELOVE

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

¹ 19 October. It reported that Vieira, Director of the Cabinet of the President of Mozambique, then visiting Tanzania, sought a meeting with Truelove in order to discuss Portuguese Timor. During the discussion Vieira expressed appreciation for Australia's refusal to become involved in the joint authority proposal, which Mozambique considered a cover for an Indonesian takeover, and for the 'positive' attitude of trade unions and other 'democratic forces' towards the possible use of force by Indonesia. Mozambique recognised Fretilin as the *de facto* power, and saw establishment of that control as constituting an act of self-determination. (He noted in passing that Frelimo knew of the UDT 'show of force' two weeks before it occurred.) Mozambique would oppose UN involvement unless initiated by Fretilin and was seeking consultations with Australia as an 'anti-colonialist neighbour' of Timor, and Australian assistance in Mozambique's provision of a small amount of aid to Timor. Canberra instructed Truelove to be 'firmly discouraging' of the view that Fretilin could be regarded as the sole representative of the people of Portuguese Timor, of aid proposals aimed at underpinning Fretilin, and of Vieira's suggestion that a delegation from Mozambique should visit Australia. Australia did not wish to be manoeuvred into a position of apparent hostility to Indonesia, even by implication. Truelove was instructed to inform the Indonesian Ambassador in Dar es Salaam of Vieira's approach and Canberra's reply (Cablegram CH280446).

² President Samora Machel of Mozambique.

³ 28 October. It replied to a request for urgent instructions (Nyerere had requested a meeting at short notice) by referring first to Cablegram CH280446 (see note 1), then adding a more general brief on Australian policy, particularly its commitment to self-determination. Fretilin's 'military victory over UDT' could not be accepted as self-determination: all parties should be involved in talks and a return to the Macao program. It emphasised that, in contrast to the long-standing politically mature independence movements in Portugal's African colonies, there had been little interest in politics in Timor before April 1974.

⁴ J. W. S. Malecela, Tanzanian Foreign Minister.

305 LETTER FROM KERIN TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 29 October 1975

The Committee,¹ having considered recent events in East Timor submits the following resolution to you and the Caucus.

That the Caucus is of the view that

- (1) Even if no Indonesian troops were involved in the fighting in East Timor, the use of Indonesian territory as a base for armed attacks is significantly contributing to prolonged fighting.
- (2) Substantial evidence points to the active involvement of Indonesian personnel and equipment in the fighting in East Timor.
- (3) Such activities have contributed to the deaths of the five Australian journalists who were in pursuit of the truth about the fighting.
- (4) The continued public silence of the Australian Government is inconsistent with Government policy concerning the rights of nations to determine their own destiny and is contrary to the Federal A.L.P. policy.

Therefore the Caucus calls on the Cabinet to give urgent consideration to the following resolution:

That the Government

- (1) publicly state the view that Indonesian activity in East Timor is prolonging hostilities and obstructing the process of decolonisation and self determination;
- (2) take prompt action to recover the bodies of the journalists and determine the circumstances in which these five Australian citizens died;
- (3) increase official Government aid to East Timor;
- (4) use its good offices to mediate between the parties involved in the dispute.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxxvi]

306 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 29 October 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor: Aid

To date the Government has provided the following humanitarian assistance to Timor:

- \$100,000 to the ICRC appeal, half of which was set aside for relief of the 40,000 Timorese refugees in Indonesian Timor.
- An army medical team—all costs borne by the Government.
- RAAF aircraft—first for the evacuation operation and later for the ICRC. Although the ICRC no longer has call on the full-time services of a Caribou aircraft, in practice the RAAF is responding favourably to ICRC *ad hoc* requests to transport supplies from Darwin to Dili free of charge.

¹ The Labour Caucus Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee. Kerin was its Secretary.

Australian assistance has far exceeded that provided by any other country. As far as we know New Zealand is the only other government to have announced a contribution—of \$NZ25,000—to the ICRC, although a number of national Red Cross societies may have offered small contributions.

Requests for Assistance

[matter omitted]¹

Considerations

6. This question of food aid to Portuguese Timor is fraught with political difficulties. In brief, if Australia were to provide food aid to Portuguese Timor, it would be difficult to avoid the impression that we were providing direct underpinning to the FRETILIN administration in Timor, with all that implies for our relationship with the Indonesians.

7. When this matter was last considered in detail (a copy of our earlier submission to the Acting Minister² is attached) the Government was able to deflect pressure for a decision because of ICRC advice, conveyed to the Acting Minister by Mr Pasquier, that there was no food shortage in Portuguese Timor at that time. Pasquier felt that reports to the contrary were exaggerated, and based on an Australian regimen of food intake. Under normal consumption patterns, he felt that there would be sufficient food supplies to see the territory through until mid-November when the new rice harvest would be in.

8. Although there was some confusion at the time, it seems that Pasquier's assessments were based in part on the assumption that the Timorese who had joined fighting units would soon return to their fields. In addition, he expected that a Portuguese ship with 500 tons of rice would be arriving in Dili before the end of November. That ship has not come and is unlikely to do so. Nor has the expected return to the fields taken place. Moreover, the latest advice we have from the ICRC (14 October) is that, contrary to earlier advice, they expect a food problem to emerge in two to three weeks, particularly in the coastal towns. Thus we are no longer in the position of being able to say publicly that the ICRC does not assess that there is a food shortage in Timor.

9. Meanwhile, we must anticipate that domestic pressure to provide food to Timor will increase. Part of the ACFOA team has now returned from Dili and the Australian Red Cross request was channelled through ACFOA. We can expect recommendations strongly supporting FRETILIN and stressing the need for further assistance from the Government, including food aid, probably for much larger quantities than the Australian Red Cross has suggested.

Conclusions

10. None of the foregoing alters the Department's view that in terms of Australia's foreign policy interests the Government would be best advised *not* to provide food aid to Portuguese Timor at this stage. This is particularly so if Ministers are also about to make a public comment critical of Indonesian military involvement in Portuguese Timor.

11. If Timor is in need of emergency food supplies (and we are still to be convinced that this is the case) it might be asked why Portugal, the colonial power, does not provide it. Instead the

¹ The Australian Red Cross had requested the Government to supply 100 tons of rice and 50 tons of flour; the ICRC had appealed for \$US300 000 plus milk powder and baby food; UNICEF had also appealed for food, but had now shelved its program, of which Australia had been wary since it appeared to have been closely tied to support for Fretilin control. The new ICRC appeal was directed specifically at refugees in Indonesia: the submission suggested that it would be consistent with Australia's approach in its previous contribution to respond this time to relief needs within Portuguese Timor as well.

² See note 4 to Document 236.

Portuguese act as though they no longer have any responsibilities for, or indeed any cares about, the welfare of the Timorese. It is not as if the Portuguese economy were bankrupt: foreign exchange reserves at \$US650 million may have begun to run down but Portugal still has huge gold stocks worth \$4.2 billion at current market prices. Some weeks ago, the Portuguese Government was toying with the thought that a rundown of food stocks in Timor would be a good thing since it could bring FRETILIN to its senses and oblige it to negotiate with the Indonesians. There is something in this argument.

12. Were you nevertheless to decide that Australia should provide food aid to Portuguese Timor, we believe there are several considerations that should be taken into account.

13. In the first place, there are a number of reasons for keeping our financial powder dry at this stage. It is still relatively early in the financial year and the latest ICRC appeal, for example, only covers the period until the end of December. But, more than that, we think that as much as possible of the \$590,000 available for food aid should be kept aside for later expenditure in Timor in the event of a political settlement there which would require a positive gesture of Australian support. Such a political settlement could ensue from the talks the Portuguese are still trying to arrange with the Timorese parties, or from Indonesian pressure, or from a combination of both. The important point is that at the end of the day the Australian Government may be under considerable pressure to make some kind of financial commitment to the territory and it would not wish to be in the position of having used all the funds available.

[*matter omitted*]

Recommendations

17. There are no reasons rooted in our foreign policy interests which could lead the Department to recommend the provision of food aid to Portuguese Timor at the present juncture. The question is whether domestic requirements should override these foreign policy preferences. If you decide that they should, *we recommend* that any further contribution to the ICRC be limited at this time to \$A100,000 with \$A50,000 of this amount being earmarked for the refugees in Indonesian Timor. Finally, we would propose that any public announcement of the contribution to the ICRC be expressed in cash terms. That the contribution in fact will be used to purchase food supplies should be seen to be the ICRC's own decision.³

18. ADAA concurs with this submission.

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia & PNG Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii]

³ Willesee noted in the margin: '\$150 000 for the ICRC to be used on both sides of the border—proportions at the discretion of ICRC'.

307 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA AND LISBON

Canberra, 29 October 1975

O.CH283870 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor*For Woolcott and Cooper*

In our O.CH279966¹ we asked you to advise the Indonesians of our extreme disappointment that they have found it necessary to resort to large-scale military intervention in Portuguese Timor. You were also asked to advise the Indonesians that the Australian Government would need to refer publicly to the fact of having made these representations to the Indonesians when the full extent of Indonesian involvement in Portuguese Timor became public knowledge.

2. In the event, there has been no effective response from the Indonesians to our representations or to the ideas we have expressed about alternative approaches to the problem of Portuguese Timor. The Indonesians show no sign of limiting the extent of their involvement in Portuguese Timor. Recent press and other reports of Indonesian military involvement in Portuguese Timor, including in particular those relating to the fate of the five Australian journalists, have increased the pressure of public opinion on the Australian Government to the point where Australian Ministers see no alternative to making the sort of public statement foreshadowed in your conversation with Malik (JA2498²).

3. Our immediately following telegram contains the text of a statement which the Minister wishes to deliver in the Senate tomorrow morning, 30 October. We should be grateful for your urgent comments on possible drafting changes. You should know, however, that the Minister has approved the text as is, and has also shown it to the Prime Minister.

4. You will see from the third paragraph of the text that the Minister wishes to inform the Parliament that Australia has acted in Lisbon and Jakarta to express the hope that the Portuguese and Indonesian Governments will approach their talks later this week in a positive and constructive manner. We should be grateful if both Ambassadors could act accordingly.

5. The Minister's intention to make a statement may be conveyed to both Governments. There would be no objections to providing both Governments with the text on the basis that it is confidential until delivery, and that the text may be subject to late amendments.

For Jakarta only

6. In conveying this advice to the Indonesians, you should repeat Australian Ministers' continuing desire to limit as far as possible damage to relations between the two countries as the result of their differing approaches to Portuguese Timor. The terms in which the Minister's statement are couched reflect that continuing desire.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

¹ Document 268.

² Document 275.

308 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA AND LISBON

Canberra, 29 October 1975

O.CH283871 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Following is text of Statement.

Begins

The Government has seen these reports. They suggest a degree of Indonesian military intervention in the affairs of Portuguese Timor. The Australian Government regrets this development. It has expressed its extreme disappointment in Jakarta. It has urged that Indonesia pursue her interests through diplomatic means. We have told the Indonesians that we remain opposed to the use of armed force. We have also said that we are firm in the view that the people of Portuguese Timor should be allowed to determine their own future. We have urged the Indonesian authorities to reaffirm their own public commitment to the principle of self-determination in Portuguese Timor.

The position of the Australian Government in all this is clear. We deplore the fighting in the border areas. We continue to believe that a solution to the problems in Portuguese Timor should be sought through peaceful means and free of external intervention. Indonesia has been made aware of our views in this regard.

If there is one ray of hope in all this gloom, it is the possibility that talks will at last get under way. The Indonesian Foreign Minister has agreed to meet with his Portuguese counterpart in Europe this week. Fretilin and UDT have also signified in recent days their willingness to hold separate talks with the Portuguese. We hope that Apodeti will also agree to talks with the Portuguese, and that all three parties will reconsider their present refusal to talk to each other. The Australian Government strongly supports resolution of the conflict in Portuguese Timor by peaceful means through which the will of the people will be expressed.

We have made numerous representations to this effect to the Portuguese, to the Indonesians, and to the representatives of Fretilin who have visited Australia. I have very recently instructed the Australian Ambassadors in Lisbon and Jakarta to reiterate to the Portuguese and Indonesian Governments our firm hope that the talks between these two Governments later this week result in a positive and constructive outcome. Were all the parties to wish it, the Government would be prepared to offer an Australian venue for round-table talks.

The Portuguese cannot escape their share of the responsibility. Portugal is the administering power, but it was very much weakness of purpose on the part of the Portuguese administration which allowed the UDT 'show of force' in early August to develop into a probably unintended coup and thus provoked the Fretilin counter-coup. It seems that Timor, like Angola, has become part of the debris of the Portuguese revolution.

That the situation in Portuguese Timor has come to this pass is in itself for deep regret. It reflects, above all, the immaturity of Timor's own aspiring political leaders, who in less than eighteen months have succeeded in wrecking Portugal's decolonisation program, sharply polarizing political opinions through the territory, and finally plunging the territory into violent civil war. The past eighteen months have turned out to be a graveyard of all those earlier hopes that the Timorese politicians, representing a small Western-educated elite, would shelve their differences for the sake of the territory at large.

From the time of the overthrow of the Caetano regime in Lisbon and the subsequent decision of the Portuguese to shed their overseas territories, the Australian Government had

hoped that the decolonisation process in Portuguese Timor could proceed in an orderly fashion which allowed the people of the territory to decide their own future.

We had hoped that Portugal would remain in control for a period long enough for the political consciousness of the people to develop to the point where there was a substantial measure of agreement regarding the future.

The need for orderly progress had also been of paramount importance in view of the interest of the countries of the region, particularly Indonesia but also Australia and other regional countries, in ensuring that the territory would not emerge in a way which would have a unsettling effect on the region.

These hopes which the Government had worked hard to see realized have unhappily not been borne out. Portugal's inability, or reluctance, to retain control opened the way to a struggle for supremacy among a number of essentially immature, rival political factions.

From this struggle the Fretilin group, aided by the Timorese army units and by access to Portuguese arms, emerged as being stronger than its rivals.

The Australian Government had still hoped—and acted accordingly—that agreement on the future of the territory could have been reached by negotiations between Portugal and the main contending factions. But the scheduled meeting for 20 September did not take place, at least in part because of the intransigence of Fretilin, which has continued to claim to the United Nations and the world in general that it is the only authentic and legitimate voice of Portuguese Timor.

Fretilin has since agreed that it will speak to the Portuguese—but not, yet, to the other parties. So had UDT, but UDT too is now attempting to lay down preconditions, while the Portuguese for their part have sometimes appeared more concerned about the fate of 23 Portuguese prisoners held by UDT (ignoring those held by Fretilin) than with getting the parties around the table. Fretilin has certainly now said that it continues to recognise Portuguese sovereignty and the right of Portugal to preside over the decolonisation process, but it seems that it wants to lay down all the ground rules for the process.

It is in this situation of drift, of Fretilin's refusal to accept that UDT or Apodeti have anything further to contribute to the decolonisation process, and of Portugal's refusal to reassert its authority in the territory, that the Indonesians have evidently responded to UDT and Apodeti appeals for military assistance. Indonesia can point to the presence of over 40,000 refugees in her territory, some 7 per cent of Portuguese Timor's entire population. It can correctly claim that Fretilin has established its present position of supremacy because it controlled the army and not necessarily because it had overwhelming popular support. It can argue, as indeed we ourselves have been inclined to argue, that prior to the recent troubles UDT was vying with, and possibly exceeding, Fretilin in terms of popular support. All this perhaps goes some way towards explaining Indonesia's actions. We should not lose sight of Indonesia's concern about order and stability in Portuguese Timor, which is located in the middle of the Indonesian archipelago. It is necessary that we, the Portuguese and the parties in Timor should recognise the importance of the Indonesian interest in the territory, just as other countries in the region do.

No more than Indonesia, can Australia accept any one party's claim to be the only true representative of Portuguese Timor. Fretilin may have prevailed over its rivals in the initial round of fighting and skirmishing but it has established no right thereby to speak for all Timorese. These matters should not be settled by force of arms: what if the Timorese army had decided to side with UDT, or with Apodeti, or had staged a purely military coup? Of course, nor can UDT or Apodeti claim to speak for the people of Portuguese Timor simply if

they are now demonstrating military prowess against Fretilin in military conflict. These matters, I repeat, should not be settled by force.

The Australian Government does not pretend to know what the people of Portuguese Timor want. But we do want them to have the opportunity to say what they want. The need in our view is to get all the parties round the table for talks. The Australian Government is doing what it can to help such talks on their way.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

309 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TAYLOR AND TJAN

Jakarta, 29 October 1975

SECRET

Portuguese Timor

I told Tjan that the Ambassador's meeting with General Yoga yesterday had been unsatisfactory and went through the main problems as we saw them. I gave him a typed up copy of the message from Gerald Stone, Channel 7 and the Victorian Branch of the AJA and emphasised that pressure on this matter was now becoming intense. We had to have firm confirmation that the journalists were dead. We had to know how they died and details of how they were identified. We needed to obtain any personal effects etc. which remained and to deal with the bodies [in accordance] with the wishes of the next of kin. In the Embassy we saw this as being very important in terms of the immediate future for Australia/Indonesia relations. We had to ask Indonesia for assistance because there was no other way of contacting the UDT/APODETI side. Malik had often said that Indonesia had an interest in Portuguese Timor because it had a common boundary. The same arguments can be used as to why we had sought information through the good offices of the Indonesian Government.

2. Tjan said he would check as far as he could. He said he was in a difficult position. He did not have direct contact with General Yoga. In the absence of General Ali and Benny Moerdani, Tjan's main channels to influence were not there. Nevertheless he would do what he could.

3. I said we were making approaches again to BAKIN and Foreign Affairs on the matter of the journalists. We were also again seeking approval for Johnson to go to Atambua and the border region.

4. I told Tjan that the Government intended to make a statement on the Timor situation in the Senate on 30 October. Tjan was disappointed but clearly expected a statement at some stage.

5. I asked whether anti-Australian feeling was growing in senior echelons in the Indonesian Government. Tjan said no. Great faith was placed in Mr Whitlam.

6. I gave Tjan the latest information on the ship bans in Australia and told him about the meeting of the maritime unions later today.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

310 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 29 October 1975

O.JA2754 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

I have not yet been able to convey the advice that the Minister intends to make a statement on Timor to Malik or to Djajadiningrat. Given the present four hour time difference and Malik's departure for Rome tomorrow we have been unable to get an appointment today 29 October although I shall still attempt to see him early tomorrow morning.

2. Meanwhile, we have communicated the substance of the proposed statement¹ to Head of Asia and Pacific Directorate, Adenan, and I shall attempt to communicate it also to Djajadiningrat when he may be available later tonight.

3. I did not pass on the first paragraph as it now stands for the reasons which follow. I said, however, that we would give them the final text of the Minister's statement in advance if this were possible.

4. The statement as it stands however does seem to me to pose a problem. If the Minister says publicly that he regrets the degree of Indonesian military intervention in the affairs of Portuguese Timor, will he not stir up a hornet's nest in Australia itself as well as producing a cold reaction here? Would not the first paragraph of the statement in its present form invite headlines of the type 'Willesee accuses Indonesia of intervention' and would this not in turn lead to increased pressures on the government to act against Indonesia by stopping the Defence Assistance Program and, possibly, by cutting aid. Such a statement at Ministerial level would also stimulate hostility to Indonesia within the Australian community, which it has been our policy to minimise.

5. Although we know it is not true the formal public position of the Indonesian Government is still that there is no Indonesian military intervention in East Timor. If the Minister said or implied in public the Indonesian Government was lying we would invite a hurt and angry reaction. We would also be the only country in the region, probably including New Zealand, to make such a statement and we would then also be regarded by Indonesia as having acted in a way which could stir up international opinion against Indonesia (see also our O.JA2497² paragraph five which is still very relevant).

6. In these circumstances I suggest that the Minister use the formula which I used with Malik and reported in our O.JA2498,³ namely 'if there was substance in the widespread media reports of Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor, then the Australian Government would be extremely disappointed etc ...'⁴ This would also require a consequential amendment

¹ Document 308.

² Document 274.

³ Document 275.

⁴ The first paragraph of Document 308 was substantially altered. The final version read: 'The Government has viewed with concern widespread reports that Indonesia is involved in military intervention in Portuguese Timor. The position of the Australian Government is clear. We deplore the fighting in the border areas. We continue to believe that a solution to the problems in Portuguese Timor should be sought through peaceful means and free of external intervention. Indonesia has been told of our views in this regard and urged to pursue her interests through diplomatic means' (Cablegram CH284297, 30 October).

in paragraph fourteen in respect of your reference to Indonesia's response to UDT and APODETI appeals for military assistance.⁵

[*matter omitted*]⁶

11. I cannot predict how President Soeharto will react to the Minister's statement but I believe we should endeavour, in our longer term interests, to keep the statement consistent with the Townsville meeting, despite the present pressures and the highly unsatisfactory approach of the Indonesians towards the five journalists.

12. We also have our position in the region generally to consider and I notice the record of conversation of the Prime Minister's discussion with Tun Razak on 15 October says that the Prime Minister said Australia 'would not allow itself to be pushed into anti-Indonesian attitudes' and that 'the preservation of the Indonesian relationship was much more important than relations with Portuguese Timor'.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

311 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 29 October 1975

O.LB427 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Ministerial Statement

I have the following comments on the draft Statement (O.CH283871¹).

Para 13 second sentence. It is not fair to accuse Portugal of being more concerned with their prisoners than with arranging talks. Their prisoners are obviously an emotive local issue (cf. the journalists issue in Australia) but the main thrust of the Santos plan was to restore the Macao program—the prisoners were a related but incidental issue. Suggest sentence be amended by deleting 'while the Portuguese for their part etc'.²

Para 14 first sentence. Portugal has not 'refused' to reassert its authority—it simply lacks the power to do so. Portugal has been and still is prepared to reestablish a presence in Timor—albeit a symbolic one. But it has not refused or denied its continuing legal and constitutional responsibility for Timor. Suggest therefore deletion of word 'refusal' and substitution of 'Portugal's regrettable inability'.³

⁵ Paragraph 14 of Document 308 (beginning 'It is in this situation of drift . . .') was altered in accordance with this suggestion. The words from 'that the Indonesians have evidently responded . . .' were changed to read, in part: 'that we view the various policy pronouncements, newspaper reports and the like from Jakarta and Timor itself. Were there substance in these reports, the Australian Government would be extremely disappointed, and we have so informed the Indonesian authorities'.

⁶ In the omitted paragraphs Woolcott suggested, *inter alia*, that the later part of the first paragraph of Document 308 be moved, to follow paragraph 14. The words from 'We have told the Indonesians that we remain opposed . . .' to the end of the paragraph, were moved accordingly. In the final version they follow the words quoted in note 5.

¹ Document 308.

² In the final text the words suggested for deletion were amended to read: 'while at one stage in their approach to talks the overriding concern of the Portuguese seemed to be with the fate of the Portuguese prisoners . . .'

³ The suggested change was adopted.

2. I appreciate your desire for a balanced statement and one in which we shall not be accused by the Indonesians of being 'soft on Portugal'. But at the same time, we should be scrupulously fair and accurate in our judgements. As it is, para 5 is pretty tough on Portugal, but I would be prepared to defend it as fair comment. We should also have in mind the need to encourage the Portuguese to 'hang on' in Timor.
3. I am seeking an early interview with the Foreign Minister and would be glad to have the final approved text as soon as possible.

COOPER

[NAA: A1838, 3038/11/64, ANNEX]

312 SUBMISSION TO WILLESEE

Canberra, 31 October 1975

SECRET

Defence Co-operation with Indonesia—Sabre Project

This submission seeks your concurrence with the approval of the Minister for Defence to our meeting an Indonesian request for the RAAF to provide two advisors to help the Indonesian Air Force to use and maintain the guns fitted to the Sabre aircraft which Australia gave to Indonesia in 1973.

2. For two years following the gift, an RAAF Sabre Advisory Unit (RAAFSAU) was stationed at Iswahyudi (the Indonesian Air Force installation in Java where the Sabres are based) to advise on all aspects of Sabre operations. The team left Indonesia in February this year. It had been agreed that the training provided by the Advisory Unit at Iswahyudi would include the use and maintenance of the guns in the aircraft. However the Indonesians were unable to arrange for ammunition for the Sabres before the unit was withdrawn (Indonesia being responsible for all operating costs, including the provision of ammunition, for the Sabres).
3. The Indonesians have now acquired ammunition, and have asked the Department of Defence for a pilot and a senior NCO armament technician to be provided as soon as practicable to give guidance to the Indonesian pilots and technicians. The request is made in the context of our undertaking that we would provide depot-level support for the Sabres until 1978.
4. The Department of Defence have informed us that the two advisors would be required for approximately one month, but that it would not be possible to provide them inside a month. Estimated costs are \$3,000, and funds are available within the Defence Co-operation Program with Indonesia.
5. In view of the situation in Portuguese Timor, the proposal has been given careful consideration. We have taken the view that it is desirable, wherever practical, not to allow the present circumstances to deflect us from maintaining normal relations with Indonesia. We believe that it would be undesirable to take action to disturb planning in areas which the

Indonesians might interpret as connected with the Timor situation. A refusal to honour our previous undertaking, or even an undue delay in responding, could be so interpreted. Nevertheless, we believe it would be both advisable, and consistent with the above approach, if the Australian Ambassador in Jakarta were to consult appropriate Indonesians about the embarrassment which we could face if the Sabres were reported as having been deployed to Timor soon after the advisors had been in Iswahyudi.¹

6. *It is recommended* that you concur in the proposal to assign two RAAF armaments advisors to Indonesia for approximately one month, commencing in about one month's time, on the understanding that our Ambassador in Jakarta speak to the Indonesians along the lines of the previous paragraph.²

7. A similar recommendation has been put to the Minister for Defence, who has now approved it.

R. A. PEACHEY

Acting First Assistant Secretary
Defence Division

[NAA: A1838, 696/2/2/1, xi]

313 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 31 October 1975, 3.20 p.m.

O.JA2807 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor—Minister's Statement

I was able to see Malik shortly before his departure as well as Adenan and Alatas, both of whom were accompanying him to Rome and Djajadiningrat who is remaining in Jakarta. I gave each of them a copy of the Minister's statement of 30 October.

2. Malik had been pre-occupied with other matters prior to his departure and while he knew of the Minister's statement earlier in the day he had read neither the statement nor the draft we had passed to the Foreign Ministry. I went through the main points orally and gave him a copy to take on the plane with him. I also said that we sincerely hoped that Indonesia would adopt a positive approach to the Rome talks and that the talks would shift the focus of activity from the military field to efforts to achieve a political settlement. Malik said he hoped so too but peace would have to be reestablished first before a decolonization program could be resumed.

3. Malik asked whether this implied any change of policy on Australia's part. On the basis of your O.CH279966¹ I said that it did not. The Government was however under considerable pressure in Australia which was compounded by the inability here so far to meet our requirements on the Australian journalists in Balibo.

4. I said also that I had been instructed to inform him that Senator Willesee had in mind in making the statement the wish to do as little damage as possible to the relationship with

¹ The views in paragraph 5 were quoted in the Defence Department's submission to their Minister, with the comment: 'It goes without saying that it is an inopportune time for this matter to have come up'.

² Willesee noted his agreement.

¹ Document 268.

Indonesia to which we would continue to attach great importance. Malik said that he would read the statement on the plane.

5. He said he was glad to hear my last comment and, for its part, Indonesia would also continue to work to limit damage to our relations. 'I hope we can' he added but the widespread criticism of Indonesia, support for Fretilin and the activities of the students and unions must be expected to have some effect on attitudes here. I said I was aware of this. Our relations were a two way street and the reports of Indonesian military involvement in East Timor and the deaths of the journalists must affect attitudes in Australia. We needed to do our best to minimise damage at both ends.

6. Generally official and media reactions so far to the Minister's statement have been fairly low key, the emphasis in the media being on the concern about the reports in the Australian media of Indonesian intervention and on our offer of Australia as a venue for talks between the parties, should they take place.

7. The only somewhat discordant note has been from the Director-General of Political Affairs, Djajadiningrat, who was at Townsville with President Soeharto. Djajadiningrat said that it seemed we were backing away somewhat from the understandings reached between the President and the Prime Minister in Townsville.

8. I said I thought there had been no change in our basic policy and the Minister's statement should be seen against a background of the Townsville talks and the Prime Minister's statement of 26 August.² But quite a lot of water had gone under the bridge since then and there was also the matter of the five journalists. We were dealing with an evolving situation. While the Government favoured integration as the best long term solution to the decolonisation of Portuguese Timor it had also insisted that this should be brought about on an internationally acceptable basis and in accordance with the wishes of the East Timorese people.

9. I also said that Fretilin's position in East Timor had been stronger than Indonesia had anticipated. Djajadiningrat said that this was true and it was difficult to predict how the situation would develop. Indonesia wanted the return of the refugees to their own territory. While Indonesia would explore positively the avenue of the Rome talks it was sceptical, given the domestic situation in Portugal and Fretilin's attitude, whether the talks would achieve very much.

10. Malik said he intended to return to Jakarta about 5 or 6 November after a brief stopover in Singapore and he would see me again then.

11. As he was remaining, I also told Djajadiningrat that it was essential that we made progress on the Australian journalists. I hope to see him on Monday.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xv]

² Document 191.

314 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 31 October 1975, 4.20 p.m.

O.JA2808 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: Journalists

Regrettably, despite constant pressure, we have got no further on the journalists. There still remains it seems a split within the Indonesian Government about how it should handle the matter.

2. A Foreign Ministry contact told us today that yesterday they had a 'very hard' meeting with BAKIN about the whole Timor issue. At one stage the Director for Political Affairs, Djajadiningrat, had said that BAKIN's approach made Indonesia's diplomatic position extremely difficult.

3. We expect that Johnson will receive a reply to his letter of 23 October to Lopes da Cruz¹ but that it will be unhelpful.

4. A factor complicating the situation is the absence of Generals Ali Murtopo and Benny Moerdani—two key men in Indonesia's Timor policy. Both are expected back next week. The Ambassador will seek to see one of them or General Yoga early in the week.

5. We have spoken to Johnson today and urged him to keep pressing for approval to go to Atambua. The Ambassador also urged him not to go beyond the border and to be very careful about his own safety.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

315 LETTER FROM TAYLOR TO CURTIN

Jakarta, 31 October 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Just a short note on the Centre. The last few months have illustrated both the great value of our links with the Centre, particularly with Harry Tjan, and the limitations of Harry's influence. On the first, I don't think it can be denied that Harry Tjan has given us invaluable information on Timor. It may be unpalatable information, but it has been worth having. Harry has also been active in getting the message that the Australian Government's policy can not be equated with the actions of various Australian citizens known in the higher echelons of the Indonesian Government.

But the limitations of Harry's influence have been evident in the case of the five journalists. As you know both Ali Murtopo and Benny Moerdani are out of the country. Harry told me quite candidly that with them away he can not get proper access to the decision making level in the military/intelligence community here. He sees the need to get us the firm information on the journalists' fate, the personal effects etc. that we seek. He has tried to help us but his usefulness as a channel of influence depends on him persuading Ali or (on Timor issues) Benny, to carry out his ideas. I am convinced in my own mind that had either of them been

¹ The reply is published as Document 300.

here we could have solved the journalists case some time ago. Ali and Benny will be back sometime next week. If Harry can convince them of the stupidity of Indonesia's present attitude we may get somewhere.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, i]

316 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 1 November 1975, 2.00 p.m.

O.JA2814 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Timor—Journalists

Ref. O.JA2810¹

I talked to General Yoga this morning.

2. I asked whether he had any progress to report on his enquiries since our last meeting. I also said that we were anxious to take up Foreign Minister Malik's offer of a plane and said that if the plane were to fly from Jakarta, we would like Rodgers to travel on it. If it were to fly from Kupang, then we might send Rodgers to Kupang to join it and Johnson there.

3. Yoga said that if the Australian Government wanted to take up Malik's offer, then he would facilitate this, but he did not think anything could be achieved from going to Atambua.

4. Yoga said that after our previous meeting he had sent two BAKIN officers to make a personal investigation of the situation. He said he had oral reports from them, but was awaiting their return to Jakarta and the compilation of a full written report.

5. Yoga said that he believed that early next week Indonesia would be able to give us more definite information, including some documents, a camera, and some remains. It had been decided that all of these would be handed over in Jakarta and, for this reason, he saw no need to go to Kupang or Atambua, but there would be no objection from the Indonesian side if we still wanted to do so.

6. I spoke to Johnson this morning in Kupang. He said that he was under some pressure from the Governor to return to Jakarta as all decisions were being taken there. I told Johnson to stay and to pass a further message to the Governor saying that we must know more than we already did about the methods of identification, the whereabouts of the remains, and of any personal effects. I said he should reiterate that the prompt solution of this matter was in Indonesia's interests. It was pointless their continuing to maintain that Balibo was in Portuguese Timor and that we should make ou[r] approaches through Lisbon or Dili. (Apparently the Governor had returned to this theme yesterday.)

7. In these circumstances, it does not seem that there would be much to be gained from sending Rodgers to Kupang or Atambua or indeed continuing to press the Indonesians for an aircraft to go to Atambua. However, I think we should keep that option open and if we have not got any firm information of a satisfactory nature by Tuesday, we should press it.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, i]

¹ See note 5 to Document 302.

317 LETTER FROM JOHNSON TO EL TARI

Kupang, 1 November 1975

I have been instructed by the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, His Excellency Mr R. A. Woolcott, to convey the following to you.

I have been sent to Timor by the Australian Government to attempt to ascertain the fate of five missing Australian journalists. Since it is believed that these journalists died in Balibo, which is under the control of anti-Fretilin forces, it is not possible to obtain positive identification of the bodies or to recover personal effects through Fretilin forces or through the Government of Portugal. Direct contact with the leaders of anti-Fretilin forces in the border area has not been possible. The Government of Australia has requested that you use your good offices with the leaders of UDT/Apodeti to forward two letters to Mr Lopes da Cruz. These letters, both dated 23 October, requested the urgent provision of information and personal effects which would enable the Australian Government to ascertain the fact and manner of the death of the journalists. However no reply has been received from the leaders of the anti-Fretilin forces.

I have been instructed by the Australian Ambassador to stress that the Australian Government regards the resolution of this matter as most urgent. I have not been allowed to go to Atambua or the border area to try to ascertain how these bodies were identified, how positive the identification is, and whether there are any remains. If it is held that there are no remains, the Australian Government wishes to know why there are no remains. The Australian Government is most anxious to obtain documents and personal effects belonging to the five journalists.

The families of the five journalists need to know of their fate. There is also great concern at present in Australia at the absence of definite information concerning the fate of the journalists. It is in the interest of Indonesia that this matter be settled as soon as possible, in view of the damage that is occurring to Indonesia's standing in Australia.

The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mr Adam Malik, has stated that an aircraft will be provided for me to travel to Atambua to attempt to obtain definite information. Since permission has now been granted in Jakarta, I again request your permission to go there as soon as possible, and also your assistance in obtaining information and personal effects. I wish if possible to interview UDT/Apodeti eyewitnesses of the incident at Balibo.

Having been sent to Timor by the Australian Government, I have been instructed to remain here until information and personal effects are obtained. It is also anticipated that a more senior official from the Australian Embassy in Jakarta will soon join me in Kupang.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

318 RECORD OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN SELLARS AND KADRI

Canberra, 3 November 1975

RESTRICTED

Slogans on Indonesian Residences

Mr Kadri rang to advise that, during the night of 2–3 November, anti-Indonesian and pro-Fretilin slogans had been painted on six Indonesian residences, including the Ambassador's residence.

2. Kadri said that the slogan 'fascist butcher' had been painted on the driveway leading to the Ambassador's residence and 'free Timor' had been painted on the gatepost at the exit from the Ambassador's residence. I told Kadri that our understanding was that a static guard was on duty and asked where he was at the time. Mr Kadri did not know but assumed that he may have been in another part of the Embassy grounds when the painting took place. Kadri said that slogans had also been painted on the residences of the Defence Attaché, the Military Attaché, the Air Attaché, the Economic Counsellor and the Administration Attaché. A house at 40 Arthur Circle which had previously been occupied by the Cultural Attaché but had since been vacated by him and was now privately occupied had also been painted.

3. Kadri said that red paint had been used in all cases. He added that the residence of the Military Attaché, which had been defaced on a previous occasion, had been heavily painted this time.

4. I conveyed the Department's regrets to Mr Kadri for these occurrences and, with his agreement, I undertook to arrange to have the slogans removed as soon as possible.

Note: I later asked Mr Oliver¹ to contact Australia Police to find out whether police enquiries had yielded any results. Mr Oliver will tell the Police that the Department is in favour of a hard line being taken with these vandals and will suggest that, even if the police are unable to identify the individuals concerned, they consider calling in some of the suspects for questioning. This will at least convey the impression that the police are pursuing the matter actively.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

¹ John Oliver, Acting Head, Protocol Section, DFA.

319 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 3 November 1975

O.JA2835 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Timor: Journalists

Apart from the predicted unsatisfactory response from Lopes da Cruz (our JA2828¹) we have had no more information on the missing journalists.

2. While we should continue the pressure I am inclined to think it would be only window dressing to send Rodgers to Kupang or Atambua in addition to Johnson, especially as we know—and Yoga confirmed this as recently as Saturday—that all decisions are being taken in Jakarta and that any remains or effects to be handed over will be handed over in Jakarta. If it had been practicable at any time during the last two weeks I would have suggested that Johnson or Rodgers went to Balibo but Indonesian sensitivities and the actual dangers have not allowed this.

3. While we cannot close this episode until we have some proper and decent response from the Indonesians we should nevertheless assume that we shall probably never know the full story and that we are very unlikely to obtain what we can regard as a full and satisfactory response from Indonesia.

4. This is due to the following factors or a combination of some or all of them:

- a) they have something to hide;
- b) they are angry about the development of anti-Indonesian and pro-Fretilin feeling in Australia;
- c) they are hypersensitive about suggestions in Australia that Indonesia is itself responsible for the deaths;
- d) they are sensitive about assumptions that Indonesia has direct control of Apodeti and UDT; and
- e) they have decided to rest on the legalistic point that the incident happened in Portuguese Timor and the journalists were with Fretilin forces; therefore it is a matter for Lisbon or Dili rather than Jakarta.²

5. In these circumstances I do not now propose, unless the Minister so instructs, to pursue further the issue of Malik's offer of a plane (what could it bring back which is probably not already in Jakarta?) or to send Rodgers to Timor. We are also now getting firm hints both here and in Kupang that Johnson should return to Jakarta.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

¹ 3 November. It reported Johnson's receipt of two letters from da Cruz, one an undated photocopy, the second an original dated 27 October. The first denied having given any interview to *Kompas* concerning the discovery of four bodies at Balibo. After receiving Johnson's letter of 23 October, and a request from the Indonesian Government, da Cruz and other leaders of the combined forces had carried out the investigation reported in Document 288. The second letter is published as Document 300.

² A sixth point had been crossed out from the final text of the cablegram before its dispatch. It read: 'they see relations with Australia as having been set back during the past fortnight and have decided to let the relationship remain in suspense until the political dust settles in Australia'.

320 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 4 November 1975

O.CH285719 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Timor: Journalists*Ref. OJA2835¹*

While taking the point in your paragraph 2, we feel it important to leave no stone unturned in our efforts to establish beyond all reasonable doubt the fate of the missing newsmen. We therefore feel, and the Minister agrees, that Rodgers should proceed to Kupang and that either he or both he and Johnson should then seek to proceed to Atambua.

2. If they succeed in getting to Atambua, we should hope that the Indonesians would agree to lend their good offices in arranging interviews with Lopes da Cruz or indeed with the UDT–APODETI Field Commander as you have already canvassed with Tjan (JA2836²). The Minister would also like you to continue to pursue with the Indonesians the possibility of Indonesia providing an aircraft to fly Rodgers, or Rodgers and Johnson, to Atambua. We note in this connexion that, while General Yoga told you on 1 November that he saw no reason for a visit to Atambua, he also said that there would be no objections from the Indonesian side if we were to proceed with the idea and indeed that he would facilitate the provision of an aircraft to enable us to do so.

3. As regards what might be done further in Jakarta, we have been pinning our hopes on General Yoga's suggestion to you that early this week he hoped to have some more definite information and might be able to hand over some personal effects and 'some remains'. You will no doubt be pursuing this matter with Yoga in the next day or two.

4. We are, of course, inclined to agree with you that unfortunately we may never obtain what the Australian Government would regard as a full and satisfactory account of what happened at Balibo. But the Minister is anxious that all avenues be explored and wishes the Embassy to continue its efforts in this regard.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, i]

¹ Document 319.

² 3 November. Tjan told Dan that Johnson would be unlikely to hear anything more from da Cruz. Dan had asked whether the Field Commander might provide written confirmation of the fate of the journalists; Tjan undertook to put the suggestion to Moerdani on his return.

321 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 4 November 1975

O.CH285927 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: Rome Talks*Ref. O.JA2832, O.JA2834*¹

We should be glad to be kept informed, as Tjan has promised, of the outcome of the Rome talks as further information becomes available. However, Tjan's account and press reports of the communiqué issued by the two Foreign Ministers suggest a fairly satisfactory result. In reply to a question in the Senate today (4 November) the Minister welcomed the outcome of the talks. He noted that the Government 'had long urged that a solution to the problems of Portuguese Timor should be sought through talks between Portugal and all the Timorese parties'. He added that the Government had also 'consistently held that any durable solution must recognise the importance of the Indonesian interest in the territory'. We are considering proposing to the Minister that he consider tabling the text of the Rome communiqué when it becomes available.

2. For your further discussions with the Indonesians about the Rome talks, you may like to have an indication of Departmental thinking which is included in the following paragraphs.

3. An immediate question is how the Rome talks will affect Indonesian policy. To some extent, we imagine that the Indonesians will regard the agreement as window-dressing which will not deter them from the pursuit of their objectives in Portuguese Timor. We have in mind what General Moerdani told you on 15 October (JA2461²) that the Rome talks would not affect the 'continuing operation on the ground'. This theme had earlier (JA2429³) been foreshadowed by Adenan when he observed that 'what really was important was the progress on the ground in Portuguese Timor'. Your JA3432⁴ is also relevant as are the Embassy's various discussions with Tjan.

4. On the other hand, Malik in private (JA2498⁵) as well as in public has suggested a line of Indonesian policy which would be satisfied simply by an assertion of Portuguese sovereignty and a willingness on Portugal's part to deal with all three Timorese parties—in other words, by what the Portuguese seem to have agreed to at Rome. We also have in mind what Sunarso said on 29 October (JA2752) that Indonesia's objective at Rome would be a return to a Macao-style decolonization procedure which would eventually lead to a referendum, the result of which Indonesia could 'influence'.

¹ 3 November. The first reported Tjan's account of principles agreed between Indonesian and Portuguese delegations in Rome. They had agreed to recognise Portuguese sovereignty, not to refer the question to the United Nations, to press for a cease fire and for the conflicting parties to meet to establish a mechanism to return to an orderly process of decolonisation. Refugees should return home as soon as practicable, and Indonesia would try to persuade UDT to release the Portuguese hostages. It had been agreed that the interests of all countries in the region, especially Indonesia, should be taken into account in reaching a solution. The second referred to press reports of statements by Antunes and Malik.

² Document 265.

³ 15 October. Adenan had also said the onus was on Portugal to come up with 'a sensible and practical proposal'. Indonesia was 'alert to all the traps that the talks might hold' but felt obliged to go along with the talks for 'public presentational reasons'.

⁴ Presumably the reference is to JA2432 (Document 262).

⁵ Document 275.

5. In any event, it is possible to speculate that the Indonesians might see in the agreement with the Portuguese a reason for limiting their military involvement in Portuguese Timor. The agreement may provide you with opportunities for pursuing with the Indonesians some of the ideas which we have canvassed with you previously (for instance, in paragraph 6 of our CH281608⁶). The present level of Indonesian military involvement was the result of a breakdown in the Macao program. What would be the Indonesian reaction in the event that something like the Macao program were revived? We shall want to know to what extent Indonesia is genuinely interested in negotiations rather than a military solution. A ceasefire in the territory, on the need for which the Portuguese and the Indonesians are now said to agree, would, of course, lie very much in the Indonesians' hands. But there are other questions arising from the Rome talks. How seriously have the Indonesians and the Portuguese explored the possibility of getting Fretilin and UDT-APODETI to the same negotiating table? Are there any understandings about the time to be allowed for the talks between the parties to be arranged and about what might happen in the event of a failure to arrange talks (or of a breakdown in the talks)? What are the implications of the agreement (mentioned in press reports of the communiqué issued after the Rome talks) on the need to restore peace and order in the territory?

6. We have previously suggested to you that any future agreement among the parties concerned on the decolonization of Portuguese Timor might well be endorsed by various countries in the region, which would recognize, among other things, Indonesia's special interest in Portuguese Timor. It is too early to say whether an agreement on decolonization will result from the new talks now foreshadowed between the Portuguese and the three parties. But the fact that the talks in Rome seem to have produced some agreement between the Indonesians and the Portuguese is a welcome step forward, whatever reservations the Indonesians—or the Portuguese—may have about the agreement and whatever uncertainties lie ahead.

7. The question arises whether there might not be some value in regional countries now expressing their approval of what has been achieved. With the Minister's answer in the Senate today, the Australian Government is already on record as endorsing the outcome of the Rome talks although we are considering suggesting to the Minister that once we have full details he should take the opportunity to express Australia's support in a more formal way. The Indonesians may find it useful, however, if similar expressions of approval also came from other capitals in the region, especially as, according to Tjan, they and the Portuguese had agreed that the interests of countries in the region had to be taken into account in reaching a solution of the Portuguese Timor problem (an agreement which seems to reflect a welcome development in Portuguese thinking).

8. Some sort of modest regional approval for the outcome of the Rome talks might have the advantage, along with the outcome of the talks itself, of providing a framework for a regional approach to the problem of Portuguese Timor in the United Nations.

9. In this regard, we note that the Indonesians and the Portuguese are said to have agreed that no action should be taken to 'internationalize' the problem of Portuguese Timor and that it was 'premature' to refer the matter to the United Nations. The fact is, however, that the question of Portuguese Timor is already in the United Nations and we still need to give thought to the approach that we, the Indonesians and the Portuguese and the countries of the region should adopt towards the United Nations consideration of Timor. The advice in New York's UN4914⁷ reinforces us in our view of the need for regional countries to seize the initiative

⁶ Document 287.

⁷ Presumably a reference to Cablegram UN4194 (30 October) which reported Tanzanian support, through Salim, of the idea of a visiting UN mission to Portuguese Timor mentioned in Document 304.

before countries like Tanzania or Mozambique do so. You should also know that we have had confirmation⁸ that the Tanzanians in New York are under an injunction from President Nyerere to assist the Fretilin position in the Fourth Committee. In short, then, whatever has been agreed at Rome, Indonesia would be well advised to consider how the question of Portuguese Timor should be approached in the Fourth Committee later this month.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

322 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Rome, 4 November 1975

O.RO6070 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor—Rome Talks

Sosrowardoyo¹ told me today that Malik and Melo Antunes met on 1 and 2 November and signed Memorandum of Understanding on 3 November. On instructions, he was unable to show me a copy of the Memorandum until Malik had reported to the President on his return to Jakarta, but his oral summary of what the Memorandum includes confirms what is reported in Jakarta's O.JA2832.² Adenan, Alatas, Sosrowardoyo and the Indonesian Ambassador to Portugal had attended the talks. The press release issued at the conclusion of the talks is being forwarded in separate telegram.

2. Sosrowardoyo said that the initial discussion had revealed how little information and understanding the Portuguese Government had of the current situation in East Timor. It was clear that Timor had been given a low priority in comparison with other Portuguese problems, particularly Angola. The Indonesians were satisfied that, as a consequence of the Rome talks, the Portuguese would henceforth upgrade the importance of reaching an acceptable solution on Timor. Sosrowardoyo showed familiarity with the text of Senator Willesee's statement of 30 October.³ His comments suggested that it had been a useful reference point during the talks with Portugal.

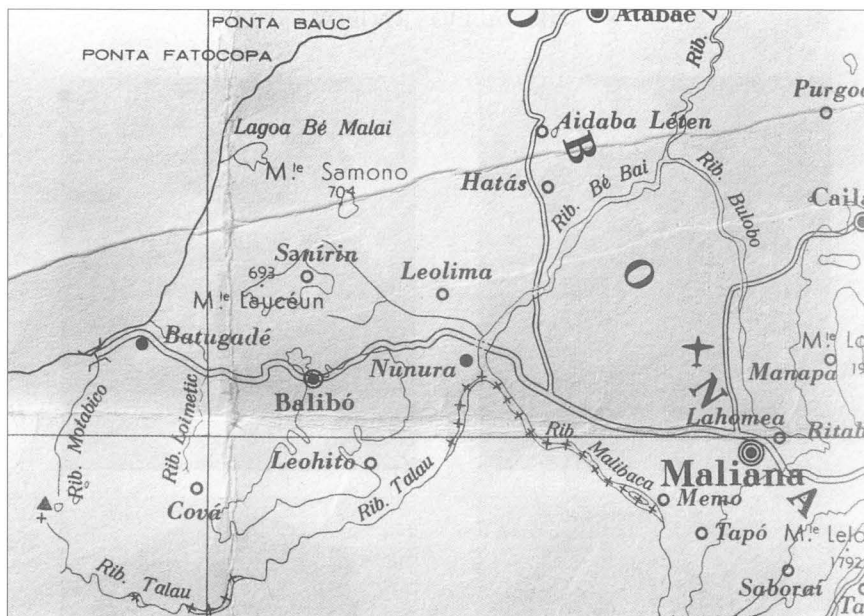
3. You will note that press release refers to need to restore peace and order in the territory and necessity for a meeting between Portugal and all political parties to end strife and bring about process of decolonisation. I pointed to Senator Willesee's indication that if all the parties wished it, the Australian Government would be prepared to offer an Australian venue for round table talks. Sosrowardoyo said that it was obvious that the Portuguese Government had no suggestions to offer regarding the locale of such talks. Malik had suggested Bali as a suitable meeting place. Malik had told Melo Antunes that Indonesia would exercise its influence on UDT and APODETI to bring them together with FRETILIN for round table talks. Melo Antunes had said that in so far as Portugal was able it would exercise similar influence on FRETILIN. The Indonesians, however, are clearly sceptical about the degree of influence which Lisbon can bring to bear.

⁸ Half a line has been expunged here.

¹ Indonesian Ambassador in Rome.

² See note 1 to Document 321.

³ Document 308, as amended (see Documents 310 and 311).

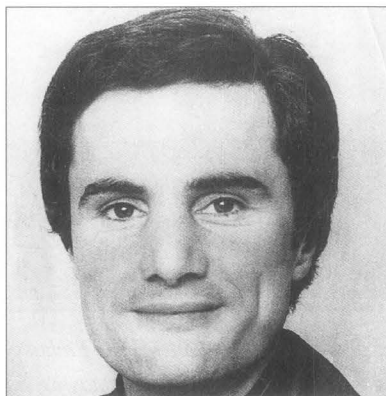
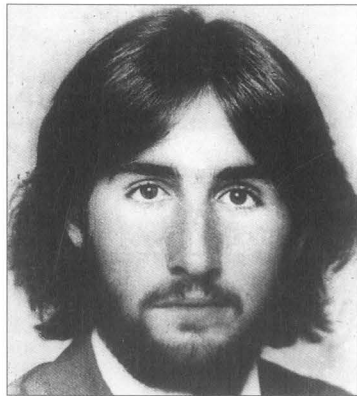
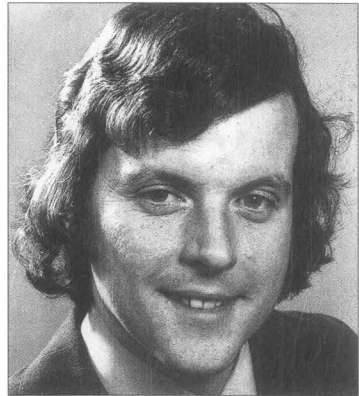
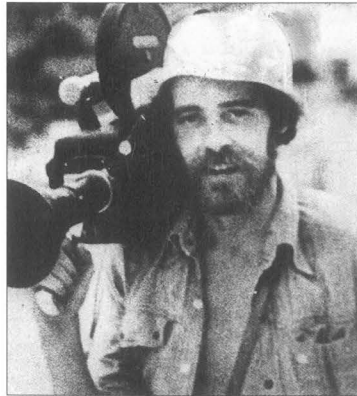


The Balibo-Maliana area



Balibo from the air: photograph taken during the Embassy investigation, April-May 1976. The house where the journalists were staying is at the centre top of the square (with the truck outside). The old Portuguese fort is at the top right-hand corner. The Batugade road is at the top, the Maliana road to the bottom.

THE BALIBO TRAGEDY



Clockwise from top left: Brian Peters, Malcolm Rennie, Gary Cunningham, Greg Shackleton, Tony Stewart



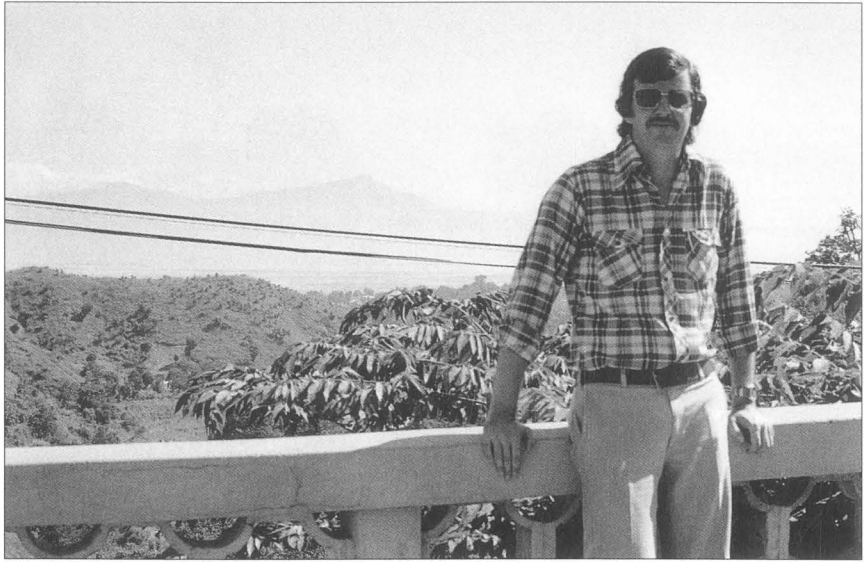
*Richard Woolcott, Australian Ambassador to Indonesia (centre),
delivering a short eulogy at the funeral of the five journalists, Jakarta, 5 December 1975.
Other Australian Embassy staff present included R. K. Johnson (second from left),
D. C. Rutter (fifth from left), A. R. Taylor (fifth from right)
and Brian Peck (fourth from right).*



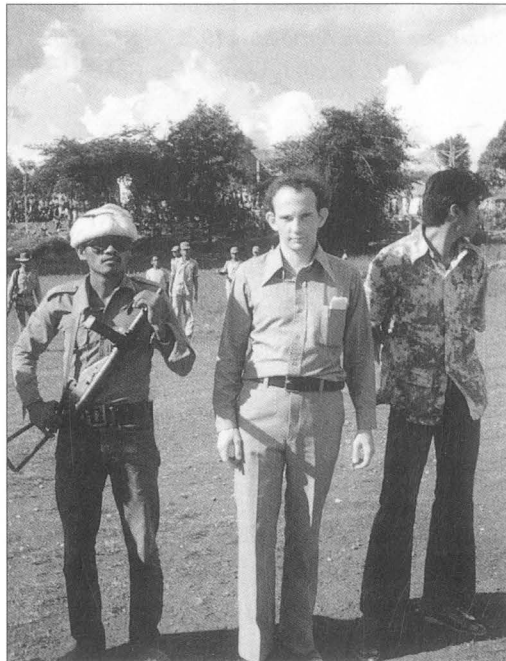
Pro-Indonesian forces outside the house where the journalists were claimed to have been killed, late October 1975



Another view of the house: photograph taken during the Embassy investigation, April-May 1976



P. W. Rodgers, First Secretary, Australian Embassy, Jakarta



R. K. Johnson in Indonesian Timor, October–November 1975



*The Balibo investigation team from the Australian Embassy,
Jakarta, in Portuguese Timor, April–May 1976. A. R. Taylor is on the left and
D. C. Rutter is second from right.*

4. Malik and Melo Antunes discussed the problem of the 23 Portuguese captured by UDT. Malik had indicated that Indonesia would use its good offices for their return but inquired how arrangements could be made to do this. It would be necessary to establish a time and place to return the prisoners. According to Sosrowardojo, Melo Antunes could offer no suggestion in this regard and I think it can be inferred that no arrangement was reached on this question.

5. The question of Timorese refugees who have fled to West Timor presented a problem which also was apparently left unsolved at the Rome talks. Sosrowardojo said Malik had indicated that Indonesia would like to see their return arranged to East Timor, since they represented a burden on Indonesia, but no arrangement was reached. Sosrowardojo offered the comment that he did not see how the refugees could be sent back to Portuguese Timor without an escort, or as he phrased it, 'a police escort', nor was it likely that they could remain there peacefully without some form of protection.

6. Sosrowardojo said that full agreement had been reached between Malik and Melo Antunes on the need for the closest possible future liaison between the Indonesian and Portuguese Governments. Both parties agreed that it was in their own interest to avoid further United Nations resolutions on Portuguese Timor. Although the United Nations was already seized of the problem, Indonesia and Portugal (and they hoped friendly nations) would do their utmost to minimise further United Nations discussion in order to avoid a situation where the General Assembly or any other United Nations body made recommendations as to the future conduct of affairs in Timor.

7. Sosrowardojo's reactions suggest that the Indonesians regard the Rome talks as a success from their point of view. The Memorandum affirms Portuguese sovereignty and makes appropriate noises with respect to decolonisation and self determination, but it also recognises the legitimate interest of Indonesia. It puts Indonesia's good intentions on international record, whilst offering a formula for discussion between Portugal and the political parties in East Timor which Indonesia will now hope to influence not only by pressure on UDT and APODETI but also by means of the close liaison which it expects to develop with the Portuguese Government.⁴

RYAN⁵

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

⁴ In Cablegram LB442, 5 November, Cooper reported Say's view that good personal relations between Antunes and Malik had helped produce the 'success', which could not have been achieved if Santos had represented Portugal. Say believed the Memorandum of Understanding committed Portugal to a proper process of decolonisation. Cooper noted two points in it not mentioned in the joint communiqué: an Indonesian proposal for a joint Indonesian/Portuguese peace-keeping force to restore law and order, and an Indonesian escort for returning UDT/Apodeti refugees. The Portuguese had objected to such a derogation of Portuguese sovereignty, but would be prepared to ask the Red Cross to assist the returning refugees. When questioned about detail, Say had responded that the concern had been merely to establish principles. He would not answer directly when questioned about Indonesian military involvement, and Cooper commented that Indonesia had given no commitment that this should cease.

⁵ John Ryan, Australian Ambassador to Italy.

323 MINUTE FROM MILLER TO FEAKES

Canberra, 5 November 1975

SECRET

Timor Policy

I wonder whether what has been done in Rome makes this an opportune moment for us to try and clear our minds about what we would like to see happen next, and what we think will happen next. In other words, would we prefer the three points underlined in the attached inwards telegram¹ to guide future Indonesian actions, or do we regard them as simply to be manipulated to assist the integration of East Timor into Indonesia? Do we think there is any likelihood of the former becoming the reality?

2. While one answer to the former question may be to point to the continuing P.M./Minister difference of view, failure to know what we wish to see achieved will make it very difficult to formulate an attitude to proposals, e.g. to take part in yet another version of a joint body of some kind, which may be put to us. Forgive me if this is stating the obvious too flagrantly.

3. In regard to the latter question, if we think that Indonesia's 'two-level' policy will continue unabated we should be careful of expressing more support for the achievements of Rome in a formal way (attached outwards telegram,² para 7) or indeed in any way.

4. Also in regard to the attached outwards telegram, para 5, I wonder how much it is in our interest to pursue, for example with Tjan or Moerdani, the question of the extent to which Indonesia is interested in negotiations rather than a military solution. If we decided that it would be in accord with what we wanted for the Rome joint statement to represent Indonesia's real policy the best way to further this might be to take that as given, rather than question it.³

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xxxviii]

¹ Cablegram RO6069 (4 November) conveying the Joint Communiqué. The three underlined points were: 'the scrupulous safeguarding of the principle of respect of the will of the people of Portuguese Timor'; 'the speedy and orderly implementation of the act of self-determination by the people of Portuguese Timor'; and the Ministers' agreement that it would be 'essential also to safeguard the legitimate interests of the countries of the region, particularly the interests of Indonesia . . .'

² A copy of Document 321 was attached.

³ Feakes replied in a marginal note that 'We are in favour of talks rather than military intervention' and that it was necessary to 'keep the negotiating option before people like Tjan and Moerdani'. In order to decide between the alternatives in the first paragraph it was necessary to establish the extent of Indonesia's interest in negotiation. In reply, on 5 November, Miller asked 'are we in favour of talks and "due process" no matter where they lead, or only if they lead to P Timor's integration into Indonesia? If the former, while we gain in an intelligence sense by giving Tjan/Moerdani a chance to assert the latter, we also play into their hands'.

324 LETTER FROM FEAKES TO WOOLCOTT

Canberra, 5 November 1975

SECRET

In our telegram O.CH285927¹ we mentioned in paragraphs 6 and 7 the possibility of some sort of regional approval for the Rome agreement between the Indonesians and the Portuguese. Looking further down the road, we still wonder whether there would be some mileage in regional endorsement of the outcome of talks between the Portuguese and the three Timorese parties, supposing they ever come about. We touched on this possibility in our O.CH266103 of 11 September² and O.CH265548 of 10 September.³ We agree with Sunarso that a desirable objective of the talks would be a return to something akin to the Macao program with a Portuguese Governor reinstated in Dili and with a resumption of an orderly process of decolonization in which the three parties, FRETILIN, UDT and APODETI, would all be able to function. It would also be a desirable outcome that Indonesia's special place be recognized and indeed formalized in some way. We wonder whether the prospect of regional endorsement of talks between the Portuguese and the Timorese parties, if it were made known, might not in itself help achieve a satisfactory outcome.

The Portuguese might be expected to welcome such a prospect and to gain new heart to press ahead with their efforts. They might also be stiffened in their resistance to FRETILIN demands for a FRETILIN-dominated solution in Timor which failed to accommodate the demands of the other two parties. But even FRETILIN could be attracted by the prospect of some regional involvement, perhaps seeing in it the best prospect for a secure future for an independent East Timor and for an abatement of Indonesian hostility.

From the Indonesian point of view, the attraction of some form of regional endorsement lies partly in the recognition Indonesia could thereby secure of its special status in relation to Timor. But more important, were Timor again to lapse into political crisis, there would already be a regional framework for approaching the problem and one which took account of the special interests of Indonesia.

You might like to take all this into account in talking to the Indonesians about the Rome talks.

[NAA: A11443 [10]]

325 BRIEFING NOTE FOR WHITLAM

Canberra, 6 November 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

You have agreed to receive the Indonesian Ambassador at five o'clock this afternoon. He is about to return to Jakarta for consultations in preparation for the annual Australian-Indonesian officials talks, which are to take place in Canberra on 27 and 28 November. He has told us that while he is in Jakarta he expects to see President Soeharto.

¹ Document 321.

² See note 3 to Document 222.

³ Document 220.

Background

2. The immediate background to his call is as follows:—

- (a) Domestic pressures on the Government to take its distance from Indonesia over Timor have been mounting (in the Caucus for instance—and there has been the recent resolution of the Victorian Branch of the ALP).¹
- (b) The Minister for Foreign Affairs stated in the Senate on 30 October that the Government viewed with concern widespread reports that Indonesia was involved in military intervention in Portuguese Timor. He went on to say that, were there substance in these reports, the Australian Government would be extremely disappointed and that we had so informed the Indonesian authorities. The Australian Government had urged that Indonesia pursue her interests through diplomatic means. This statement is the closest the Government has gone in criticizing Indonesian military involvement in Portuguese Timor. It amounted to a shot across the Indonesians' bows. There has so far been no Indonesian reaction to the statement.
- (c) But there has been a deterioration in our relations with the Indonesians. The main elements in this deterioration are:—
The widespread and circumstantial reports of Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor.

[*matter omitted*]²

There was little in the Indonesians' comments to suggest that the Agreement reached in Rome would deter them from pursuit of the other main strand of their policy, namely the gradual expansion of the bridgehead they have established in the border areas until FRETILIN is brought to heel or collapses under the combined weight of UDT–APODETI and Indonesian military pressure. For all that, the Rome talks must be regarded as a step forward. They will presumably give new impetus to Portuguese efforts to get round-table discussions underway. Senator Willesee has publicly welcomed the outcome of the Rome talks in the Senate.

[*matter omitted*]³

Particular Points to Make

4. Australia and Indonesia are approaching a situation where there may be some terseness in the relationship at the public level but where both countries should strive, at the policy level, to ensure that the relationship between the two remains intact. We suggest that you make the following points, the gist of which the Ambassador might pass on to Soeharto:—

- (a) Indonesia will understand the domestic pressures on the Australian Government. Just as the Australian Government takes careful account of the domestic, political and constitutional context in which the Indonesian Government has to work, so we hope and expect the Indonesian authorities to take account of corresponding circumstances here in assessing Australia's actions and policies.

¹ For the Caucus resolution see Document 305. The Victorian resolution was passed on 26 October and called for increased humanitarian aid for East Timor; the *de facto* recognition of Fretilin; the cutting of aid (particularly military aid) to Indonesia; the encouragement of talks between Fretilin, Portugal and Indonesia; the re-opening of the Australian Consulate in Dili; and a full investigation into the deaths of the journalists at Balibo.

² A page is missing from the file copy at this point.

³ Omitted paragraphs suggest Whitlam follow the line of his letter to Soeharto of 28 February (Document 98), reiterating the points made there, as well as the talks in Jogjakarta and Townsville and Willesee's statement of 30 October (see Documents 308, 310 and 311).

- (b) There has been something of a tendency on Indonesia's part to look around for a scapegoat over Portuguese Timor. We want to make sure that Australia is not cast in that role. If the present situation in Portuguese Timor drags on the risks of misunderstandings between the Indonesians and ourselves will persist. It is important that Indonesia has a clear understanding not only of Australia's policies but also of the political conventions (freedom of the press, independence of MPs and so forth) within which the Government in Australia always has to work. The Government has in fact gone to considerable lengths to resist domestic pressures that it should intervene politically in Portuguese Timor out of deference to our wish not to complicate any further Indonesia's problems. We had hoped for a greater degree of Indonesian recognition of the degree to which we had sought to help them in this regard. The public allegations about Australian arms shipments to Timor and about Australians fighting with FRETILIN seem aimed at envenoming relations.
- (c) Australia has also sought to be helpful to Indonesia's position internationally. In response to approaches from Brazil, Mozambique and Tanzania (President Nyerere) we have sought to present a balanced picture of the situation in Portuguese Timor and to deflect Tanzania and Mozambique from an anti-Indonesian course.
- (d) The Indonesians should recognize that, despite the pressures on it, the Government has been scrupulous in its attitudes towards FRETILIN, as is clear from the Minister's statement of 30 October.
- (e) A more helpful Indonesian attitude on the question of the missing journalists is essential to us. While we cannot expect a full and satisfactory response from the Indonesians, we cannot close the episode until we have some decent and proper answer from them. We assume the journalists are dead but we need to establish the facts, obtain positive identification and to carry out the wishes of the next-of-kin for the disposal of the remains and the return of personal effects. While uncertainty drags on it will continue to contribute to the difficulties we are facing in our relations with Indonesia, and to inflame Australian public opinion against the Indonesians.⁴
- (f) The Australian Government regrets the defacing of the Indonesian residences. We shall do our best to prevent a recurrence. There is a full-time guard now on the Indonesian Ambassador's house and on the Indonesian chancery.⁵
- (g) The Government, together with the ACTU, will be doing its best to facilitate the normal handling of Indonesian ships. But the power of decision rests with the individual trades unions.

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia & PNG Division

[NAA: A11443, [14]]

⁴ Cablegram CH287198 (7 November) reported that during the conversation Her Tasning had suggested Whitlam write to Soeharto seeking his help with regard to information about the journalists. Whitlam agreed that Her Tasning should take a letter with him on his departure the following Tuesday (11 November). Woolcott replied (Cablegram JA2933, 7 November) that he too had intended to suggest a letter as he had been informed Soeharto appreciated this type of personal exchange, which he had regularly with other leaders in the region. He thought the letter should also reassure Soeharto about Australia's Timor policy, and 'make some apologetic comments' about the bans on Indonesian ships and the defacing of diplomatic premises.

⁵ Whitlam assured Her Tasning that there would be no further defacing of Indonesian diplomatic residences, and the police would be so instructed. After Her Tasning left, Whitlam emphasised this instruction to Feakes, who pointed out that the instruction would have staffing implications for the police. Feakes noted in a minute to Rogers and Sellars that a letter should be written from Whitlam to Senator Cavanagh, the responsible Minister, but 'I do not think that action on the Prime Minister's instructions should be delayed while a letter is drafted and so forth'.

326 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 6 November 1975, 4.00 p.m.

O.JA2902 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Timor: Missing Journalists

Notwithstanding continuing pressure I am afraid we are still not getting far on the journalists. We are fully aware of the difficulties this is causing you in Canberra and of the likelihood that the Minister may need to be critical in public of Indonesia's handling of this matter. We have of course impressed this on the Indonesians assuring them that we want to avoid this if possible.

2. Despite his undertaking to let me have further definite information early this week, General Yoga has not done so and has left Jakarta for a meeting in Kuala Lumpur without telling me. He is not expected back until the evening of 7 November.

3. Generals Murtopo and Moerdani who could be helpful have been overseas but they are due back today and I shall of course try and see either or both as soon as possible.

4. Malik, Alatas and Adenan returned from Rome last night. I have asked to see Malik as soon as possible about the Rome talks and the journalists and, hopefully, will do so tomorrow.

5. I do not think the Indonesians are being deliberately inaccessible at this stage but they are behaving in a very Javanese, touchy and unhelpful way on the journalists. This is compounded somewhat by a general disenchantment with the way the Timor situation has developed and with what they regard as Australia's over-active and unhelpful role in Timor in contrast to the reactions of other countries within and outside the region.

6. In the absence of all of the above-mentioned I saw the Director-General, Political Affairs, Djajadiningrat, yesterday evening 5 November. I went through the whole issue again with him stressing the urgent need our Minister had to be able to make an acceptable public statement on the matter in Australia and our obvious obligations to the next-of-kin.

7. I also said that Indonesia's reluctance to help seemed to me to be damaging Indonesia's own interest and was giving credence to reports in the media in Australia that the journalists had been shot by Indonesian forces. Djajadiningrat reacted strongly to the latter comment saying that the journalists were with Fretilin forces and that this story was Fretilin propaganda which was not uncommonly given good coverage in the Australian media as though it were the truth. He blandly repeated the denial that Indonesian troops were engaged in Timor.

8. I told Djajadiningrat that the whole situation was most unsatisfactory to us. He and I had known each other for years. If Australian/Indonesian relations were as close and as soundly based as we said they were, then surely we should be frank with each other on an issue like this. What value would people in Australia place on our close relations if we could not secure Indonesia's help when we needed it on an issue like this?

9. Djajadiningrat said he took the point. But it was 'very difficult'. He then went through the usual legal and climatic arguments about Balibo being in Portuguese territory, the monsoons, bad roads, no bridges, difficult communications etc. between Indonesian and Portuguese Timor. I said that we could not accept this. We knew through our own contacts that several Indonesian journalists had been able to reach Balibo within a few days of the battle in which the Australian journalists were apparently killed. If Indonesian journalists could do so, why could not proper information be obtained and passed on to us by Indonesian officials? Djajadiningrat could not answer this but repeated that it was 'difficult'. He would however do all he could with BAKIN and HANKAM to assist.

10. He asked, what did we really want? I said that as he knew we had been through all this before. But in essence we wanted confirmation of death, perhaps by way of an eye-witness account, possibly from the UDT Commander, of how the Australians died. We also wanted information on the methods of identification of the bodies. We also wanted the bodies themselves or any remains. Finally we wanted all personal effects including passports, documents, cameras, etc.

11. Djadiningrat said he personally understood our problem and repeated he would do his best. But the answer would really have to come through BAKIN. I said we knew this and had been in daily contact with BAKIN. He also said that whatever we might think Indonesia's influence over UDT was not absolute and communications in the area, especially now, were appalling.

12. I turned to the question of Malik's offer of a plane and the Rodgers visit. Djajadiningrat was obviously embarrassed by this. He said he did not know what the offer of a plane to fly members of our staff to Kupang or Atambua could achieve. I said that our Minister wanted to accept the offer which Malik had made publicly. In any case we would be sending Rodgers to Kupang as early as possible by commercial means unless the offered Indonesian plane materialised before then. (Rodgers is in fact leaving this evening 6 November.) Djajadiningrat said all he could do would be to take the matter up again with the Minister after his return.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

327 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 6 November 1975, 4.15 p.m.

O.JA2903 SECRET PRIORITY

Missing Journalists

The *Age* correspondent from Singapore, Michael Richardson, who has returned to Jakarta has told us that he has ascertained from 'a very reliable Indonesian source' that '200 Indonesian troops had been involved in the attack on Balibo with UDT and Apodeti forces'. His source, whom he would not name, said that heavy fire had come from the house in which the Australian journalists were. The house had been mortared and most of the occupants including four of the journalists had been killed inside the house. The fifth jumped out of a window with his arms up saying 'Australian, Australian' but was shot. Richardson added his source had said not in cold blood but in the heat of the battle and probably before what he was saying was understood. He was also said by the source to be wearing a Fretilin battle jacket.

2. Richardson said he was also aware that several Indonesian journalists seemed to know the story but were under strict instructions not to talk about it. But one of his contacts had. He said that carefully vetted Indonesian journalists had been on the scene fairly soon after the fall of Balibo. There had been a sordid argument between Indonesian journalists over who would take one of the cameras which was intact. According to Richardson's source, the newspaper *Berita Yudha* has one of the cameras. It is difficult but we are doing our best to follow this up.

3. Richardson—whose source is obviously very well informed—has asked that in any use the Embassy makes of the information he has given us he is not mentioned by name. We do not think Richardson himself will report this or if he does it will be in a very guarded way.

4. A new element is that Johnson has told us from Kupang that he has come upon some evidence that one of the journalists may be still alive and in Occussi. If true this would be most important. It could also explain the evasiveness and prevarication which we have encountered on this matter. But it could also create a very real problem of how to secure his safety. All the evidence we have suggests that this is *not* so but we shall, of course, follow it up. Meanwhile it would be wrong to raise any false hopes and this information should be closely held.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

328 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 6 November 1975, 5.35 p.m.

O.JA2904 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: Missing Journalists

In view of what is reported in paragraph 4 of JA2903¹ we asked Tjan whether he thought there was any possibility that any of the five journalists had survived. He said it was evident that there had been no survivors.

2. Our American contacts also believe that all five died at Balibo.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

329 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 6 November 1975, 5.00 p.m.

O.LB444 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: Call on Foreign Minister

I called on Melo Antunes this morning. I said that I had read the Rome communiqué carefully and my initial reaction was that it seemed almost too good to be true. Did it represent a real breakthrough in Portuguese/Indonesian relations?

2. Antunes replied that he believed there was now agreement between Portugal and Indonesia on the principles to be observed in the decolonization of Portuguese Timor. Obviously there were differences in points of view expressed in Rome, but on fundamentals the Minister thought that a satisfactory understanding had been reached. The meeting had, he believed, been an important step in clarifying relations with Indonesia.

3. Antunes went on to say that a telegram had already been despatched to FRETILIN proposing round table talks between 15 and 20 of this month, and that the Portuguese Embassy

¹ Document 327.

in Jakarta had been instructed to enlist Indonesian cooperation in conveying a similar proposal to UDT and APODETI. Antunes said he favoured Darwin as the venue.

4. I queried the proposed venue, and said I understood that in Rome Portugal had indicated a preference for the talks to be held on Portuguese territory—namely Macao. Without specifically denying this, Antunes said that in his view Darwin would be the best site and asked me to seek the Australian Government's concurrence in this proposal (presumably if the parties also agreed).

5. The Minister then referred to the general problem of logistics and said that without a 'guarantee' from the Australian Government that Darwin could be used on a regular basis for refuelling ships and as a point from which to maintain regular air transport communications with Atauro, it would be quite impossible for Portugal to achieve its objective of rapid and peaceful decolonization in Timor. The Minister added that if this objective were not achieved because of lack of facilities, the consequences would be 'catastrophic' for Timor and, he believed, 'disagreeable' for Australia. He therefore asked me to seek a guarantee of logistic support from the Australian Government as soon as possible.

6. I said that the Australian Government naturally welcomed the Rome agreement and wished to do what it could to promote the objectives agreed on in Rome (our offer to provide a venue for talks was evidence of this) but 'guarantee' was a strong word. I could not see the Australian Government giving an open ended undertaking to underwrite in a logistic sense the decolonization of Timor. As the Minister knew, we had always taken the view that this was a Portuguese responsibility. Governments did not normally give 'guarantees' in respect of situations in which they were not a party principal. Moreover, I did not entirely share the Minister's view that our aid was indispensable. In view of the understanding reached with Indonesia in Rome, should not the Indonesians be asked to assist with some of these logistic problems? I was sure that my Government wished to be helpful, but we did not regard ourselves as having any exclusive role in this area.

7. Antunes replied that he took the point, but the fact was that, of the three parties in Timor, Indonesia was supporting two of them, and Portugal could not discharge its obligations there without Australia's help, since it was recognised and accepted by all interested parties that we were neutral in respect of the various contenders for power in Timor.

8. This part of the discussion concluded by my saying that I would seek your views on the matter, but that I did not think that any assistance we might give would be pursuant to any form of guarantee.

[*matter omitted*]¹

Comment

14. Antunes seems to have convinced himself that, as a result of the Rome talks, relations with Indonesia are now on a satisfactory footing. This is of course to be welcomed as far as it goes. But it seems that so far both sides have been content to agree on some general principles of decolonization. The real test will come when efforts are made to implement them on the ground. The fact that Antunes regards Australian help as indispensable is a reflection of his distrust of Indonesian intentions. Incidentally he did not refer to Portugal's rejection of the Indonesian proposal for a joint peace-keeping force to maintain peace and order.

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, viii]

¹ Omitted paragraphs report Antunes' version of the Rome talks, including his understanding that Indonesia had agreed to withdraw its forces from the border areas.

330 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 7 November 1975

O.CH287380 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*Ref. O.CH287198¹**For Woolcott*

The Prime Minister has approved the text of the letter to President Soeharto on the subject of the missing newsmen. The signed original will be handed to the Indonesian Ambassador, hopefully over the weekend but if not on Monday 10 November. Tasning leaves for Jakarta on 11 November.

Following is text of letter.

Begins

Before his return for a brief visit to Jakarta, I was very glad to have the opportunity for a general discussion with the Indonesian Ambassador in Canberra, Mr Her Tasning, about the question of Portuguese Timor. He will be able to inform you fully of my views, and when he comes back to Canberra I shall look forward to hearing from him of your own thinking. In this way we shall be able to continue the valuable exchange of views on Portuguese Timor which we had in Yogyakarta and Townsville. On one particular aspect of the question of Portuguese Timor, I am taking the opportunity of your Ambassador's visit to Jakarta to seek through him Your Excellency's personal help.

I refer to the fate of the five missing newsmen from Australia, who, it now seems clear, were caught in the fighting at Balibo in Portuguese Timor on 16 October. There is a great deal of public concern in Australia about the newsmen. The issues involved are very difficult ones for us. We have been assuming that the men, or at least four of them, have been killed. But we have so far been unable to obtain positive confirmation of this fact or indeed to establish precisely the circumstances in which the men were killed. We need to do what we can to establish the facts, to obtain positive identification, and to carry out the wishes of the next-of-kin in regard to the disposal of the remains and the return of personal effects. In the absence of information about the fate of the missing men, various legal problems arise and will continue.

I recognize that Indonesia might not feel well-placed to provide information on an incident which occurred in Portuguese Timor. But Indonesia is the only country in direct touch with UDT and APODETI forces and we have, therefore, been enlisting the good offices of your Government in trying to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion.

Our officials have been in touch these last few weeks and I appreciate the help which Indonesian officials have felt able to provide, in particular in arranging for an exchange of letters between the Australian Embassy in Jakarta and the UDT leader, Mr Lopez da Cruz. We are still lacking, however, final and positive confirmation that the bodies located at Balibo are in fact those of the missing newsmen.

My concern, Your Excellency, is that the longer the issue is not settled the greater will be the speculation in our newspapers and elsewhere about the circumstances in which the five died. It is for this reason that I have felt that I should write to you personally to seek your help in overcoming the problem which has arisen for us. May I suggest, too, that it is in the interests

¹ See note 4 to Document 325.

of others concerned, including the UDT and APODETI parties themselves, that the matter be cleared up as quickly as possible? I should, therefore, be most grateful for anything further Indonesia might be able to do to help us establish positively the fate of the newsmen and to help us obtain such personal effects and remains as may be available.

Ends

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, i]

331 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 7 November 1975

O.JA2938 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: Rome Talks

I called on Adam Malik this afternoon. Djajadiningrat, Alatas and Adenan were with him. Dan accompanied me. On this occasion Malik was relaxed and friendly.

2. I said that when I had last seen him he had offered to brief me on the Rome talks. Malik said that he would be happy to do this.

[*matter omitted*]¹

9. Reverting to the United Nations question,² I said that the issue was of course already before the United Nations. Mozambique among others had shown interest in the subject and it would come before the Fourth Committee later this month. Did not Indonesia believe it would be to her advantage to draft a resolution before others produced theirs? Malik said that the question of United Nations involvement was discussed in Rome at some length. Both sides realised that it could not stop the Fourth Committee from taking up the question. Nor could it stop the Committee of 24 sending a team to Portuguese Timor. In principal, Indonesia and Portugal would have no objection but the safety of the United Nations team and its usefulness would have to be considered. Concerning United Nations matters, it was decided that Portugal and Indonesia would consult very closely before any decisions were taken. (Malik did not include Australia in this reference.)

10. I observed that the Rome talks had apparently gone well. I asked Malik whether Portugal would in fact be able to resume its responsibilities or provide something more than a symbolic presence in Portuguese Timor. Malik replied that Antunes had admitted to him privately that Portugal's authority had greatly diminished. Of course he could not openly say this. It was important for Portugal to be able to say that it was still able to try to reach at least the point where negotiations between the contending parties could be held. Antunes was hopeful that this process might lead to Portugal's effective authority in Portuguese Timor. I said that if Portugal could not reassert its authority, would Portugal ask Indonesia to restore peace and order in Portuguese Timor? Malik did not answer this directly. He said that Indonesia saw logic in Portugal's decision which was to try to get a ceasefire, to try to get the talks going, and to try to get all three parties to agree to recommence the process of decolonisation. But if this

¹ Omitted paragraphs report Malik's account of the talks, which he described as 'open and frank'.

² Malik had said both sides agreed that UN involvement would be 'premature and not opportune', and might in fact be counterproductive to orderly decolonisation.

failed, Malik said that the two countries would meet again to give another opportunity to Portugal to look for other ways to complete the process of decolonisation.

11. I asked whether Indonesia believed that Portugal had the ability to get Fretilin to the conference table. Malik said that Antunes had asked Indonesia to help in this respect and Indonesia believed that it could help indirectly by asking the Australian Government to get a message to Fretilin. He said he would be grateful if I would formally convey this request to you. I said that the Government would not want to be regarded as the 'friend of Fretilin'. But Horta visited Australia frequently and we should be able to pass a message to him. Malik said that, in fact, he had Horta in mind when he made the suggestion. It was in the interests of all countries to bring Fretilin to accept the need for talks.

12. I asked Malik whether he was confident the talks would in fact take place. Malik said that he could not answer this question immediately. Time would tell. He had not yet had the opportunity to speak to UDT and Apodeti leaders but, as had already been announced, he would go 'fairly soon' with General Adenan to the border area to explore the question of talks.

13. I said I noted that Indonesia had an open mind concerning the venue for the talks. As he knew our Minister had announced recently that Australia would be happy to allow the talks to be held in Australia if all the parties agreed. Malik replied that Macau and Lisbon had been mentioned by the Portuguese side. He had suggested Indonesia (Bali) as a possible venue. I asked Malik whether he had any reservations about a meeting in Australia. He said he did not.

14. I asked Malik whether he would be willing to say something about how he saw [Australia's present] role in the question of Portuguese Timor. For a variety of reasons, including the geographical location of Darwin, Australia had been drawn into the problem of Portuguese Timor much more than we would have wished. It had been claimed in some quarters that Australia was pro-Fretilin and that we favoured an independent East Timor. As he knew, these claims were not correct. Malik said Indonesia regarded Australia as very important in the Portuguese Timor question because we were 'close neighbours and good friends'. He hoped that Australia and Indonesia would continue to view Portuguese Timor through the perspective of common interests and common objectives. From the beginning, Indonesia had said that she would accept whatever result eventuated in Portuguese Timor. Whoever won, whichever political view was the majority, Indonesia would accept.

15. The situation of course in Portuguese Timor had changed dramatically since 11 August. Fretilin had acquired arms and achieved its position only as a result of its possession of arms. Fretilin had continued to seek additional arms to consolidate its position. Indonesia asked of Australia only one thing and that was to view the problem of Portuguese Timor in this light. Here was a situation in which Fretilin was trying to invite outside forces and influences into Indonesia's region. This was also not in Australia's interests. There was the current lesson of Angola. If Indonesia and Australia allowed this to happen, a dangerous situation could develop in the future not only for ourselves but for the region. Malik said he hoped that Australia would not view the problem in a limited time frame. It was essential to look to the future in respect of Indonesia/Australia relations.

16. Malik went on to say that if one wished to be really objective, one had to acknowledge how hollow Fretilin's claim was to be the legitimate nationalist movement in Portuguese Timor. Fretilin, unlike the legitimate nationalist groups in Angola and Mozambique, had literally sprung up overnight. This provided a remarkable contrast to the true East Timorese nationalists such as the Raja of Atsabe who had been a prisoner of the Portuguese for 17 years because of his nationalist attitudes. Malik said that he understood there was some misunderstanding even

within the Labor Party about Fretilin, that is, that some Government members seemed to believe that Fretilin was a genuine national liberation movement with deep roots amongst the people. This was simply not so.

17. I asked Malik whether the outcome of the Rome meeting pointed to a shift of policy by the Indonesian Government. As we understood it, the Indonesian Government favoured the integration of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia. Australian policy had been to accept the integration of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia so long as this reflected the wishes of the majority of the Timorese people. I said to Malik that all the information we had suggested that Indonesia would not in fact accept a *de facto* Fretilin Government. What if an act of self-determination produced a Fretilin Government? Malik said Indonesia had made it clear to the Portuguese in Rome that Indonesia's first preference was integration with Indonesia but he had prefaced this by saying that the will of the people had to be respected. If Fretilin won the support of the majority of the people, Indonesia would accept this but it could not accept a situation in which Fretilin obtained control through the force of arms.

18. I said to Malik that for some time it had been suggested to us, both here and in Lisbon, that Portugal had acknowledged that Portuguese Timor's integration with Indonesia would provide the most satisfactory result provided this reflected the wishes of the Timorese people. Malik said that Antunes had also expressed this view to him privately in Rome.

19. I noted that Malik had said that at least for the time being he saw no role for the UN in this matter. I wondered whether there might not be a role for the ASEAN and some other regional countries to play. Malik said 'not for the moment'. It would be 'difficult' and 'complicated' to bring in the regional countries at least at this stage. In fact, the main resistance to regional involvement came from Portugal itself.

[*matter omitted*]³

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

332 CABLEGRAM TO NEW YORK

Canberra, 10 November 1975

O.CH287823 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor/United Nations

You will note from Jakarta's telegram JA2938¹ that Adam Malik and the Indonesians generally continue to be reticent about the possibility of United Nations involvement in the Portuguese Timor issue. Notwithstanding this reaction, however, and whatever agreement the Portuguese and Indonesians come to in Rome, the fact remains that the Fourth Committee will soon be discussing the issue and the Department continues to believe it important that Australia and the Indonesians should not leave the running in the Fourth Committee to non-regional countries.

³ Woolcott commented in conclusion that as Malik was 'charged with the diplomatic and presentational level of Indonesian policy', he would also wish to talk to 'someone like General Moerdani' before responding finally to Document 321 and making an updated assessment of Indonesian policy.

¹ Document 331.

2. We have been giving some consideration as to whether the Item might not be concluded with some form of consensus statement as occurred at the time of the Committee of Twenty-Four hearings in June. The advantage of a consensus statement is that it would be less susceptible to amendment especially if, as we should hope, it could be represented as a regional initiative: a statement might simply be made at the beginning of the debate announcing that regional countries were working on a draft consensus: the consensus itself could then be introduced late in the debate when hopefully it would be accepted without objection.
3. It is relevant in regard to a possible regional consensus approach that the Chairman of the Fourth Committee (Mrs Famah Toka-Bangura of Sierra Leone) in her opening remarks at the beginning of the Committee's work, stressed the advantages 'in the first instance of the cooperation, initiative and good offices of the neighbouring states (acting) on a regional basis' in approaching problems associated with the decolonisation of small territories.
4. As against this, we recognise that delegations like Tanzania and Mozambique may now be too far committed to permit a simple consensus approach. They may insist instead on a resolution which should include an input from themselves. Accordingly, in our accompanying telegram we include the texts of both a possible draft resolution as well as a shorter draft consensus statement.²
5. In a sense, both drafts represent minimum texts. They do not, for example, call for any specific action on the part of the Committee of Twenty-Four, and, in particular, they make no reference to a fact finding mission, an idea which the Tanzanian Chairman of the Committee has been quietly canvassing in New York. Our thinking is that the necessity of such action need not be conceded immediately at least until the pros and cons have been discussed by regional countries. For our own part, if a fact finding role were deemed necessary we may prefer to think in terms of a representative of the Secretary-General (cf. operative paragraph 6 of our draft resolution) than a visit by a mission of the Committee of Twenty-Four. For domestic as well as other reasons. Australia could hardly avoid seeking membership of a Committee of Twenty-Four mission with all the difficulties of additional involvement in the Portuguese Timor problem that would entail. These difficulties could also arise with the involvement of a representative of the Secretary General, but less directly, and we should have more flexibility in reacting to various proposals which might emerge.
6. As indicated, we feel the time has arrived when we must try to bring the Indonesians to focus on these matters. Our hope would be to convey to them, in Jakarta, Australian suggestions for a possible consensus and/or resolution before the end of this week. Before doing so, however, we should appreciate your comments on the advantages and feasibility of a consensus statement [as] against a resolution, and also any observations you may have about the two texts—we imagine that it would be difficult to include a reference in any resolution to Resolution 1541 (XV) to match that to 1514 (XV),³ but you may wish to advise on this possibility.
7. At this stage we do not want you to discuss our texts with other delegations, or indeed indicate that we are actively considering the matter. Nevertheless our hope would be that, if we can bring the Indonesians in Jakarta to agree on a text or texts, these drafts might be

² Cablegram CH287824. The draft resolution deplored the loss of life and suffering in Portuguese Timor, called upon Portugal and the parties in Timor to negotiate towards a process of self-determination and on the governments of the region to promote and facilitate those negotiations. It also called for restoration of conditions to enable refugees to return home, release of all detainees, the good offices of the Secretary-General and review of the situation by the Committee of Twenty-Four. The draft consensus welcomed the intention of Portugal to arrange talks with the parties and called upon all parties to facilitate those talks. Both made special mention of the reference in the Rome communiqué to the continuing interest of countries in the region.

³ See notes 3 and 4 to Document 66.

circulated at the next meeting of the ASEAN-plus group which Anwar Sani had foreshadowed he would be convening following his return from the Rome talks and his visit to Jakarta.

For Jakarta

8. As you will see, we hope to be in a position later in the week to convey to you texts which you might pass to the Indonesians. In doing so you shall need to stress that we are not trying to force the pace, but rather to do what we can to keep the Fourth Committee debate within bounds. We realise of course that the Indonesians would prefer no Fourth Committee debate at all, and that they are pleased that the Portuguese appear to have assured them that Portugal does not want UN involvement either. But it seems unrealistic for the Indonesians to expect that the Portuguese Territories Item might pass in the Fourth Committee without some sort of conclusions.

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, i]

333 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 10 November 1975

O.UN4307 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: United Nations

Ref. OCH287823, O.CH287824¹

The Department's steady pressure has obviously been helpful in bringing home to the Indonesians that they need to mount some sort of campaign at the General Assembly this year, and it is very helpful at this early stage to have the detailed guidance contained in your two reference telegrams.

2. From our contact with the Indonesian and Portuguese Missions we know that Sani has been in touch with his delegation by telephone from Indonesia over the weekend and that the two delegations are planning to discuss at ambassadorial level after Sani returns (probably at the end of this week) coordinated approach in their statements on Timor in the Fourth Committee. This is obviously a big step forward. We understand also that the Indonesian delegation expects that Sani will bring back to New York with him a draft for the Fourth Committee.

3. It is not clear to us whether Sani's draft (assuming one does in fact materialise) will be a consensus or resolution. We are confident that key figures like Salim would have *no* objection to a consensus statement on Timor as opposed to a resolution provided of course they were satisfied with the contents. On grounds of brevity and ease of handling in the Committee a consensus would as you indicate be much preferable.

4. As to substance the pro-Fretilin Africans will probably have two minimum demands:

A) That unlike the evasive formulation of the Lisbon Committee of Twenty-Four text,² the Fourth Committee should reaffirm the right to self-determination *and independence*. (It can be argued

¹ See Document 332 and note 2 thereto.

² See Document 142.

that the General Assembly can do no less in the light of its repetitive annual resolutions on the Portuguese territories generally—see operative paragraph 1 of Resolution 3294 (XXIX):³ and B) That there should be no external interference in the decolonisation process—there might be reference to the relevant Bandung principle.

5. As regards (A) above our feeling is strongly that the point should be *volunteered* by the Indonesians and not conceded by negotiation or, in the worst event, by amendment from the floor. It is consistent with Indonesia's public presentation of its case and as you know (O.UN4085⁴) Sani has himself had this possibility in mind. Given Indonesia's willingness to play the doctrinal game here in this way, we believe most of its difficulties would be over this year. Our feeling is that Salim would in these circumstances not press for a specific reference to a Committee of Twenty-Four or other form of visiting mission, especially if the Portuguese were to indicate in their statement (which might be possible with Indonesia[n] agreement) that they proposed inviting a visiting mission at an appropriate time. The Committee of Twenty-Four or the Secretary-General can of course respond to an invitation from the administering power without any need for approval by the General Assembly.

6. As to points of content and drafting in your second reference telegram, in addition to what is implicit in the comments above, we feel that the draft resolution is considerably too detailed. We wonder also whether, pending developments here next week following Sani's return, you might not agree that it would be better in Jakarta this week to limit ourselves to establishing that the Indonesians are doing some drafting themselves and, if so, to wait on their initiative. We have in mind not only that Sani initiated the meeting here on 24 October but also the signs in the cable traffic, of which we have had a slight echo here, that the Indonesians may not be altogether comfortable at the prospect of talks in Darwin. They might be somewhat put out if, despite our protestations to the contrary, we now appeared to be trying to force the pace in relation to the Fourth Committee. The situation would of course be quite different if they had failed to grasp the nettle after Sani's return here.

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, i]

334 CABLEGRAM TO GENEVA

Canberra, 11 November 1975

O.CH288067 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor: Missing Journalists

In reports appearing in the Australian press on 10 November, three FRETILIN militiamen who ha[ve] 'just returned to Dili' and had witnessed the fighting in Balibo on 15/16 October when the newsmen disappeared, were reported as saying that the five newsmen had been 'captured and executed' by Indonesian troops.

³ UN Resolution 3294 (XXIX) was passed on 13 December 1974. Paragraph 1 reaffirmed 'the inalienable right of the peoples of the Territories under Portuguese dominion to self-determination and independence in accordance with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in resolution 1514 (XV)'.

⁴ 17 October. It reported that Sani proposed to discuss with Soeharto the possibility of Indonesian support for the 'right' to self-determination, going so far as to suggest the possibility of some form of plebiscite or referendum.

2. We believe that it would fall within the ICRC's mandate in regard to persons missing in war zones to follow up such reports about the missing journalists. Accordingly, we contacted the ICRC Representative Pasquier yesterday 10 November to request his assistance in checking these reports. He expressed reservations about the ICRC becoming involved. He said that it was quite clear that the newsmen were dead and that the ICRC's responsibility for locating the newsmen has thus lapsed. He was also concerned that interviewing the three militiamen would compromise the ICRC's neutrality either by provoking the UDT-APODETI side or alienating FRETILIN in the likely event of the ICRC's having to attach a caveat to the effect that it was unable to establish the credibility of the account of the FRETILIN militiamen. Pasquier nevertheless undertook to refer our request to ICRC in Geneva for decision.

3. We should be grateful if you would take up this matter informally with the ICRC in an attempt to enlist their help. We do not of course expect that the ICRC will confirm or deny the reports. However, it would be most helpful if we could say publicly that, in response to an Australian Government request, the ICRC has interviewed the three militiamen concerned and passed to us a report on the interview.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, i]

THE DISMISSAL OF THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT: NOVEMBER 1975

By early November the constitutional crisis in Australia had reached breaking point. There were growing fears that as public finances began to run out public service salaries and contracts would be left unpaid and services such as healthcare, education and public works would be forced to cease. Despite increasing pressures the Opposition senators remained resolute. Similarly, the Government refused all suggestion of compromise and began preparations for the holding of a half Senate election and the possible use of a financial source other than Parliament.

On 11 November, after seeking the advice of Chief Justice Sir Garfield Barwick and Justice Anthony Mason, the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, intervened, dismissing the Government and calling on the Liberal-National Party Opposition to form a government on condition that they guarantee supply and request an immediate election. Malcolm Fraser, leader of the Liberal Party, accepted these conditions and took office as caretaker Prime Minister, appointing Andrew Peacock as Foreign Minister. The role of a caretaker government is essentially to maintain the ordinary process of administration, without introducing any radical departures or new policies, until it or a new government is confirmed in office by an election; the incoming Liberal-National Party Government adhered strictly to this convention. A general election was set for 13 December.

335 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 12 November 1975

O.JA3025 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Timor: Deceased Australian Journalists

After daily pressure since the weekend I saw General Yoga this afternoon 12 November.¹

2. Yoga said he regretted to inform me that all the evidence BAKIN had acquired now indicated that the five journalists (2 Australians, 2 British and one New Zealander) were dead.

3. Yoga handed me a letter dated Balibo on the 3 November and signed by the Rajah of Atsabe. The full text is in my immediately following telegram.² Yoga also handed me some documents, including three passports and one health certificate, the inventory of which also follows by separate telegram.³ In addition Yoga produced a box of photographic equipment and four repeat four boxes of remains.

4. Yoga apologised for the delay which he blamed on poor communications in the border area and the movements of relevant UDT and Apodeti personnel.

5. I said that in Australia the question of legal proof of death was a complex one and asked was it not possible to obtain an eye witness account of the deaths of the journalists which would be more satisfactory than the letter from the Rajah of Atsabe. Yoga said given the movements of troops this would be impossible. The Indonesians will I believe do no more. I also asked Yoga why there were four sets of remains and not five. Yoga said that speaking frankly they had obtained through Atambua one box of remains which they had divided into four. No remains had been located in respect of the body found separately.

6. I asked Yoga whether he was quite confident that all five journalists were dead. He simply said 'yes'.

7. I said a number of Australian press reports maintained that the Australian journalists had been killed by Indonesian troops. Yoga insisted with some anger that this was Fretilin propaganda. He had gone out of his way to meet Australian demands for assistance. He added that the five journalists were with Fretilin forces and had stayed on after they had been warned to leave. They were foolish and their deaths were essentially their own fault. It was regrettable but this happens in wars. Yoga added that Indonesia would not issue any statement on the matter. Balibo was in Portuguese Timor but Indonesia had used its good offices to help us. It did not want to react to each example of Fretilin propaganda. If an Indonesian Minister were however asked at a press conference, he would of course strongly deny the Fretilin allegations. Indonesia would not however take the initiative in this matter.

¹ On 12 November DFA had also instructed the Consulate-General in Geneva to press the ICRC to assist in obtaining information on the journalists, stressing that the journalists were still classified as 'missing' thus covered by the ICRC's mandate relating to missing persons in a war zone (Cablegram CH288321, 12 November).

² Cablegram JA3026, 12 November. The Rajah of Atsabe's letter stated that four European corpses, which were unable to be clearly identified, had been found burnt in a house in Balibo and that two other corpses, one of them white, had been discovered by Apodeti forces on a Fretilin escape route on 26 and 27 October. The Rajah added that some personal effects had been found near the bodies and that the two bodies found on the escape route had been burnt for health reasons.

³ Cablegram JA3027, 12 November. The inventory included the passports of Gregory J. Shackleton, Malcolm H. Rennie and Brian R. Peters, a health care card belonging to Anthony J. Stewart and letters of introduction for Shackleton and Stewart.

8. The Embassy Medical Officer Dr Will has examined the remains and confirmed that to the best of his knowledge they are human remains.

9. We shall return all the documents and equipment listed in our related telegram by airfreight but would like further instructions on what to do with the four boxes of remains.⁴

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, i]

336 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, [13] November 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Relations with Indonesia: Portuguese Timor

Attached is a copy of my submission to you of 13 November about relations with Indonesia and the question of Portuguese Timor. The submission rehearses the difficulties which have arisen with the Indonesians over Timor and refers to the possibility of action in the United Nations on Portuguese Timor and to the plans for talks between the Portuguese and the three main political groups in Portuguese Timor.

2. It may be that the talks will not take place or, if they do, will fail to reach agreement; it seems also likely that consideration of Portuguese Timor in the United Nations will not point the way to a solution in the territory which would ease the difficulties that have arisen in Australia's relations with Indonesia. We should not exaggerate those difficulties but they have affected our relationship, which otherwise remains very good.

3. If the proposed talks do not take place or fail and the United Nations consideration of Portuguese Timor does not take matters forward, it may be that after the elections the Australian Government would wish to send the Foreign Minister to Jakarta for discussions with the Indonesians about our general relationship and the issue of Portuguese Timor. Even if the issue of Timor had not arisen, it would be normal for a new Australian Foreign Minister to make an early visit to Indonesia. For reasons which emerge from the attached submission, we should not be sanguine that a Foreign Minister's visit, while it will point to the importance the Australian Government continues to attach to relations with Indonesia, will be effective in easing the difficulties which have arisen over Timor. Many of the problems which have arisen have been caused by the well-publicized activities of private Australian groups. Scope for Government action is thus limited. It could be possible to recover ground with Indonesia by offering strong Government support for the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia, as for example Malaysia has done. But if this is not possible—and, other problems apart, the Indonesians probably realize that it would be difficult for any Australian Government to give such support unequivocally—then the Indonesians would prefer Australia to be as uninvolved and as unobtrusive as possible.

⁴ Cablegram CH289120 (13 November) advised that all next-of-kin had indicated to DFA that the remains of the newsmen should be buried in Jakarta.

4. The Indonesians might not be able to receive a Minister until some time after the elections, but I think that the Government should not take the initiative to raise the question of a visit until after the elections have taken place.

ALAN RENOUF

Secretary

Attachment¹

SECRET AUSTEO

RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA: PORTUGUESE TIMOR

1. There has been a deterioration recently in our relations with the Indonesians over Portuguese Timor. The main elements in this deterioration are:—

- (a) Public reaction to the widespread and circumstantial reports of Indonesian military involvement in Portuguese Timor.
- (b) Allegations of Indonesian involvement in the deaths of the five missing journalists in Portuguese Timor; and the Indonesians' unhelpful attitude towards clearing up the fate of the journalists.
- (c) The Indonesians' feeling that, while the previous Australian Government's attitude towards the problem of Portuguese Timor has been correct, the Australian news media is pro-FRETILIN, anti-Indonesian groups in Australia have been lending material support to FRETILIN, including arms, and FRETILIN representatives have been allowed to whip up anti-Indonesian feeling here.
- (d) The trades unions' bans on Indonesian shipping and on cargoes for Indonesia. These bans are disturbing our trade with Indonesia, to which we send exports worth about \$100 million a year.
- (e) The daubing twice of Indonesian properties in Canberra. The slogans have been particularly offensive, including one on the Indonesian Ambassador's house calling him a 'fascist butcher'; and while the Indonesians reluctantly accept that the Government can do little about trade union bans and demonstrations, they do believe that we should be able to protect their property here. The Director-General of Political Affairs in the Indonesian Foreign Office is reported as saying publicly that the Australian Government now has a responsibility to prevent further incidents of this kind. Mr Whitlam, as Prime Minister, directed on 6 November that the police ensure that there is no further defacement of Indonesian diplomatic premises in Canberra.

2. [The previous Government was always mindful of the need to have the best possible relations with Indonesia and this has constantly been a basic consideration in the handling of policy over Portuguese Timor. However,] most of the damage to relations with Indonesia has resulted from the action of groups in Australia not directly susceptible to Government influence or control. The capacity of any Australian Government to contain that damage is, therefore, limited. The Government could come out in forthright condemnation of the activities damaging our relations with Indonesia. To do so would earn the Government credit with the Indonesian Government but may have little effect on the activities themselves and might well stimulate them.²

¹ Peacock first saw this submission on 12 November and annotated it as follows: 'Sec, [I do not agree with the above Conclusion]—We should discuss further'. The words in square brackets were then crossed out. A second version of the submission, dated 13 November, was attached to a later submission of 19 November (Document 341), with the changes noted at Paragraphs 2 and 4. The submission as published here and the two versions of its attachment have been found in separate locations (see citation).

² The words in square brackets at the beginning of this paragraph were added to the version submitted on 19 November.

3. A number of other courses of action have been suggested. They have to be considered against the background that the Indonesians have made it quite clear privately that they intend to incorporate Portuguese Timor into Indonesia and they have precise military plans to achieve this. They have remained unresponsive to suggestions for other ways of achieving a predominant position in Portuguese Timor and to suggestions that they might provoke military resistance among the inhabitants of the territory which would create dangers far greater than those of an independent East Timor.

(a) *Australian Mediation*

Against this background of Indonesian determination to seize the territory of Portuguese Timor, an attempt at mediation by Australia is likely to put us on a direct collision course with the Indonesians.

(b) *ASEAN*

The Department's reports indicate that the ASEAN countries take the view that the issue is one for the Portuguese Government to resolve with the Timorese. The other ASEAN countries also attach great importance to the views of Indonesia. Tun Razak, during his recent visit here, implied clearly that ASEAN would act only if Soeharto requested and he said that Soeharto had not done so. We know that the Indonesians are opposed to the regionalization of the problem of Portuguese Timor at least at this stage. It would be awkward, to say the least, for Australia, which is not a member of ASEAN, to pursue the question of Portuguese Timor with ASEAN when Indonesia, which is a member of ASEAN, has chosen not to do so. We think that there *may* be some scope for the regionalization of the question of Portuguese Timor at some later stage—and we have been in touch with the Indonesians from time to time on the subject.

(c) *United Nations*

The Indonesians have made it clear that they want to limit UN involvement in Portuguese Timor. They do not want others to take the initiative on Timor in the United Nations. We have been discussing with them how the question might be handled when it does come up in the UN (as is inevitable this Session). At their recent meeting in Rome, the Indonesian and Portuguese Foreign Ministers agreed that 'under the present circumstances premature involvement by the UN and other forms of "internationalization" of the problem of Portuguese Timor would be inopportune'. It was acknowledged, however, that 'at a certain stage UN involvement and endorsement would be considered appropriate and necessary', that is, UN endorsement of the agreement reached between the Portuguese and the Indonesians in Rome and the results that would flow from it.

4. Hitherto, there have been two strands in the Australian Government policy on Portuguese Timor: (a) a recognition that the territory was part of the Indonesian world and would best be incorporated in Indonesia, provided (b) this could be achieved in accordance with the right of the people of the territory to decide their own political future (a principle to which the Indonesians have also been committed publicly). The Australian Government's relations with Indonesia would, no doubt, be improved—at least in the short term—if the Government were now publicly to concentrate on strand (a) in the existing policy and exclude strand (b). Such a step would, in effect, represent a new policy towards Portuguese Timor. It would encourage the Indonesians in their military plans, which, as pointed out in paragraph 3 above, are not without dangers of provoking a prolonged guerilla warfare in Timor. It might also inflame

anti-Indonesian sentiment among those sections of the Australian population who set greater store by the principle of self-determination.³

[4. In Australia the present position over Portuguese Timor is not unhopeful despite the effect of what has happened so far upon our relations with Indonesia. It was agreed at the recent Rome Talks between Portugal and Indonesia that round-table talks should be arranged between Portugal and all the Timorese political parties. Portugal is now seeking to arrange these talks with Indonesia's assistance. Australia has offered to provide a venue if all involved so wish (Portugal so wishes). It will be some time yet before it is clear whether the talks will take place or not. The chances that they will take place are not good as Indonesia in private has never been keen to see talks. Secondly, the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly is to discuss Portuguese Timor around the end of this month. We are attempting to concert a regional approach to this exercise (so as to control the situation which might otherwise get out of hand) and are trying first to talk to Indonesia.

5. The position is therefore 'held' for the time being. Should, however, the talks which Portugal is trying to organize with Indonesia's ostensible blessing not take place or take place and break down and once the UN exercise is over, the Government will need to consider what more, if anything, it should do. A first essential step in the right direction would be, in my view, for the new Minister to go to Jakarta and talk fully and frankly to the Indonesians should circumstances then prevailing permit (it is conceivable that should Indonesia resume military operations, Fretilin would collapse and withdraw into the hills; in this case a Ministerial visit might be unnecessary). Expectations could be aroused by such a visit but the Government could not be accused of inactivity.]

ALAN RENOUF

Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, ii and iii; A11443, [14]]

337 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 13 November 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: Missing Newsmen

You will have seen the telegrams¹ from Jakarta providing final Indonesian confirmation of the deaths of the five newsmen missing at Balibo in Portuguese Timor since the fighting there on 16 October. Although all five were working for Australian television channels, only two were bearers of Australian passports. Two others were British nationals and the fifth was a New Zealander.

2. This confirmation has been a long time coming. The Australian Embassy in Jakarta has made approaches to the Indonesians virtually every day and at numerous and various levels. Virtually each day they have promised something positive; and each day the Embassy has

³ Paragraph 4 was replaced in the version submitted on 19 November by Paragraphs 4 and 5 as shown here in square brackets.

¹ See Document 335.

been disappointed. The Embassy sent an officer to Kupang in Indonesian Timor hoping to enlist Indonesian assistance in getting him to the border area. In fact the officer concerned was effectively quarantined in Kupang and was not permitted to proceed to the border. A second, more senior officer was sent to Kupang late last week but again without any effective result. Mr Whitlam spoke to the Indonesian Ambassador in Canberra late last week on the matter and subsequently followed-up with a letter² to be conveyed by the Indonesian Ambassador to President Soeharto. (The Ambassador returned to Jakarta for consultations on 11 November.)

3. In the event, General Yoga (Head of BAKIN, the Indonesian State Intelligence body) has now confirmed the death of the newsmen. He did this during a call by the Australian Ambassador in Jakarta on 12 November. He handed over to Mr Woolcott four boxes of remains as well as a letter from an APODETI leader (the Rajah of Atsabe) purporting to describe the possible circumstances in which the newsmen had met their deaths. General Yoga also handed over some personal effects—some passports, other documents and photographic equipment.

4. The next-of-kin have been informed that as a result of this new evidence we are now satisfied that the five newsmen are dead. It would be appropriate for a press statement to this effect now to be released and a draft text has been submitted to you separately.³ You might also wish to consider having a telegram sent to the next-of-kin in your name. The absence of positive identification of the individuals concerned would require that no specific reference to names be made in a telegram from you to the next-of-kin. Our suggested text has been drafted accordingly.

5. The personal effects of the newsmen are being despatched by airbag from Jakarta.

6. The question remains of what should be done with the remains which are apparently badly decomposed and indeed, according to the advice from the Australian Embassy doctor, hardly recognisable as human. Oral advice from all of the next-of-kin of the newsmen is that the remains should be buried in Indonesia. The next-of-kin have the legal right to give instructions on the disposal of the remains and we would propose to instruct the Embassy in Jakarta accordingly. However, it is to be noted that such action by the Government could lead to criticism from groups like the Australian Journalists Association and related bodies which might take the view that the Government has avoided having the remains brought to Australia for fear of allowing a forensic investigation which might show that the newsmen had all been shot. In this regard you will be aware that the long delay in obtaining the facts about the journalists' death has led to speculation in Australia that the Indonesians have been indulging in some form of a cover-up. FRETILIN sources have claimed that the five newsmen were executed after capture in order to prevent their informing the outside world of Indonesian involvement in the attack on Balibo.

7. We ourselves have been unable to establish with certainty the circumstances and manner in which the newsmen died. We knew⁴ that at least four of the missing newsmen had probably been killed by Indonesian or pro-Indonesian forces who attacked Balibo. But we cannot be

² See Document 330. Cablegram JA3087 (14 November) reported Her Tasning's conversation with President Soeharto. The President had been pleased to receive the letter although he 'regarded the main subject of the letter, namely the deceased Australian journalists, as settled'.

³ On 13 November Peacock issued a press statement announcing that the Australian Government had received '... what appeared to be authoritative evidence that the five newsmen missing in Balibo in Portuguese Timor since the fighting there last month, were killed during the attack on the town by UDT, Apodeti and Kota forces on 16 October'. The full text of the statement is given in DFA, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, vol. 46, no. 11, November 1975, p. 657. A burial service, conducted jointly by Anglican and Roman Catholic priests, was held in Jakarta on 5 December at Commonwealth Government expense. Instructions from next-of-kin were sought as to the wording on the single headstone and provision was made to include any remains ever recovered of the fifth body in the same grave.

⁴ One line has been expunged here.

certain whether the newsmen were accidentally killed by mortar or small arms fire, or deliberately shot. Their bodies may have been burnt accidentally as a result of the mortar attack or may have been deliberately burnt in an attempt to conceal their identity and/or manner in which they were killed.

8. In short, then, there would be some considerable support in the Australian community for returning the remains to Australia, at Government expense, to allow a forensic examination to be carried out. The Department, however, would recommend against this. We have an obligation to respect the wishes of the next-of-kin. At the same time, to avoid any later embarrassment, we would propose asking the next-of-kin to convey in writing their instruction that the remains be buried in Indonesia.

9. Our Embassy in Jakarta has advised that there may be some difficulties about burying the remains in Jakarta, e.g. the provision of death certificates and passports. We are cabling Jakarta to obtain further information with a view to enabling burial to proceed.

10. *Recommendations*

It is recommended that you agree:

- (a) to the despatch of the suggested telegram to the next-of-kin; and
- (b) that we proceed with disposal of the bodies in a common grave in Jakarta—provided written instructions to this effect are received from the next-of-kin.⁵

K. H. ROGERS

First Assistant Secretary

International Organisations and Protocol Division

Attachment

DRAFT TELEGRAM TO NEXT-OF-KIN

I regret that I have to advise, in confirmation of what my Department has already informed you, that the Australian Embassy in Jakarta has received what appears to be conclusive evidence that the five journalists missing in Balibo, Portuguese Timor, were killed.

In my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs I wish to express my deepest sympathy to you and the families of the journalists on behalf of the Australian Government.

(ANDREW PEACOCK)

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, ii]

⁵ The Minister agreed to (b) but wanted (a) redrafted 'in less bureaucratic style'. The telegrams as sent read: 'It is with profound regret that I have to confirm receipt of apparently conclusive evidence that your [husband/son, name] who was missing in Balibo, Portuguese Timor, has been killed. I know that the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of your [husband/son, name] have caused you great distress. In my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I wish to express my deepest sympathy to you on behalf of the Australian Government'.

338 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 13 November 1975

O.JA3043 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

When I saw General Yoga on 12 November about the deceased Australian journalists¹ I also raised briefly some other matters related to Timor, given the key role Yoga plays in all aspects of this issue.

(I) Indonesian Involvement

2. I asked Yoga about Information Minister Mashuri's statement of the previous day that Indonesia was training UDT and APODETI forces.² I said that it had been reported previously that Foreign Minister Malik had said this but he had denied it. Yoga said that what Mashuri had been reported as saying was true enough. Mashuri had in mind however the training of APODETI and UDT forces to go back to East Timor with the refugees. The latter wanted to return to their lands but wanted to do so in conditions of security. The training to which Mashuri referred related to this. It was, Yoga said, 'village defence training' not training 'in attack techniques'.

3. I asked Yoga whether, in the wake of Malik's talks with Portugal, Indonesia would limit its military involvement in East Timor. Yoga said predictably and blandly that Indonesia's position was that there is no Indonesian military involvement in Timor. He repeated however that UDT, APODETI and KOTA could be expected to maintain the pressure on the ground in East Timor. Also Indonesia could not be expected to remain inactive given FRETILIN's continuing violation of Indonesia's border and given the understandable wish of many of the refugees to return under protection.

(II) FRETILIN 'Attacks'

4. Yoga said that on the 10 November FRETILIN forces had made their '7th attack' on Indonesian territory. Most of these incidents were either mortar fire into Indonesia or minor skirmishes. The sixth attack on the Indonesian border village of Kota had, however, involved two companies. Fourteen houses had been destroyed and 300 head of cattle stolen. 17 civilians, 2 professional soldiers and 4 civil defence personnel had been killed on the Indonesian side of the border. Yoga said that if this continued, Indonesia must be expected to retaliate.

(III) Possible Talks Between the Parties³

5. I also asked Yoga for his assessment of the chances of FRETILIN agreeing to attend talks. Yoga said that perhaps Australia could use its links with FRETILIN to influence them to attend. I said that, as he would know, Malik had made this point to me last Friday and that I had told him then that we did not wish to be regarded as having special links with FRETILIN. I added that there were no FRETILIN leaders in Australia at present but if any turned up we would be prepared to urge them to attend talks. I said that Portugal would be better placed to press FRETILIN to attend the talks.

¹ See Document 335.

² Cablegram JA2988 (12 November) communicated the text of Mashuri's announcement that the Indonesian Government would assist in improving the fighting capability of Timorese willing to join Indonesia in combating Fretilin.

³ Cablegram JA2985 (11 November) reported that Malik was planning to visit the leaders of UDT and Apodeti in Atambua in order to discuss the Rome meeting and the proposed meeting between Portugal and the Timorese political parties. The Embassy in Jakarta considered that UDT and Apodeti would accept the invitation to attend the talks but would not agree to Australia as a venue for them.

6. Yoga said he accepted the point. He added that while Indonesia could get UDT and APODETI to attend talks if they materialised he doubted whether Portugal or anybody else would in fact be able to get FRETILIN to them, at least until FRETILIN accepted that its position could not last.

7. I asked Yoga whether the reference in the Memorandum of Understanding⁴ to the equitable representation of all the parties meant that KOTA and TRIBALISTA should also be included in any talks. Yoga said that he had not thought of this but doubted if it would be so interpreted. KOTA and TRIBALISTA did not have at present defined areas of influence like FRETILIN, UDT and APODETI.

(IV) *Possible Venues for Talks*

8. Yoga asked if the recent political changes in Australia meant that Australia was still a possible venue for any talks. I said that we now had a new Caretaker Government but as far as I knew at present the offer was still open. In fact Portugal had suggested the talks should be in Australia. Yoga said he 'personally' thought Darwin was 'out'. FRETILIN would not accept talks in Indonesia and he did not believe that UDT, and possibly APODETI also, would want talks in Australia (our O.JA2965 refers⁵). We might think it unfair but they did not now regard Australia as neutral. There were too many supporters and defenders of FRETILIN in Australia.

9. Yoga said that if the talks took place, he thought the most likely venues now would be Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur or Singapore, possibly the former.

(V) *United Nations*

10. I asked Yoga whether he had seen Sani. I added that, as I had said before, it was our view that Indonesia needed to do more to protect its position internationally, especially in the United Nations, as Timor would be considered in the Fourth Committee later this month. Yoga told me that he had briefed Sani earlier in the day and that Sani had been instructed to do everything he could to convince the Africans and others that FRETILIN was not an established liberation movement. Sani apparently has been given 'documents, photographs and slides' to use in New York.

11. To my surprise Yoga then said that he had seen the Draft Resolution and the Draft Consensus we had prepared.⁶ He had told Sani that with one or two minor amendments they were acceptable to Indonesia if it seemed in New York that they would be needed. I asked Yoga how he knew of the drafts. He said from Canberra. I told Yoga that any texts we had prepared were at this stage only of a contingency nature, as the item was coming up in the Fourth Committee. They were intended to be helpful to Indonesia. We wished to have contingency drafts which could, if required, be put in first before other less sympathetic groups, for example FRETILIN's African groups might seek to put in drafts. Yoga said that he accepted this and said that Sani would be in contact, primarily with the Portuguese delegation, but also with our own delegation on his return to New York.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, i]

⁴ See Document 202. The text of the draft memorandum of understanding was conveyed in Cablegram JA1538 (30 August).

⁵ 10 November. It reported Tjan's similar view of UDT objections to any locations in Australia.

⁶ For the Australian Draft Resolution see UNGA 30 A/C.4/L.1125. The texts of both the Draft Resolution and the Draft Consensus were communicated in Cablegram CH287824 (11 November). See note 2 to Document 332.

339 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA AND WASHINGTON

Jakarta, 13 November 1975

O.JA3058 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor*Ref O.CH286335¹*

Should the Indonesian campaign in Portuguese Timor run into serious difficulties or even fail completely we do not believe the Armed Forces would blame President Soeharto and turn against him.

2. While there was initial disappointment among some senior military advisers, notably General Moerdani, that the President would not authorise overt intervention in Portuguese Timor, it is evident that these same officers now strongly support the Indonesian covert military operation. Moreover, Soeharto's firm decision—he did not 'hesitate' at any stage—not to intervene openly was we believe supported by at least two key ABRI figures, Defence Minister Panggabean and Air Marshal Sudharmono. Soeharto's cautious approach has also been backed from the beginning by General Ali Murtopo.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

340 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCKCanberra, [18 November 1975]¹

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor: Talks

On the Summary of Cables for 13 November you queried why Mr Malik should be awaiting news from Australia about FRETILIN's attitude to proposed talks with the Portuguese.

2. The proposal for round-table talks between the Portuguese and the three major Timorese political groups (FRETILIN, UDT and APODETI) flows from the Rome meeting between the Portuguese and Indonesian Foreign Ministers. The Portuguese agreed to take early steps to arrange such talks and to prevail on FRETILIN to attend, while the Indonesians undertook to use their influence with the pro-Indonesian parties, that is, UDT and APODETI, to persuade them to participate.

3. The Portuguese afterwards proposed that the talks be held in Darwin between 15 and 20 November. But so far they have had no official replies to the telegrams they sent to the three parties proposing the talks. The press this morning reports that the talks will begin in Australia on 24 November and that FRETILIN has agreed to participate; but we are inclined to doubt whether this is true, for reasons which emerge below.

¹ 5 November. The Embassy in Jakarta was asked to ascertain whether President Soeharto was in political danger as a result of his hesitation in intervening by military means in Portuguese Timor after Fretilin had gained the ascendancy. Quick intervention by military means had been favoured by ABRI and it was speculated that if the current Portuguese Timor campaign had difficulties then ABRI might blame the President.

¹ This was the date the submission was received in Peacock's office.

4. There can be little doubt about the Indonesians' capacity to get UDT and APODETI to the conference table. But it is very possible that UDT and APODETI (and the Indonesians) will balk at an Australian venue. We have been told as much in Jakarta. It has been suggested that Australia would not be accepted as neutral ground in view of the help given to FRETILIN by Australian organizations like the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) and the Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid—Timor (ASIAT) and because of the alleged pro-FRETILIN bias of the Australian press, the trades unions, some individual Australians and certain sections of public opinion.

5. For corresponding reasons FRETILIN itself has always been disposed to favour an Australian venue for talks. News reports from Dili suggest that FRETILIN would prefer Melbourne to Darwin because, according to these reports, Melbourne is 'where there are many information media organs capable of reflecting the content and substance of the talks'. In other words, FRETILIN recognizes that talks held in Australia would stimulate further (and possibly major) Australian press and public interest in the issue of Portuguese Timor, and that that interest is likely to be sympathetic to FRETILIN and anti-Indonesian. For talks to be held in Australia would deepen Australia's official involvement in the Portuguese Timor problem. It is for this reason that the former Government was wary when the Portuguese first mooted the idea of talks in Australia in mid-September, although it recognized that if *all* the parties wanted the talks to take place in Australia, it could not refuse an Australian venue.

6. It is uncertain whether FRETILIN would attend talks at which the other Timorese parties would be present. FRETILIN has previously maintained that it would not. Conflicting reports broadcast over Radio Dili suggest there could be a division within the FRETILIN leadership over the Portuguese proposal, with Ramos Horta and some others inclined to accept talks with FRETILIN's rivals and an opposing group against such talks. The Portuguese told our Ambassador in Lisbon on 12 November that they were sanguine that FRETILIN would participate in round-table discussions. We have informed the Portuguese that the previous Government's agreement to allow an Australian venue is on the basis that *all* parties want the talks to be held in Australia and that they all attend. We said that the previous Australian Government would not be agreeable to Australia's becoming the venue for talks between Portugal and FRETILIN alone.

Malik's Remarks

7. Malik's public remarks (10 November) that he was awaiting news from the Australian Government on FRETILIN's attitude followed a discussion he had with the Australian Ambassador on 7 November.² The following is the relevant extract from Mr Woolcott's telegram:—

'I asked whether Indonesia believed that Portugal had the ability to get FRETILIN to the conference table. Malik said that Antunes had asked Indonesia to help in this respect and Indonesia believed that it could help indirectly by asking the Australian Government to get a message to FRETILIN. He said he would be grateful if I would formally convey this request to you. I said that the Government would not want to be regarded as the "friend of FRETILIN". But Horta visited Australia frequently and we should be able to pass a message to him. Malik

² See Document 331.

said that, in fact, he had Horta in mind when he made the suggestion. It was in the interests of all countries to bring FRETILIN to accept the need for talks.'

8. On 11 November, following Malik's public remarks, the Department confirmed to Mr Woolcott that what he had told Malik on 7 November was correct, namely, that the Australian Government had no official contacts with FRETILIN and did not want to be cast in the role of the 'friend of FRETILIN'. We noted, however, that in recent discussions with Horta the Department had already impressed on him the need for FRETILIN to sit down at the table with the other Timorese parties and, further that, if a political settlement were to emerge, FRETILIN would need to give up a good deal of what it had won on the battlefield, and in effect return to the Macao program. We said that if Horta, or some other FRETILIN representative, returned to Canberra we should, of course, be prepared to speak to him again in these terms but that the Australian Government could not be regarded as having any special relationship with FRETILIN or as a channel of communication to it. There was no reason why the Portuguese should not continue to provide this latter service.

9. Mr Woolcott has since spoken to Mr Malik in these terms, and this morning's telegrams indicate that the message has got through to Malik.

10. In the Department we have considered carefully whether or not we should try to initiate some contact with the FRETILIN leaders in an effort to nudge them towards early participation in round-table talks. But, having considered the idea, we recommend firmly against it. From the beginning FRETILIN has shown itself anxious to enmesh Australia in the internal affairs of Portuguese Timor—first as a counter-balance to Indonesian pressures and second with a view to the Australian Government's becoming a kind of patron who might in due course be induced to underwrite an independent East Timor economically as well as politically. The previous Government considered that for Australia to allow itself to be drawn in in this way could have the most serious consequences not only for our future relations with Indonesia and, by extension, with the rest of the ASEAN world, but also for the disproportionate demands an independent East Timor, looking primarily, and perhaps solely, to Australia could place on Australian resources.

11. All this may seem to take us a long way from the simple proposition that we might establish some contact with FRETILIN to try to persuade them to attend talks. But what if, having taken it on ourselves to sponsor FRETILIN attendance, the talks, as is likely, break down? We should find ourselves at the top of a slippery slope. The pressures on Australia to take over from Portugal an active mediatory role would be very considerable. In turn, as we have noted elsewhere, such a mediatory role could place us on a collision course with Indonesia and further reduce the range of all future policy choices.

Conclusion

12. In summary, then, the Department does not favour initiating direct and official contacts with FRETILIN to persuade it to the conference table. The Australian Government should certainly continue to encourage the Portuguese and Indonesians in their efforts to get round-table talks under way, the Department should continue to urge the need for flexibility when Ramos Horta or, indeed, other Timorese leaders call on us, and the Government should continue to maintain the offer of an Australian venue for the talks. But otherwise we should leave the running to the Portuguese and the Indonesians and, so far as is possible, limit Australian official involvement.

ALAN RENOUF

Secretary

341 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 19 November 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Relations with Indonesia: Portuguese Timor

1. Attached is a copy of my submission to you of 13 November about relations with Indonesia and the question of Portuguese Timor.¹ The submission rehearses the difficulties which have arisen with the Indonesians over Timor and refers to the possibility of action in the United Nations on Portuguese Timor and to the plans for talks between the Portuguese and the three main political groups in Portuguese Timor.
2. It may be that the talks will not take place or, if they do, will fail to reach agreement; it seems also likely that consideration of Portuguese Timor in the United Nations will not point the way to a solution in the territory which would ease the difficulties that have arisen in Australia's relations with Indonesia. We should not exaggerate those difficulties but they have affected our relationship, which otherwise remains very good.
3. If the proposed talks do not take place or fail and the United Nations consideration of Portuguese Timor does not take matters forward, a new phase in this whole issue would be opened. This would be after the elections on 13 December. As by then there would have been no discussion at Ministerial level with the Indonesians about our general relationship and the issue of Portuguese Timor for many months, a visit to Jakarta by the Minister for Foreign Affairs would be desirable. Even if the issue of Timor had not arisen, it would be normal for a new Australian Foreign Minister to make an early visit to Indonesia.
4. For reasons which emerge from the attached submission, we should not be sanguine that a Foreign Minister's visit, while it will point to the importance the Australian Government continues to attach to relations with Indonesia, would be effective in easing the difficulties which have arisen over Timor. Many of the problems which have arisen have been caused by the well-publicized activities of private Australian groups. Scope for Government action is thus limited. In the problem of Portuguese Timor, the Indonesians would probably prefer the Australian Government to be as uninvolved and as unobtrusive as possible. However, the visit by the Minister would seem the essential pre-condition to formulation by the new Government of policy.
5. Perhaps the idea of a visit might now be floated in instructions to the Australian Ambassador in Jakarta as the culmination of a message emphasising the continuing importance Australia attaches to relations with Indonesia and recognizing the significance for Indonesia of Portuguese Timor.
6. There is little else that the Government can do which has not already been done to limit the prejudice which the Timor question has caused to relations with Indonesia. However, it may be possible to remove, at least temporarily, one irritant to the relationship which is not mentioned in the attached submission. This is the frequent visits to Australia from Timor of Mr Ramos Horta of FRETILIN (the member of FRETILIN charged with foreign relations). It would be quite proper, as I see it, for the Government, as a caretaker, not to receive Horta (or any other representative of FRETILIN) at the Ministerial level should he come to Australia again before 13 December. Such a decision would be welcome to Indonesia and I suggest that it be taken and conveyed to Indonesia.

¹ Document 336.

7. Should you agree to the above suggestions, a draft telegram to Jakarta is attached for consideration.²

ALAN RENOUF

Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iii]

342 DISPATCH TO PEACOCK

Jakarta, 19 November 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Indonesia: The Internal Situation The Uneasy Calm

[matter omitted]

The Leadership

President Soeharto has maintained and strengthened his own position during the last twelve months and remains firmly in control. He appears certain to secure re-election in early 1978 for a further term as President, at which time he will still be only 56 years of age. More interest will centre on the election at the same time of a Vice-President. The Sultan of Yogyakarta, who is currently Vice-President, has been in indifferent health and will then be 65 years old. He is said not to be anxious to carry on. Speculation about his possible successor has already included General Surono, the present Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces, although he is also slated to become Minister for Defence when General Panggabean retires or should his health fail before then.

It has been suggested that President Soeharto's position could be endangered if developments in Portuguese Timor go badly for Indonesia. This is based on the argument that since the President declined to accept his military advisers' recommendation in favour of direct intervention in Portuguese Timor—that he 'hesitated'—the Armed Forces (ABRI) might blame Soeharto for any failure in Portuguese Timor and turn against him. I do not consider that this is likely. While there was initial disappointment among some, but not all, key military advisers at the President's firm decision (he did not hesitate), Indonesia's policy of covert military intervention is, as far as we know, now fully supported by ABRI.

The Armed Forces

The Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) have presented a united front over the past year. While any divisions in its leadership which may have existed prior to January 1974 have been effectively papered over, there has inevitably been some speculation about General Panggabean's successor as Commander of the Armed Forces and Minister for Defence and Security. Panggabean has already reached the normal military retirement age; his ill-health

² The cablegram, published as Document 343, was dispatched on 20 November.

also suggests that he may step down soon. General Surono is a strong and generally acceptable contender for this job too. We do not know which position, Vice-President or Defence, he would prefer, although of course they are not mutually exclusive. Appointment to replace Panggabean during 1976, say, might then be followed by transition to the Vice-Presidency in early 1978. Either appointment would make Surono a strong contender to succeed President Soeharto eventually. It seems unlikely that the succession in ABRI leadership would create internal problems for the Armed Forces. A certain amount of discontent persists at junior levels of the Armed Forces: the nature and scale of the personal enrichment and ostentatious life style of some senior officers appalls many junior and middle-ranking officers. The post-1945 officer generation are said to regard themselves as professional soldiers rather than *dwi fungsi* administrators. This feeling does not represent any serious challenge to the Armed Forces leadership at present, but could be important in five to ten years as these younger officers inherit positions of power within the Armed Forces.

[matter omitted]

Implications for Australia

The short-term prospects for stability are in accord with Australia's interests in Indonesia. However, we need to watch carefully the elements of instability contained within the present situation which make the medium and long-term prospects less certain. It is in Australia's interests that a stable and credible central Government should hold power in Jakarta.

Stability is, of course, not the only criterion. A continuing preoccupation with internal security by the Indonesian Government, and the implications this has for current and future developments with regard to political prisoners, may pose a problem for us. This can, however, be a matter on which we agree to differ and should be viewed in the context of our overall relations and interests.

Finally, it has generally been accepted that it is important to maintain good relations with Indonesia, regardless of who is in power in both countries. In the context of this despatch, this means that while making use of our opportunities to forge and maintain close links and good channels into the present Indonesian Government, we should be alert to alternative centres of power and careful not to allow ourselves to be seen as too intimately tied up with the personnel of the present regime. The emphasis must be, so far as it is possible in practical terms, on our relations with Indonesia as a country and the Indonesian Government as such, rather than the personal relationship with President Soeharto and his immediate circle.

R. A. WOOLCOTT

Ambassador



*From left: Andrew Peacock, Australian Foreign Minister,
J. M. Fraser, Prime Minister, and R. A. Woolcott,
Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, 1976*



*Ministerial talks in Jakarta, 19–20 January 1976. Visible on the left are:
R. B. Djajadiningrat, Director-General for Political Affairs, Indonesian Ministry of
Foreign Affairs; and Adam Malik, Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs.
The Australians are, from right: M. J. Dan, Minister, Australian Embassy, Jakarta;
Alan Renouf, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs; Andrew Peacock, Minister for
Foreign Affairs; R. A. Woolcott, Ambassador to Indonesia; and A. R. Taylor,
Counsellor, Australian Embassy, Jakarta.*



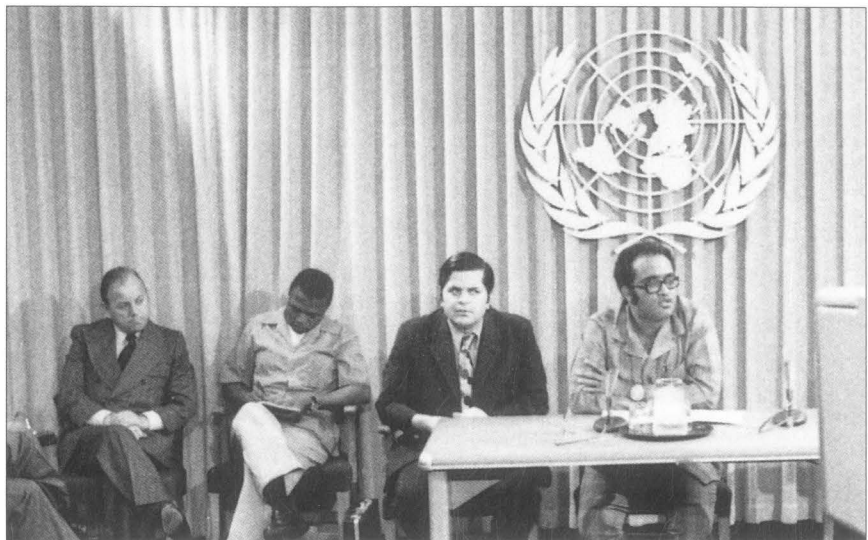
*Sir Laurence McIntyre,
Australian Ambassador to the United Nations,
New York, 1970–1975*



*R. L. Harry,
Australian Ambassador to the United Nations,
New York, 1975–1977*



*Tang Ming-chao,
United Nations Under-Secretary for Political Affairs
and Decolonization, New York, 23 May 1975*



*Salim A. Salim (right), Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee of
Twenty-Four on Decolonization, during a press conference, New York, 19 May 1975*



Chaidir Anwar Sani, Indonesian Ambassador to the United Nations (right), addressing the Security Council, New York, 15 December 1975



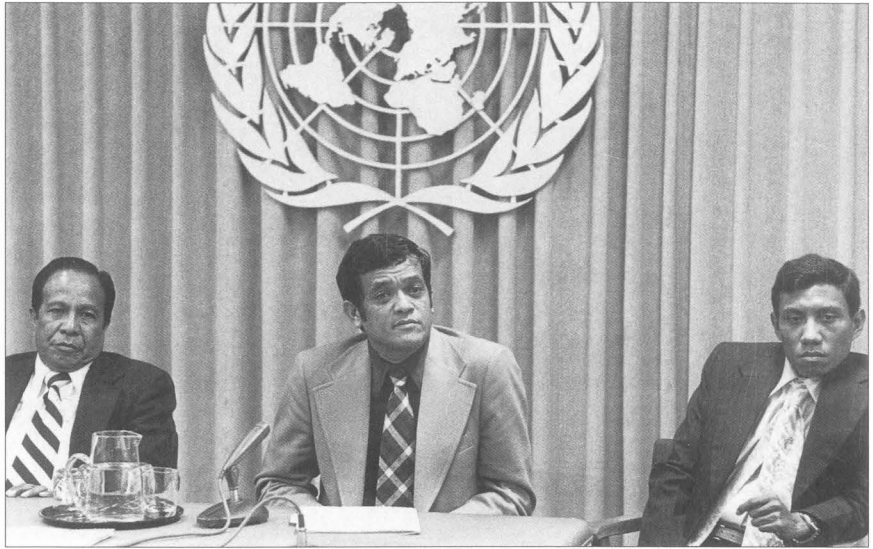
R. L. Harry, Australian Ambassador to the United Nations (centre), making a statement to the Security Council, New York, 16 December 1975. A. D. Campbell and G. J. Forrester (second and third from left) are sitting behind Harry.



Winspeare Guicciardi, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to Portuguese Timor (far right), with Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, Geneva, 9 April 1976



José Ramos Horta, Minister for External Relations and Information of the Democratic Republic of East Timor (right), addressing the Security Council, New York, 12 April 1976



*The Provisional Government of East Timor at the United Nations, New York,
22 April 1976: (from left) Chairman of the Delegation, G. M. Gonçalves,
M. V. Carrascalão, and J. P. Soares*

343 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 20 November 1975

O.CH291591 SECRET PRIORITY

Australian Relations with Indonesia*For Woolcott*

1. The Prime Minister would be glad if you would convey a message to President Soeharto indicating the great importance which Mr Fraser attaches to Australia's relations with Indonesia and that the Prime Minister, should he be returned to power on 13 December, will be seeking to build up further those relations and to establish close personal ties with the President.¹
2. The Prime Minister wants you to say that he recognizes the need for Indonesia to have an appropriate solution for the problem of Portuguese Timor. He regrets such irritants to Australia's relations with Indonesia as the actions by Australian trade-unions with regard to Indonesian shipping as have been caused by this question.
3. You should make it known to President Soeharto too that in the event of the present Government being returned at the elections on 13 December, the Prime Minister proposes that the Foreign Minister should make an early visit to Jakarta for conversations with Indonesian Ministers.
4. The Prime Minister wants you to tell the President, in addition, that pending the elections Ministers will not (repeat not) receive Ramos Horta or any other representative of FRETILIN should he come to Australia.
5. The Indonesians should be informed that the Prime Minister wants the transmission and contents of his message to remain secret.

[NAA: A11443, [14]]

344 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 25 November 1975

O.JA3280 SECRET PRIORITY

For the Secretary

I saw President Soeharto this morning to deliver the Prime Minister's message.¹ (He had been out of Jakarta over the weekend and unavailable on Monday.) In order to assist in preservation of secrecy (paragraph five of your O.CH291591²) I arranged to meet the President at his private residence. The President said he regretted he had been unable to receive me on Monday. He had seen me as soon as he could.

2. I made each of the six points in your telegram under reference. The President said he 'greatly appreciated' the Prime Minister's message. Indonesia too attached great importance to its relations with Australia.

¹ See Document 341.

¹ Document 343.

² Document 343.

3. The President referred to his close personal ties with Mr Whitlam. He said that Indonesia could not intervene in any way in Australia's domestic politics but, depending on the outcome of the election he would want to maintain his ties with Mr Whitlam or develop similar personal ties with Mr Fraser.

4. The President said he was very pleased Mr Fraser recognised the need for Indonesia to have an appropriate solution of the Timor question. He said there was 'no change' in Indonesian policy. Portuguese Timor should be decolonised 'properly'. Indonesian interests however needed to be taken into account, especially the problem of the 40,000 refugees and their wish to return to East Timor. The President asked if I could amplify the Prime Minister's message on this point. I said that I had not been in a position to discuss the message with the Prime Minister but I would assume that by appropriate solution the Prime Minister would have in mind a solution which accommodated Indonesia's policy interests.

5. The President asked whether I thought the agitation about Timor would continue in Australia. I said it depended on the way in which the situation developed. From that point of view, the sooner the situation was settled and peace returned to East Timor the better. The President said that this was one of the paradoxes in the situation. Indonesia could 'settle the situation very quickly' but it was 'not for Indonesia to do this'. The decolonisation process would have to proceed properly. (The President made no reference to direct Indonesian involvement although I assume he must be aware that I know of it.)

6. The President added that while what happened in East Timor was important for Australia, we were basically a stable country. Moreover we were separated from Timor by the Arafura Sea. What happened in Timor was of importance to Australia but it was unlikely to affect seriously Australia's future stability. What happened there was however of vital importance to Indonesia and could affect Indonesia's future stability. The future of Timor was of greater concern to Indonesia than it was to Australia. He sometimes wondered whether this was appreciated by those who sought to criticise Indonesia in Australia.

7. The President noted Mr Fraser's regret about such irritants to Australian relations with Indonesia as the ban on Indonesian ships by Australian unions. He did not want to see trade and communications disrupted when they should be being further developed. He said he had been disappointed by the manifestations of hostility towards Indonesia in some union, student and other circles. I said that as Mr Whitlam had told the President in Townsville there were latent fears and suspicions of Indonesia in some sections of the Australian community. The Timor situation and allegations of Indonesian involvement had tended to stir them up. President Soeharto said he knew this.

8. President Soeharto added that he believed the Australian public generally had an 'unbalanced' picture of FRETILIN and the situation in Timor. (I think Indonesian Ambassador Her Tasning had put this view to him on his recent visit to Jakarta.) Could not more be done to secure a better balance? Many members of the Australian public were being 'misled' by FRETILIN propaganda and by the Australian media. If Mr Fraser were to be elected on the 13 December he hoped he would emphasise the importance to both countries of their relations with each other and help to see that Indonesia's position was better understood. Timor was unimportant in itself and should not be allowed to undermine Australian/Indonesian relations.

9. The President said he was 'very pleased' to hear that Ministers would not receive Ramos Horta or other representatives of FRETILIN should they visit Australia. He had found it difficult to understand why representatives of only one party in the Timor dispute and a party which had established its position by force and intimidation was so well

received in Australia. The President added that he hoped this decision would mean less exposure for FRETILIN propaganda in Australia. I explained that although Ministers would not see Horta he would still have access to the Australian media. One of our problems was the fact of our geography. Darwin traditionally was Dili's main link, other than Lisbon, with the outside world. As Dili was in FRETILIN's hands it had inevitably become FRETILIN's main link with the outside world.

10. The President said that, if the Government was returned at the election, the Foreign Minister would be very welcome to visit Jakarta again. The President recalled Mr Peacock's visit to Jakarta in April. He said that he had welcomed the helpful public statement Mr Peacock had made while he was in Indonesia.³ The President added that the Prime Minister would also be very welcome to visit Indonesia when he was able to do so. He asked if Mr Fraser had visited Indonesia. I said he had done so as Minister for Defence. I added that he had intended to visit Indonesia again last June but that this visit had to be deferred because of the domestic political situation in Australia.

11. The President said he hoped Australia would 'settle down' after the election and 'become stable again'. I intervened to say that Australia was fundamentally stable, economically, politically and socially. It was going through a period of some political turbulence and economic difficulty but this should not be exaggerated by other countries in the region. The President said that he hoped this was correct. A stable and friendly Australia was of great importance to Indonesia and to all the countries of South East Asia and the South Pacific, both as a source of technical assistance and to bolster regional confidence.

12. Finally the President asked me to pass his personal good wishes to the Prime Minister.

13. To sum up, I consider the Prime Minister's message was well received by the President and could yield a useful dividend if the present Government is returned at the General Election. It may also have created some expectations and the President may look for some effort on the Government's part, if it is confirmed in office, to moderate the growth of hostility towards Indonesia in the Australia[n] community.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A11443, [11]]

³ See Document 131 and note 1 thereto.

UNION BANS ON INDONESIAN SHIPPING: 1975–1976

Perhaps the most concerted public reaction against the Indonesian involvement in Portuguese Timor came from the Australian trade union movement in relation to Indonesian shipping. On 22 October 1975, the Seamen's Union in Melbourne placed an indefinite 'black ban' on the Indonesian vessel Gunung Tambora as a means of protesting over the deaths of the five journalists at Balibo. At this same time the Waterside Workers' Federation in Darwin imposed a ban on all trade with Indonesia. By the end of the month Indonesian ships around the country were being targeted.

The Indonesian Ministry of Communication indicated their grave concern to the Australian Embassy in Jakarta and asked that the Australian Government use whatever means it could to reopen this important conduit for Australian–Indonesian trade. On 6 November the Indonesians were assured that the Government and the Australian Council of Trades Unions would use their good offices with the maritime unions to 'defuse the situation' (Cablegram O.CH286908 to Jakarta). This assurance of ACTU assistance was repeated on 18 November (Cablegram O.CH290705 to Jakarta) despite the fact that the Seamen's Union bans on Indonesian shipping had been subsumed within a nationwide strike against the new Government. The following day the Embassy in Jakarta reported that President Soeharto had expressed irritation at the Australian Government's failure to end the ban (Cablegram O.JA3166 from Jakarta).

The deepening political animosities in Australia and the growing evidence of Indonesian involvement in Portuguese Timor led the ACTU executive on 27 November to reverse its position and accept the decision of the maritime unions to continue their ban on Indonesian shipping. These union bans remained one of Indonesia's greatest and most constant complaints against Australia throughout 1976. Although the Liberal–National Country Party Government was itself critical of the trade union movement, it could only express sympathy for the Indonesian position and repeat that in a free society there was only so much a government could do.

345 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 27 November 1975

O.JA3326 SECRET IMMEDIATE

For Secretary and Minister

Since speaking on the telephone to Feakes I have had a chance to consider the proposed statement by the Minister which Feakes read to me over the telephone.¹

2. I fully appreciate the situation created by the Richardson articles² and the domestic pressures aroused by the Timor situation in Australia.

3. I feel bound however to recommend to the Minister that the statement not be made.

¹ Neither a record of this discussion nor the proposed statement by Peacock has been found.

² On 26 November, the *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* published front-page articles by Michael Richardson, stating that an Indonesian bomber and at least one Indonesian warship had been involved in an attack on Atabae on 25 November. An editorial in the *Age* on 26 November referred to the Indonesian Government's repeated denials of military involvement in Portuguese Timor and described Richardson's report as 'certainly *prima facie* evidence for the Australian Government to stir itself from its torpor and demand a frank and detailed explanation from the Indonesians'.

4. I believe that the statement as read to me would damage Australia's relations with Indonesia. Indonesia is already critical of what they regard as an over-active Australian involvement in Timor especially as we have maintained that we are not a party principal. I believe that the statement would be disadvantageous to the Government developing further relations with Indonesia if it is returned to government on the 13 December.

5. The proposed statement would appear to the Indonesians to be inconsistent with the message from the Prime Minister which I conveyed to President Soeharto only two days ago.³ It is even possible that the Indonesians might consider leaking the Prime Minister's message to offset the proposed statement by the Minister.

6. The Indonesian Government continues to deny its military intervention in Portuguese Timor. However transparent these denials may appear the proposed statement would in effect accuse, in the name of the Minister, the Indonesian Government of lying. (It is true and we know it is but public acknowledgement by us at this level must be expected to create a strong reaction in Indonesia.) The Indonesians could also interpret the phrase that the Minister has reason to believe that press reports are true as a breach of confidence in what I and other senior political officers in the Embassy have been told by close personal contacts. These contacts have taken us more fully into their confidence than could reasonably have been expected on the grounds that the Australian Government should know what was really happening and that it would do its best to be helpful to Indonesia.

7. I consider that the Indonesians would be surprised that the Caretaker Government would make a statement which they would see as going beyond the previous Minister's statement of 30 October.⁴ (There has as you know been no new development in Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor since Senator Willesee's statement except that it has become more public.)

8. As far as we know no other countries are contemplating a similar statement. By making one we would be putting ourselves in the vanguard of Indonesian critics at the same time as we are maintaining to the Indonesians the great importance which we continue to attach to our relations with Indonesia and while we are saying that we are sympathetic towards Indonesia's objectives. The ASEAN countries presumably continue to say nothing and we could also be setting ourselves further apart from the countries of the region with which we are seeking closer identification.

9. One of the reasons the Indonesians are so sensitive to Australia's activities in respect of Timor is that they believe that public influence in western countries is to a large extent influenced by Australia's attitude. They could well see a statement by Australia shortly before President Ford's visit as putting some pressure on the United States in respect of the Timor situation. This of course would also not be welcomed by the United States.⁵

[10.] Most countries including Australia maintain that the most logical outcome of the decolonisation of Timor is its integration with Indonesia. The breakdown in Portuguese decolonisation policy, instability in Lisbon itself and the resort to force by two relatively small and immature political parties are largely responsible for the situation in which Indonesia now finds itself. In these circumstances what Indonesia wants of its friends is support and understanding. If this is not forthcoming it looks to them for silence and acquiescence as the next best policy. If this is not forthcoming then Indonesia looks for as low a level of activity and criticism as is possible especially from countries like Australia which endorse Indonesia's

³ See Documents 343 and 344.

⁴ The draft of Willesee's statement in the Senate is published as Document 308. See also Documents 310 and 311.

⁵ President Ford was to visit Indonesia in the first week of December.

objectives (although not the means it is using) and seek to consolidate and develop further their relations with Indonesia.⁶

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

WOOLCOTT

346 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 27 November 1975

O.JA3327 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I spent an hour privately with General Moerdani on 25 November.

2. I found Moerdani somewhat tense and nervous on this occasion and he appeared to be under some strain.

Indonesian Policy

3. He said he was worried about the way in which the Timor situation was developing. Indonesia was having 'the worst of both worlds'. It was involved in East Timor and being criticised in Australia, but nowhere else, for this.¹ On the other hand the Government was denying this involvement and the 'covert' involvement itself had not so far been sufficient to bring the situation there to a speedy conclusion. Time was slipping by and Indonesia's denials of involvement were less likely to be believed—particularly in Australia. However the President was, as recently as the weekend, still unwilling to agree to large scale Indonesian intervention or to admit involvement. I told Moerdani that the President had also told me very recently that there was 'no change' in Indonesia's Timor policy. Moerdani said the President continued to believe that Indonesia's objectives could be secured by steady pressure.

4. General Moerdani said he and General Yoga were 'trying to find a way to convince the old man' that Indonesia 'ought to move in'. Regional countries favoured the incorporation of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia. He did not believe they would criticise Indonesia if it took direct action with the apparent exception of Australia. They would not want to see the situation drag on. This would in the end only result in great loss of life on the way to the inevitable

⁶ In a note for file dated 28 November, Woolcott recorded that Peacock had telephoned to advise him that he had decided not to make a statement about Portuguese Timor for the time being but would discuss the issue with the Prime Minister over the weekend and reconsider it during the following week. On the same day Peacock's private secretary, M. G. D. Williams, noted in a minute to Feakes that Peacock had rejected all the arguments listed in Cablegram JA3326 against making a statement except that 'concerning the recent exchange of messages'. Williams added that Peacock had 'reacted strongly' to the argument that a ministerial statement which did not deny reports of Indonesian intervention in Portuguese Timor would be tantamount to accusing the Indonesians of lying.

¹ The *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Canberra Times* and the *Melbourne Herald* all published editorials on 27 November based on 'firm reports' about the involvement of Indonesian forces in Timor that 'give the lie to the protestations by Indonesia that it is not involved in the fighting'. The *Sydney Morning Herald* called for the Australian Government to 'condemn publicly the Indonesian invasion, urge Indonesia to withdraw and press the case for talks to resolve the Timor problem peacefully'. The *Canberra Times* maintained that the 'inaction of the Whitlam Government and its not-so-tacit encouragement of Indonesia's ambitions have destroyed Australia's credibility as a genuine advocate of self-determination, and much else'.

outcome. Tun Razak had again put this to President Soeharto at their recent meeting in Medan and urged that the sooner the situation was resolved the better even if this involved more direct Indonesian action. (Moerdani attended the Medan talks.) I said while Australia shared Indonesia's objective we could not condone the use of force or disregard the principle of self-determination. Moerdani said I had told him this before. In these circumstances the best we could do would be to let events take their course and keep as quiet as possible.

5. General Moerdani would not be drawn on the details of troop movements on the ground in East Timor. This is understandable. In August and September close personal contacts like Moerdani and Tjan had taken us more fully into their confidence than could reasonably have been expected, presumably on the grounds that the Australian Government should know what was really happening and that it would do its best to be understanding towards Indonesia. They are now worried, particularly since the Minister's statement of the 30 October,² that the information which they had given us in the strictest confidence could possibly be used against them to condemn Indonesian involvement.

6. The nearest Moerdani went was, however, to suggest that any Australian journalists in the Bobonaro/Attabae area were in danger and Dili could become dangerous before the end of the year.

Relations with Australia

7. Moerdani said that he understood the domestic pressures in Australia and our attitude towards humanitarian assistance. The fact remained that however well-intentioned our food aid to Dili, it was having the effect of prolonging the civil war and delaying the crumbling of Fretilin. It was only when Fretilin crumbled—politically or militarily—that the present situation could be brought to a conclusion.

8. Moerdani said that there were some signs of this now. UDT and Apodeti forces were operating much more effectively than they had done in the past. There were also signs that Fretilin's morale was cracking. 200 Fretilin troops had recently deserted and 80 quite well trained Fretilin soldiers were now fighting with UDT forces.

9. Moerdani said that when he had returned from America on 7 November he had detected 'some suspicion and hostility' towards Australia in 'certain circles' here. I asked who was in these circles. Apart from saying some officers at HANKAM and BAKIN he would not be specific.

10. I said that I had the impression myself at the beginning of November that attitudes towards Australia were becoming cooler. I had thought this was due to the coincidence of a number of developments, including the union bans on Indonesian ships, the pressure we had had to maintain in order to obtain answers on the five Australian journalists in Balibo, reports in the Australian media that Australia was supplying substantial quantities of arms to Fretilin from disused wartime airstrips in Northern Australia, reports in the Australian media that the Indonesians had complained about the violation of Indonesian airspace and that the Australian Air Force and Navy were conducting espionage activities against Indonesia, reports in the Indonesian press that white soldiers, presumably Australians, were fighting with Fretilin forces and a general feeling based in part on the Australian media that many people in Australia adopted an anti-Indonesia, pro-Fretilin attitude. I said that we had worked hard to blunt this trend. We had strongly and publicly denied the ill-informed press reports.

11. My own feeling was the situation had improved in the last two weeks. There was a better understanding of the domestic pressures in Australia and a recognition that many of the media

² The draft of Willesee's statement in the Senate is published as Document 308. See also Documents 310 and 311.

reports, both in Australia and Indonesia, were misleading and mischievous. Moerdani said he had personally sought since his return to contribute to that improvement. One manifestation of this was the reversal of the decision not to allow the C130 carrying Red Cross supplies to land in Kupang. I also said it was possible that some persons out of frustrations might have been seeking to put pressure on Australia in this way.

The Five Journalists

12. General Moerdani said he did not want to 'sound hypercritical' [*sic*] but he wanted to express his sincere regrets about the deaths of the five Australian journalists. I said that I was glad he had raised this matter as I had intended to raise it with him. We had asked BAKIN for the remains of the fifth body if at all possible. I said that for reasons of legal proof of death and funeral arrangements this was necessary. At present we could not be completely certain for which one of the five deceased journalists there were no remains. General Moerdani said he would be seeing General Yoga and he would follow up this as soon as possible.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

347 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 28 November 1975

O.JA3350 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

We discussed with Tjan and Lim Bian Kie possibility that FRETILIN might declare independence soon.

2. They were not surprised to hear this. In fact they gave the distinct impression they expected FRETILIN to make such a move and would not be unhappy about it.

3. They said that a UDI by FRETILIN would introduce a new factor in the Timor political situation which was somewhat of a 'stalemate'. Their guarded 'personal' comments about Indonesia's possible reaction were along the lines of paragraph 14 of JA1615.¹ Indonesia would point out to Portugal that the declaration was contrary to the policy agreed at the Rome talks and ask Portugal to take action to preserve the agreement. Fighting in Timor would continue. Portugal would be unable to restore law and order. Portuguese Timor would become a 'no-man's land'.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

¹ Document 210.

348 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 28 November 1975

O.JA3352 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor*[matter omitted]**Indonesian Involvement*

2. I said that the eye-witness reports in the Australian media on 26 November¹ created considerable difficulties for Australian Ministers. I noticed that he, Malik, had denied these eye witness reports of Indonesian air and naval involvement.² Malik said blandly that he had denied them after consulting with Minister for Defence, General Panggabean, who had also denied them.

3. I said that these reports, whether denied or not, naturally stirred up feelings in Australia. Malik said he was aware of this. There was—for reasons he could not understand—a strong pro-Fretilin element in Australia and apparently a lack of understanding amongst the Australian public of the vital importance of the future of East Timor to Indonesia. I said that even if this were so, reliable looking reports of the use of force by Indonesia must be expected to cause a reaction in Australia.

*[matter omitted]**Policy on Timor*

10. Malik said that there had been no change either in Indonesian policy or its objectives in respect of Timor. Malik added that, with the exception of Australia, such pressure as there was on Indonesia was to settle the issue quickly. He instanced Malaysia and India as the most recent countries to advise Indonesia accordingly. He added however that the President wanted Indonesian objectives achieved 'legally'. (I assume he should have said 'at least to appear to be achieved legally'.)

*[matter omitted]***WOOLCOTT**

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

¹ See note 2 to Document 345.

² Cablegram JA3329 (28 November) reported Malik's denial of Richardson's story.

349 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 29 November 1975

O.JA3359 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Dan discussed with Tjan and Lim Bian Kie (Ali Murtopo's Private Secretary) this morning, 29 November, FRETILIN's Unilateral Declaration of Independence for Portuguese Timor.¹

2. They said that as soon as advice of the UDI was received yesterday an urgent message had been sent by Indonesia to the Portuguese Government asking Portugal what its attitude was to the UDI and what steps it proposed taking. The Indonesian Ambassador in Lisbon in a cable received in Jakarta this morning had advised that the Portuguese Government had replied that Portugal would not repeat not recognise the FRETILIN Declaration but that Portugal would be obliged to 'accommodate' FRETILIN. Portugal said it had been forced to accept this latter approach because Indonesia had assisted UDT/APODETI in a 'strong way', for example through the supply of tanks. (Lim Bian Kie said that the phrase in the Indonesian Ambassador's cable could also be translated 'brutal way'.)

3. At an urgent meeting this morning of the Co-ordinating Committee on Timor, which was held after receipt of Portugal's reply, the following policy and action was decided upon. (The meeting was attended by President Soeharto and all the key personalities involved in this question.)

4. First, Malik would issue a statement today condemning the FRETILIN move. The statement would argue that the UDI was contrary to the process of decolonisation in Portuguese Timor which Portugal had said it wished to complete; that FRETILIN represented merely one section of the people of Portuguese Timor and that FRETILIN alone had prevented a political solution to Portuguese Timor (Malik's statement as delivered may not present these points precisely in this way, and it may include others. These were only some of the points mentioned at the meeting.)

5. Secondly, either today or tomorrow (probably today) UDT/APODETI will issue a declaration that Portuguese Timor is part of Indonesia (a Declaration of Integration). UDT/APODETI will declare themselves citizens of Indonesia. They will request the Indonesian Government to accept their Declaration and call on the Indonesian Government to provide them with protection as citizens of Indonesia. (The leaders of the anti-FRETILIN parties are presently assembled in Bali for a top secret meeting with Indonesian representatives.)

6. Thirdly, Malik will proceed to Atambua as planned either on 30 November or 1 December. He will brief leaders of the anti-FRETILIN parties on current political developments. His efforts to find a political solution through round table talks between all the parties will be publicly contrasted with FRETILIN's action.

7. Fourthly, on 2 or 3 December (following Malik's return) Indonesia will formally reply to UDT/APODETI's Declaration. Indonesia will agree to the requests contained in the Declaration namely that Portuguese Timor be incorporated into Indonesia and that UDT/APODETI supporters be accepted as citizens of Indonesia. The Indonesian Government would say it had a right and a duty to protect its citizens.

¹ Cablegram JA3355 (28 November) reported advice from the Portuguese Chargé d' Affaires in Jakarta that Fretilin radio had announced a unilateral declaration of independence. Cablegram CH294829 (29 November) repeated the text of a message to Peacock from Xavier do Amaral, seeking Australian recognition of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

8. Fifthly, at the same time, that is, next week, Indonesian assistance to UDT/APODETI forces on the ground in Portuguese Timor would be stepped-up considerably. Indonesia would *not* intervene in a conventional military way. There would be no Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor. In addition to a considerable increase in Indonesian assistance to UDT/APODETI forces in Portuguese Timor, tactics on the ground would be changed. Instead of the slow, gradualist approach by forces on the ground a process of 'leap frogging' of towns would be put into operation. The tempo of the campaign would be quickened. The anti-FRETILIN forces would move to protect the lives of over 200 UDT/APODETI supporters (Indonesian citizens) held captive in Dili. Dili would be occupied by UDT/APODETI forces.
9. Sixth, once in control of Dili, the Raja of Atsabe or UDT Chairman Lopez da Cruz would be invited to become Acting Governor or Administrator of Timor.
10. Seventh, Indonesia would appeal to all countries friendly to Indonesia to support Indonesia at this difficult time.
11. Eighth, Indonesia's Ambassador in the United Nations, Sani, was instructed last night to 'move' with regard to the draft Consensus Statement.²
12. Both Tjan and Lim Bian Kie said that FRETILIN had only itself to blame for the current situation. FRETILIN had achieved its temporary position of authority through the use of arms which it had acquired from the Portuguese administration. FRETILIN had destroyed any possibility of a political solution to the Portuguese Timor problem. FRETILIN had boycotted the Macao talks. Now it had sabotaged the round table talks decided upon at the Rome meeting and which Malik had been working on right up to this moment.
13. They said there was no doubt that the other ASEAN countries would fully support Indonesia's handling of the Portuguese Timor issue. India had recently renewed its promise of full support. Indonesia would be looking in the difficult days ahead for its friends 'to stand up and be counted'. Australia's attitude would be very important. (They were pleased to know that the Minister had already told the media that Australia did not recognise the UDI.) They did not believe that FRETILIN's UDI would be recognised by many countries.
14. Tjan made a special plea to us to try to get all Australians out of Portuguese Timor as soon as possible. He said their lives were in great danger. In the type of warfare being conducted in Portuguese Timor they could be shot on sight.
15. Ambassadors of key countries including Australia will be formally briefed by Malik on 3 December. Tjan and Lim Bian Kie said they had *not* been authorised to give us the foregoing account. Please protect them absolutely.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

² Cablegram UN4503 (25 November) conveyed the text of a draft consensus statement in the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly, developed by the Indonesian Mission to the United Nations in consultation with others. The draft encouraged Portugal to hold talks with the Timorese political parties in the hope that these talks would 'lead towards the orderly exercise of the right of self-determination by the people of Portuguese Timor'.

350 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 29 November 1975

O.JA3360 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor*Ref O.JA3359¹*

Tjan and Lim Bian Kie mentioned to Dan this morning one additional matter not reported in our reference telegram.

2. At the Indonesian Government's high level meeting on Timor this morning the participants reacted angrily at the news of Portugal's response to the UDI. The meeting strongly condemned Portugal for its handling of the Portuguese Timor problem. It was recalled that Portugal had abandoned Portuguese Timor after the 10 August show of force; that it had allowed FRETILIN to achieve its position through the use of Portuguese arms; that in its dealings with Indonesia it had been devious. Portugal, to relieve itself of its responsibilities in Portuguese Timor, had all along tried to provoke Indonesia to invade Portuguese Timor. Portugal itself could not restore peace and order in Portuguese Timor but it refused to invite the only country which could—Indonesia. The Rome meeting, which had appeared to be on the surface the only bright spot in an otherwise shabby Portuguese performance had now been shown to be a fraudulent exercise by Portugal.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

351 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 29 November 1975

O.LB509 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I spoke to the Foreign Ministry (Cruz) this morning about the latest developments in Timor, in particular the position of the Portuguese Government in relation to FRETILIN's UDI.

2. It is at this stage not correct to speak of a 'Portuguese Government' position as the Indonesian Ambassador has done (para 2 of O.JA3359).¹ The Indonesian Ambassador's report was based on a conversation with Crespo yesterday who at that time was expressing no more than personal views. The National Decolonisation Committee (which decides policy on Timor) has not yet met to consider the matter, although Cruz had no doubt that the Committee would recognise the FRETILIN UDI.

3. Cruz regarded the UDI as ruling out any possibility of talks. Their intention now was to refer the matter to the UN and the Foreign Ministry was simply waiting for authorisation from the Decolonisation Committee to do this. The Portuguese case would be that Portugal had

¹ Document 349.

¹ Document 349.

tried to arrange talks between the parties, that their efforts had reached the point where all that had to be decided was the date and venue, but that these efforts had been frustrated by FRETILIN's decision to take matters into their own hands. Faced with a demand by FRETILIN to evacuate from Atauro, Portugal had no choice but to comply. (The intention is to evacuate 'immediately', Cruz said. They were also worried about their prisoners still in UDT hands.) Having failed in its efforts to get the parties to agree to a political solution, Portugal looked to the United Nations to deal with the problem since Portugal's position in Timor had become untenable.

Comment

4. Cruz was unable to disguise his 'relief' at the turn of events. As he put it, 'the issue is now between FRETILIN and Indonesia' and it is already fairly clear (to the extent that Cruz reflects official thinking [D]), that the Portuguese attitude is that thanks to FRETILIN, Portugal can now withdraw from Timor sooner than they had hoped. As has been previously foreshadowed, the time has now arrived when Portugal considers itself free to hand over the Timor problem to the United Nations.

COOPER

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, viii]

352 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 30 November 1975

O.JA3371 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Minister's Statement o[n] East Timor

Tjan told us today 30 November that the Minister's Statement¹ had been extremely well received by the Indonesian Government. He had sent copies of the text last night to President Soeharto, General Ali Murtopo, Foreign Minister Adam Malik, General Yoga Sugama (Head of BAKIN), Information Minister Mashuri and General Benny Moerdani.

2. Apparently Australia was the first country to announce that it did not recognise the UDI. Tjan said that this fact would be very helpful for Australia-Indonesia relations in the longer term.

3. Commenting on the text of the Minister's Statement Tjan noted that 'The Australian Government was bound to continue to recognise Portuguese sovereignty in Portuguese Timor.' He said that one of the main questions that now had to be clarified was whether Portugal itself continued to hold [onto] its sovereignty in Portuguese Timor. If Portugal said it was obliged to accommodate FRETILIN's action, it was reasonable to conclude that Portugal had abrogated its legal claim to sovereignty.

¹ Peacock announced, on 29 November, that the Australian Government did not recognise the unilateral declaration of independence by Fretilin leaders. The Australian Government continued to recognise Portuguese sovereignty in Portuguese Timor and saw the proposed talks between Portugal and the Timorese political parties as the best way of restoring an orderly process of decolonisation in the territory and stopping further bloodshed. The Australian Government 'could not accept claims by any one of the three main Timorese parties to be the only true representatives of Portuguese Timor'.

4. We also now had a situation in which not one of the five Timorese parties recognised Portuguese sovereignty in Portuguese Timor.
5. As regards Indonesia's attitude to the question of Portuguese sovereignty the only public comment was contained in the Indonesian Government Statement on the UDI as follows:
'Portugal is now no longer considered responsible for what happens in Portuguese Timor following the unilateral proclamation of the so-called independence of East Timor by FRETILIN' (JA3366)²
6. We expect that the Minister's Statement will be given extensive treatment in the media tomorrow (there are no Sunday papers).

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

353 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 1 December 1975

O.JA3374 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Our immediately following telegram contains text of relevant extracts from a story filed 29 November by the *Washington Post* correspondent visiting Jakarta (Saar). The story is based on an interview with General Ali Murtopo.¹

2. As you will see, Ali Murtopo's remarks as reported strongly imply that Indonesia is rapidly moving towards an open, conventional invasion of Portuguese Timor. This appears to contradict the advice given in our JA3359.²

3. We asked Tjan on 30 November about the *Washington Post* account. He said that Ali had not said that Indonesia would intervene in such a blatant manner. Ali had said that under the present circumstances of an illegal UDI by FRETILIN, Indonesia was justified in providing *full* assistance to the pro-Indonesian forces in Portuguese Timor. (You will be aware of course that Indonesian support for UDT/APODETI forces in Portuguese Timor is already about as large as Ali is quoted as saying it will become.)

4. As you know, by 'UDT/APODETI forces' Tjan and Lim Bian Kie (and our other close Indonesian contacts) mean 'Indonesian forces supplemented by a few Timorese soldiers'. In reading our JA3359 and other messages this should be clearly understood.

5. President Soeharto has all along ruled out overt large-scale military intervention, and he evidently repeated this again at last Saturday's meeting (29 November). Tjan said that the President insisted that the final outcome of Portuguese Timor's integration into Indonesia had to be 'legal'.

6. Tjan acknowledged that the extent of Indonesia's 'assistance' to the pro-Indonesian side in Portuguese Timor would be difficult to conceal. This did not worry the Indonesian

² 29 November. It reported an Indonesian Government statement issued on 29 November in *Antara*.

¹ Cablegram JA3375 (1 December). Murtopo was reported to have said that the Indonesian Government was likely to send up to 2500 soldiers into Portuguese Timor and, if Fretilin forces resisted, to use Indonesian air, army and naval forces to 'halt the civil war and disarm all fighting groups'.

² Document 349.

Government he said because it could now be easily justified: FRETILIN had declared an illegal UDI at the time talks were being planned and the four other parties in Portuguese Timor had made a declaration of integration in favour of Indonesia.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

354 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 2 December 1975

O.CH295719 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor

We were glad to see from paragraph 5 of your JA3394¹ that you emphasized to Sunarso and Tjan the importance Australia attached to the need to determine the future of Portuguese Timor through an expression of the wishes of the people themselves. We hope that the Indonesians will maintain their repeated public commitments to self-determination for Portuguese Timor [despite the changes in the situation in Portuguese Timor] which may occur.² We should also like you to make the point to the Indonesians as suitable opportunities occur that their interests and ours would seem to be served by trying to avoid bloodshed on both sides as much as possible. We have in mind the observation of Tjan and Sunarso reported in paragraph 3 of your JA3394,³ which seemed to accept too easily that bloodshed will be fairly widespread. At the same time, we appreciate that part of Tjan's purpose is no doubt to hurry us along towards removing Australian observers from Portuguese Timor whose presence might prove a liability for the Indonesians as their operations develop.⁴

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

¹ 1 December. This cablegram communicated Tjan's advice that the Indonesian Foreign Ministry was considering establishing some form of local government in Dili which would demand integration with Indonesia or, alternatively, that the Foreign Ministry was considering some other act of self-determination by the people of Portuguese Timor. It reported that the Embassy in Jakarta had emphasised to Sunarso and Tjan the importance which the Australian Government placed 'on the need to determine the territory's future through an expression of the wishes of the people themselves, the majority of whom were probably not connected with any of the five parties'.

² Words in square brackets indicate an addition, advised in a later message, to the text as originally transmitted.

³ Paragraph 3 reported that Sunarso and Tjan had stressed the necessity that all Australians leave Portuguese Timor urgently, in view of Tjan's characterisation of the conflict there as a 'tribal war' and his expectation of further indiscriminate killings on both sides.

⁴ Cablegram JA3398 (2 December) reported an observation made by Moerdani on 1 December to the effect that 'there was hostility to Australians, especially ACFOA and media representatives and to a certain extent towards the Red Cross on the part of UDT. Any foreigners in Dili would run the danger of being lumped together as pro-Fretilin by UDT forces'. On 3 December Peacock confirmed that, in view of 'clear indications' that the scale of fighting in the territory would increase, fourteen Australians and two Swiss had been evacuated by charter aircraft from Dili to Atauro and most were expected to return to Australia that same day. It was thought that only three Australians remained on the mainland of Portuguese Timor: freelance journalist Roger East, who had declined the offer of evacuation, and a married couple on a plantation at the eastern end of the island (the Sydells).

AUSTRALIA AND THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On 10 November, the Department of Foreign Affairs had communicated texts of both a draft consensus statement and a draft resolution on Portuguese Timor to the Australian delegation, United Nations, for possible use in the Fourth (Decolonisation) Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. The draft statement and the draft resolution were shown to the Indonesians who subsequently drafted their own consensus statement. After Fretilin's unilateral declaration of independence for Portuguese Timor (28 November) made a consensus unlikely in the Fourth Committee, an 'ASEAN-plus group' of delegations (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, Fiji, Japan, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea) met and agreed to co-sponsor a resolution on Portuguese Timor in the Fourth Committee. This draft resolution called on Portugal to convene talks with the Timorese political parties in order to agree on a process of self-determination in the territory.

355 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 2 December 1975

O.UN4605 UNCLASSIFIED IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: United Nations

Reference telecon Feakes/A. D. Campbell.¹ Following is text of Statement by latter in Fourth Committee on 2 December:

Begins

We are grateful to the Delegation of Portugal for the detailed and informative statement just made to the Committee.

This expression of Australian views on the situation in relation to Portuguese Timor, while traversing some of the same ground covered by the administering power, may help to add a regional perspective to the Committee's consideration, and indeed that of a close neighbour of the colony and island of Timor.

From the time of the overthrow of the Caetano regime in Lisbon and the subsequent decision of the Portuguese to shed their overseas territories, the Australian Government had hoped that the decolonisation process in Portuguese Timor could proceed in an orderly fashion which allowed the people of the territory to decide their own future.

We had hoped that Portugal would remain in control for a period long enough for the political consciousness of the people to develop to the point where there was a substantial measure of agreement regarding the future.

The need for orderly progress had also been of paramount importance in view of the interest of the countries of the region, particularly Indonesia but also Australia and other regional countries, in ensuring that the territory would not emerge in a way which would have an unsettling effect on the region. It was also important because of the essentially immature nature of the rival political factions.

Only a month before 10 August, when the present political crisis began in Portuguese Timor, the Portuguese introduced a program of decolonisation for the territory of a kind which

¹ No record of this discussion has been found.

would have met the objectives already mentioned. This program, known as the Macao Program, provided for a series of clearly defined steps to bring the territory to the point where the political future of the territory would have been decided by the people themselves.

The program looked to the election of a popular assembly in October 1976. The assembly would have had the task of deciding the political future of the territory. The three major Timorese political groups, FRETILIN, UDT and APODETI, all took part in the preliminary discussions in Dili about the program, and, although FRETILIN did not attend the later talks in June in Macao, all three parties were to have been invited to take part in the election next year and to participate in the organs of government to be established before then.

The Macao Program did not seek to anticipate the Timorese people's choice. There was, for instance, no prior commitment to either separate independence or independence through integration with Indonesia. The choice was to be left to the people. In either event, the process would have been based on popular choice.

These hopes have unhappily not been borne out. A struggle for supremacy among the Timorese political groups erupted in early August. From this struggle the FRETILIN party, aided by the Timorese army units and by access to the arms left behind by Portugal, emerged as initially stronger than its rivals.

Australia's wish had been that the fighting could have been brought to an early end and that agreement on the future of the territory could then be reached through negotiation between Portugal, the administering authority, and the contending Timorese factions. It follows that the Australian Government welcomed the announcement in Rome on 3 November following the meeting of the Portuguese and Indonesian Foreign Ministers that both Governments would work together to try to promote early round-table talks in which all the Timorese parties would participate. Australia agreed that, were all the parties to wish it, Australia should be prepared to provide a venue for such talks. This offer has recently been reiterated by the Australian Government.

In the event, the FRETILIN group, in control of Dili and, still, in many other parts of the territory, has now unilaterally proclaimed independence. It has held to the view that FRETILIN alone is the authentic and legitimate voice of the people of Portuguese Timor. It has by its action rejected the notion that its rivals, UDT and APODETI, have anything further to contribute to a possible resumption of the decolonisation process.

FRETILIN's action has aggravated an already tense situation in Portuguese Timor. It has been rejected by the other Timorese parties. It has provoked those other parties, favouring integration with neighbouring Indonesia, to issue their own declaration proclaiming the integration of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia.

The Australian Government does not recognise the unilateral declaration of independence by FRETILIN. Nor does it regard the counter declaration by UDT and APODETI as having legal force. It continues to regard the Government of Portugal as legally and constitutionally sovereign in Portuguese Timor.

Australia does not pretend to know what the people of Portuguese Timor want. But we do want them to have the opportunity to say what they want. It could be that they want FRETILIN and independence under FRETILIN, but it cannot be assumed that that is so simply because of FRETILIN's initial military successes against its rivals. These matters should not be settled by force of arms: what if the Timorese army had decided to side with UDT, or with APODETI—or had staged a purely military coup? Of course, nor can UDT or APODETI claim to speak for the people of Portuguese Timor simply because they have been able to demonstrate some

military capacity in conflict with FRETILIN. It may well be that the people of East Timor may prefer to achieve their independence by uniting with the ethnically identical people of Indonesian Timor. But these matters, to repeat, should not be settled by force.

The Australian position is clear. There are three contending parties in Portuguese Timor. They have all emerged in less than eighteen months. No one of them has established the right to speak as the authentic voice of all the people of Eastern Timor. They can not in our view expect credence to be given to unilateral declarations on the method of attaining independence. Instead they should each co-operate with the Portuguese Government to restore a decolonisation program in which the claims of all three could be satisfactorily tested. Only then might we speak of self-determination or accept any particular party's claims.

Our view remains therefore that talks between the Timorese parties and Portugal continue to offer the best hope of bringing an end to the continuing conflict in Timor. We believe that the United Nations would be doing a great service to the people of Timor if it were now to put its weight behind the proposal for talks. The aim should be to bring about a restoration of an orderly process of decolonisation in the territory in a way which should enable the people of the territory to decide their own future in the light of all options available to them.

Ends

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, i]

356 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

Tokyo, 3 December 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Portuguese Timor

Our telegram O.TK7015 of 2 December 1975 reported comments by Hasegawa (Director, Second Southeast Asia Division, Foreign Ministry) on developments in Portuguese Timor and the request for Japan to recognise the Democratic Republic of East Timor proclaimed by Fretilin on 28 November. A copy of the message sent to the Japanese Foreign Minister is attached.

2. Hasegawa in his personal remarks, which should be protected, made it more clear than he has done on previous occasions his view that the best solution to the problem of Portuguese Timor would be absorption by Indonesia. An independent yet economically unviable state, probably with radical tendencies, which Indonesia would regard as a threat, would have detrimental effects for the whole of Southeast Asia. Hasegawa said his information was that all the other ASEAN states were prepared to support an Indonesian absorption of Portuguese Timor. They did not want to be diverted from the task of developing bi-lateral relations and the further strengthening of ASEAN. Surely Australia would not want to see a 'red' East Timor as an irritant disturbing the stability of Southeast Asia. We contested this, saying that to our knowledge there was a lack of hard evidence of communist links with Fretilin. Moreover while it could be said that Timor would be economically unviable, much the same thing had been said about many other states now independent, but with a population less than Portuguese

Timor. There were for example Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland in Southern Africa and other examples in the Pacific region. While there might be a compelling logic to the proposition that Portuguese Timor should be absorbed by Indonesia there was a moral element involved and one which any Australian Government would have to take into account while seeking to maintain our close and co-operative relationship with Indonesia. Many Australians would not look favourably on a unilateral Indonesian military absorption of Portuguese Timor. Hasegawa remained unconvinced but went on to speak of the practical and political difficulties facing Indonesia if it were to move to absorb Portuguese Timor. He was very worried about the way Indonesia was proceeding and it could, by acting too precipitately, alienate world opinion. He very much doubted whether Indonesia would for the moment be prepared to engage in political talks of all parties involved in Portuguese Timor. The situation seemed to be bogged down, with no nation being prepared to take steps to move the situation forward.

3. A copy of this memorandum and its attachment has been passed to the Embassy in Jakarta.

R. L. COTTON

First Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, vii]

357 LETTER FROM WOOLCOTT TO FEAKES

[Jakarta], 3 December 1975

CONFIDENTIAL PERSONAL

[*matter omitted*]

The situation has moved into a decisive phase. It will as usual present us with serious difficulties. While some of the ideas in cables to our mission in New York may be largely for the historical record we need to grasp the nettle, whether we like it or not, that talks between the parties and Portugal are not going to take place and that to continue to maintain that such talks offer the 'best hope of bringing an end to the conflict' and restoring an 'orderly process of decolonisation' are unrealistic.

I think it is certain that the Indonesians will now grasp the opportunity to put enough pressure on Fretilin to defeat it and to proceed with the integration of East Timor, albeit with some lip service thereafter to ascertaining the wishes of the people and possibly including the rump of a reconstituted Fretilin in any local representative institution which might be established.

There seems to have been longstanding reluctance in some quarters in Canberra to accept the fact of Indonesian determination to integrate Portuguese Timor. As you know it has been decided Indonesian policy for some time, as I emphasised at the Heads of Missions meeting in July. Indonesia was prepared—or could have been persuaded—to bring this about in an acceptable manner but the way in which the situation has evolved, both in Portugal and in Dili, has rendered this impossible. Although we have always opposed it and sought to avoid it we have to accept that the issue will now be settled initially by force. One could argue as General Moerdani and others have done that, given the inevitable outcome for East Timor, this will mean less lives will be lost than if the slow war of attrition against Fretilin, accompanied by political activities such as talks about talks or even talks themselves, continued.

There is one point which I must make to you of which Alan Renouf should also be aware. This concerns what Andrew Peacock said during his 'private' visit to Bali in September.¹ I did write to Alan personally about this on 30 September but not so explicitly. He told Harry Tjan and Lim Bian Kie, who went to Bali to brief him, that he favoured the early integration of East Timor into Indonesia. He said that he would 'not criticise' Indonesia's actions to bring this about (including presumably the use of force) provided Indonesia had the support of other ASEAN countries. He would criticise the then Whitlam Government for 'inaction' but not Indonesia. Both Tjan and Lim Bian Kie have told us this separately and while they may not have it completely correct and while the circumstances in which Mr Peacock said it have changed, there is no doubt in their minds—and they will have passed this up the line—that what Mr Peacock said then represented his considered view on Timor. I leave it to your judgement how to handle this but you may need to drop the Minister a hint at some stage about what Tjan and Lim Bian Kie believe he said to them.

I notice the media is full of criticism of the Australian Government over its failure to mediate in Timor. I do not often agree with Lenin but I do agree with his comment that 'mediators are rarely if ever successful'. Given Indonesia's well known policy, which it would, I believe, have pursued whatever Australia had done, short of intervening on Fretilin's side, there really was no scope for us to mediate. As I have consistently maintained, albeit occasionally in terms which may on occasions have offended some in Canberra, there has never been much prospect of political talks in Australia, of Australian mediation, of effective United Nations action, or of Portugal reasserting and maintaining its authority in Timor. There has to me always been an inevitability about the outcome of the Timor situation.

In essence we look like being confronted with a basic choice between Indonesia and Fretilin. Although principles of self-determination, the use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes, are all involved, it comes back to that choice. As a political realist with racing connections I imagine that Mr Peacock will not be interested in putting his (Australia's) money on a 50 to 1 outsider in a two horse race, even if he does not like the actions of the favourites' handlers or the lack of rules for the race.

Looking beyond Timor I think we should try and widen the present focus of our relations with Indonesia. For example, if the present Government is confirmed in office on the 13 December then I think we would need to be careful that the proposed early visit by Mr Peacock—or a later visit by Mr Fraser—is not presented mainly in the context of Timor.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi]

¹ Peacock had been briefed by Tjan during a private visit to Bali in September 1975. See Cablegram JA2026 (24 September), Cablegram JA4882 (17 February 1976), and a note by Taylor, dated 1 December 1975. [On file NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi.]

358 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 4 December 1975

O.JA3479 UNCLASSIFIED IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Following is our translation of the text of the 'Statement of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia regarding the latest developments in Portuguese Timor' issued on 4 December 1975.

Begins:

1. In facing the latest developments in Portuguese Timor the Government of the Republic of Indonesia once again affirms its standpoint which, from the beginning, has supported a policy of decolonisation by the Government of Portugal which must be carried out in a genuine, orderly and peaceful fashion. Besides constituting principles which are generally accepted, such a process of decolonisation is a guarantee of the maintenance of the national stability of Indonesia which closely borders on that territory and the stability of S.E.A. in general.
2. The genuine, orderly and peaceful process of decolonisation means the guaranteeing of the vote of every class of society in Portuguese Timor, without pressure in any form whatsoever to declare their stand point regarding their own future.
3. It is necessary also to affirm the resolve of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to use its legal right in defending its territorial integrity, its national sovereignty and its protection of the safety of its inhabitants and their possessions.
4. As long as the process of decolonisation in Portuguese Timor is not complete, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia respects the rights and the duty of the Government of Portugal as the only legal power in that territory.
5. The points mentioned above have caused the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to join in attempting (as far as requested by all sides concerned) to expedite the process of decolonisation in this territory. These points have also caused the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to fully support the result of the 'Macao Talks' and the agreement reached in the 'Rome Memorandum'.
6. Meanwhile the process of decolonisation in this territory [has] developed toward a critical situation. Terror, torture and cruelty have been carried out by FRETILIN towards other groups of the people of Portuguese Timor who have different views on their future. To defend themselves, the other groups have opposed the violence carried out by FRETILIN. All of this has taken place in a situation where the Government of Portugal has not had the capacity to restore security and general order and to guarantee the basic rights of the people of the territory.
7. It must be recalled also that the Government of the Republic of Indonesia has offered its good offices to assist the Government of Portugal in restoring security and general order in the territory of Portuguese Timor in the framework of helping to bring about a genuine, orderly and peaceful process of decolonisation.
8. It must also be recalled that since the armed violence by FRETILIN against the other groups of the people of Portuguese Timor, refugees from this territory which has begun to be in disorder and full of suffering have flooded into the Indonesian border regions, numbering tens of thousands of people.

Humanitarian grounds have caused the Government and people of Indonesia to protect them, to give shelter to them, to give food and clothing to them, and to care for their health.

9. It must also be noted that the Government and the 130 million people of Indonesia are very well capable of defending themselves against mortar attacks on the territory of the Republic of Indonesia, against raids on the territory of the Republic of Indonesia, against robbery in the territory of the Republic of Indonesia and other provocations which have been carried out by the FRETILIN, causing the loss of the lives and the possessions of the population. This situation, added to existence of thousands of refugees, has constituted an attack on national stability and threatens the security of Indonesia.

10. The process of decolonisation in the territory, which from the beginning has developed in a fashion which is neither genuine, orderly nor peaceful, has reached its peak with what is called a 'Declaration of Independence' by FRETILIN. FRETILIN's unilateral act has made the 'Rome Memorandum' difficult to implement, whereas Portugal, which is responsible for the territory of and the situation in Portuguese Timor, has stated in the United Nations that its Government is not able to control the situation in Portuguese Timor.

11. Because of this, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia understand and consider genuine the statement which was then issued on 30 November 1975 by the other political parties in that territory—that is the parties of UDT, APODETI, KOTA and TRABALISTA—which jointly, in the name of the people of Portuguese Timor, frees them from the colonial power and unites them with the State of the Republic of Indonesia.¹

12. In connection with developments in the territory of Portuguese Timor, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia hereby states:

- (A) that it greatly regrets the unilateral action of FRETILIN which has declared the independence of Portuguese Timor without heeding the opinion of the other parties in the territory that also represent the voice of the people,
- (B) that it respects the right of, sympathises with and fully understands the declaration of the UDT, APODETI, KOTA and TRABALISTA parties who in the name of the people of Portuguese Timor have declared that they have united with the State of the Republic of Indonesia,
- (C) that it calls on all sides concerned in Portuguese Timor earnestly to try to attain the implementation of decolonisation of the territory of Portuguese Timor in a genuine, orderly and peaceful fashion,
- (D) that it will take the necessary actions to guarantee national territorial security, to guard the sovereignty of the State and to protect the population against interference from outside, and based on the principle of anti-colonialism and on the principle of humanitarianism the Government and the people of Indonesia possess a moral duty to protect the people in the territory of Timor so that the process of decolonisation can be realised in accordance with the aspirations and the desire of the whole people of Portuguese Timor,

¹ The joint statement proclaimed the 'integration of the whole territory of the ex-Portuguese colony of Timor with the Indonesian nation' and called on Indonesia to protect those 'who themselves now are considered part of the Indonesian people yet living under the terror and fascist practices of Fretilin allowed by the Government of Portugal'.

- (E) That it calls on the whole people of Indonesia in general and on the people bordering the territory of Portuguese Timor especially to increase their vigilance.

Jakarta, 4 December 1975²

Ends

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, i]

359 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 6 December 1975

O.JA3517 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

The Timor situation has entered a decisive phase.

2. Sinaga, the influential and well-informed personal assistant to Defence Minister Panggabean, confirmed to me last night that action against Dili was likely to start tonight, 6 December or not later than Monday 8 December. He said Indonesia would give the four anti-Fretilin forces the assistance they needed. Sinaga said that given the way the situation had developed following Fretilin's Unilateral Declaration of Independence this was the best course. There would be less casualties, less disruption and less likelihood of outside interference if the situation was dealt with 'quickly' and 'not permitted to drag on'. Sinaga added that Indonesia looked to Australia for 'understanding' and said that he hoped this would be forthcoming from countries like Australia and New Zealand in addition to the ASEAN countries.

3. The incoming Government will certainly be faced with difficult policy questions which will have consequences for the future of Australia's relations with Indonesia, when it comes to office after the 13 December. Given the way in which the situation is evolving now however, the Minister may wish to make a statement shortly. If so I would suggest that any statement be based on the following facts or well-substantiated assessments.

4. Firstly, and most important, Indonesia is now bent on immediate action to secure incorporation of East Timor. Its earlier hopes of achieving its objective by influencing a more or less internationally acceptable act of self-determination were set back by the UDT 'show of force' in August and the breakdown of Portugal's decolonisation program and dashed finally by Fretilin's declaration of independence. In these circumstances Indonesia will provide adequate military assistance to the anti-Fretilin forces to ensure that its objectives are obtained.

5. Indonesia is fully committed to this course. Although it hopes to avoid it, it will not be deterred by a hostile Australian reaction or by the attitudes of radical and former Portuguese

² On the same day the Embassy in Jakarta was instructed (Cablegram CH297104, 4 December) to obtain a reading of Indonesian attitudes to a number of questions without, on most issues, talking to the Indonesians. They were asked to gauge views on: a) the commitment of the Indonesians to the act or process of self-determination and the details of how this would be achieved; b) the difficulties for Australia in accepting *de jure* recognition of incorporation if the Portuguese continued to maintain a presence at Atauro; c) the advantages that the Indonesians may see in quickly incorporating Portuguese Timor legally, and the Australian preference for this to occur after an act of self-determination; d) the Indonesian view on continuing United Nations interest in Timor and a visiting mission; and e) whether the Indonesians expected aid from Australia.

African countries remote from South East Asia because it believes its long term national interests are involved. It will look to the Australian Government—both caretaker and incoming—for ‘understanding’ of the position in which it finds itself and for an effort to blunt the further growth of anti-Indonesian feeling in Australia in the long term interests of both countries.

6. Secondly, Indonesia, although its involvement will be obvious, will seek to achieve its objectives as ‘properly’ and ‘legally’ as possible in the circumstances. When Fretilin has crumbled or been defeated and the territory pacified there will be an act of self-determination or free choice. A United Nations visiting mission may well be permitted to visit. We should be under no illusions, however, about the result of any act of self-determination. While trying to make it look as genuine as possible, the Indonesians will want to ensure that the outcome is integration.

7. Thirdly, as far as we can tell from here the other ASEAN countries support Indonesia’s objective of incorporation and are opposed to an independent East Timor within the ASEAN area. Some accept Indonesian military involvement, overt or covert, if this is considered necessary by Indonesia to achieve its objective. None wants a weak, potentially radical, independent trouble-spot within the ASEAN region and none would want membership of ASEAN for an independent East Timor.

8. If he makes a statement the Minister will presumably need to repeat Australia’s opposition to the use of force and emphasise the caretaker government’s active efforts in the brief period since it took office to secure a negotiated settlement on the basis of self-determination. That said, the Minister might also make some understanding reference to Indonesia’s very real concerns including the 40,000 refugees, as it sees them and Australia’s understanding of these concerns. [9.] The Minister could also urge Indonesia to use its influence with the anti-Fretilin parties to avoid bloodshed. If the Indonesians have publicly admitted their military involvement at the time of any ministerial statement, the Minister might call on Indonesia to take what steps it can to ensure that an act of self-determination is conducted and that the United Nations be associated in some way with this act.

10. The Minister might stress the point that Australia cannot act in isolation. It is geographically a part of the South East Asian region and is trying where possible to coordinate its approach to regional issues with the countries of the region.

11. The Minister could also make the point in response to any ‘blood on Australia’s hands’ allegations that Fretilin must bear much of the responsibility for the present situation. It should have sought an accommodation with its large and powerful neighbour in the first place and those who discouraged it from this course in the early days ultimately did the party a disservice. Fretilin had been led to believe that it could pursue a policy contrary to Indonesia’s national interests and ultimately to the folly of the UDI which triggered off the present situation.

12. The Minister could make the point that while Australia holds strongly to the view that an act of self-determination can still take place, there is no intrinsic reason why the indigenous people of East Timor would not in the long run be as well off and free within the Indonesian Republic as they would be as a brittle and divided state. Timor has been artificially divided by its colonial history and ethnically, culturally and even by religion the East Timorese have much in common with the West Timorese. (For obvious reasons this argument is not applicable to New Guinea.)

13. The Minister might also consider making the point that while Indonesia’s fears of an Angolan type situation or of a communist beachhead established in the Indonesian Archipelago

may be exaggerated, Indonesia believes its long term security and stability for which it has fought for many years, are at stake. It is not really for Australia to say that Indonesia's concerns are groundless. Who can predict what the situation in an independent East Timor might be in 1980?

14. The Indonesians, while understanding domestic pressures in Australia especially in the middle of an election campaign, will be looking to the present Government, as they looked to its predecessor, to adopt as helpful and as understanding a position as possible in the interests of the long-term relationship between the two countries.

15. Underlying our Timor policy has been the great importance the Government and its predecessor places on relations with Indonesia. Our wish to maintain close relations with Indonesia has been conveyed to President Soeharto by both the caretaker Government and its predecessor and indeed by the McMahon Government before that.

16. We are in fact faced with related choices which we hope to avoid, namely our relations with Indonesia and integration on the one hand and, alternatively, support for Fretilin and moral objections to Indonesia's means on the other hand. In effect the Government faces one of those issues which Governments frequently face in the conduct of their foreign relations; a choice between a pragmatic and realistic acceptance of what is going to happen and our longer term national interest, on the one hand, and on the other, a moral and principled stand about the means to the accepted end which might ease our national conscience but which is unlikely to have an effect on what actually happens and which would erode our relations with Indonesia. It is really a choice between a pragmatic realistic position and a principled but ineffective posture.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvii]

THE INDONESIAN INVASION: DECEMBER 1975

In the early hours of 7 December Indonesian naval forces began bombarding the coast to the east and west of Dili. Their targets were the Fretilin positions located in the city's outskirts, and a smaller gun emplacement near the airport. Just before dawn Indonesian paratroopers from the Special Forces Command were dropped into the waterfront district with the objective of securing a landing ground for the marines who were to follow them ashore two hours later. This operation was code-named 'Seroja' (Lotus). The forces destined for Dili were to have been supported by Indonesian troops involved in the campaign against Balibo and Maliana, but these had become bogged down at the Lois River.

The landings took place with only light resistance and most Fretilin forces retreated into the hills before the advancing Indonesian troops. The joint operation proved somewhat beyond Indonesia's capabilities with many of their casualties in the first days resulting from confusion between the various arms of the Indonesian attack. The Indonesians also found that their opponents, once secure in the hills surrounding the capital, were able to maintain a far stronger defence than they had expected and their advance stalled in the suburbs. With the Indonesian invasion force contained in the city, casualties amongst the civilian population of Dili were high, and there were many reports of summary executions and massacres. From the relative safety of Atauro the two remaining Portuguese corvettes watched as Dili burned before weighing anchor for Darwin. The Indonesian military campaign to incorporate Portuguese Timor would clearly last longer than the Indonesians had foreseen.

360 DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS NEWS RELEASE

Canberra, 7 December 1975

No. M85

Portuguese Timor—Statement by the Foreign Minister, Mr Andrew Peacock

The Australian Government deeply regrets the course which events in East Timor have taken. It is tragic for the Timorese and a matter for serious concern to the countries of the region that the decolonisation process has broken down so completely.

While the Australian Government fully appreciates the gravity of the problems posed for the Indonesian Government by the breakdown of administration in East Timor, the continuation of fighting by the competing parties, and the movement of 40,000 refugees into its territory, we had hoped—and have pressed—that there would not be a recourse to the use of force by our neighbour. As recently as December 4 our Ambassador in Jakarta again made it clear that this was our view.

The present Liberal and National Country Party Government inherited the Timor crisis at the eleventh hour. We believe—and it is a matter of record, not of hindsight—that a more positive role by Australia in the earlier stages—a strong regional initiative, for example—was possible, desirable, and might have had very beneficial results.

Since coming to office we have co-sponsored and vigorously supported a draft resolution in the United Nations reaffirming the right of self-determination of the Timorese, urging the need for a peaceful settlement, calling for a revival of talks among the conflicting parties, and proposing that the Government of Portugal should request a United Nations visiting mission to East Timor.

While we appreciate the strains which events impose on the Fretilin spokesman, Mr Horta, we must reject any suggestion that Australia has 'betrayed' the Timorese, or is responsible in any way for the present recourse to force. It is the Portuguese who are the colonial power. Portugal's own internal disarray has been a major contributing factor.

In the absence of any attempt to ascertain the will of the East Timorese, the equating of Fretilin's cause with that of the East Timorese people cannot be accepted. Further, the Australian Government believes that Fretilin's earlier refusal to participate in talks with the other parties and its unilateral declaration of independence on November 28 have not helped either the peaceful resolution of the crisis or its own cause.

It is obvious that the initiatives open to the Australian Government are limited. The options have closed almost to vanishing point. We shall, however, continue our efforts to gain support for the United Nations resolution. We shall be ready to resume humanitarian aid as soon as practicable. We shall continue to consult closely with countries of the region to explore other possible regional initiatives. But there is unfortunately no way of recovering the opportunities that were allowed to slip away months ago.

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, i]

361 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 7 December 1975

O.UN4677 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: United Nations*Ref O.UN4675¹*

As you indicated in our last telecon,² we shall no doubt have to play the next round of developments here by ear guided by any new Ministerial statements and by instructions which you may be preparing with understandably higher priority for Jakarta and Lisbon.

2. As you know we are locked into a situation in the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly which must have some outcome in the next few days and we could thereafter face new consideration of Timor in the Committee of Twenty-Four and/or the Security Council.

3. The position reached late Saturday night New York time was that the Draft Resolution³ with the amendments negotiated *ad referendum* on Friday with Mozambique and others had been agreed by Jakarta, and the Secretariat informed, just before midnight following extended discussions between Sani, the Secretariat and ourselves.⁴ On the basis of these discussions Sani had assured Jakarta that the new final preambular paragraph⁵ *could not* have the effect of precluding Timor's integration into Indonesia as a result of self-determination, and indeed Mozambique had said so in our consultations. The Mozambique Deputy Foreign Minister had earlier signified his agreement to the amended draft.

4. Sani maintains that it was only after he left his office in the early hours of this morning 7 December that he first heard on the radio news of the Indonesian movement into Dili.

5. In any event, the fact that the revised Draft Resolution dated 6 December will be available tomorrow will help fill a vacuum and has the advantage of registering the position genuinely reached by the co-sponsors and others before the Indonesian move.

6. There was some early optimism in telephone consultations today that the draft might still survive especially because of its usefulness in committing Indonesia to self-determination and continuing United Nations involvement. We have encouraged this line of thinking amongst the Africans and Sani was prepared today to maintain Indonesia's co-sponsorship.

¹ 6 December. It reported that the Australian Mission to the UN considered that it should persevere in its efforts to have a suitable resolution adopted in the Fourth Committee, despite difficulties such as Sani's not being able to communicate or clear with Jakarta the revised text. The Mission continued: 'We feel that the co-sponsors can be presented as being in a good position, even if unfortunate developments are imminent, because we have sought for some days, while other delegations sympathetic to Fretilin have resisted, the adoption of a resolution which would establish a current and responsible United Nations position in relation to Portuguese Timor. Without pointing to particular delegations, this is a consideration you might add to your public comment.'

² No record of this discussion has been found.

³ This draft resolution, the text of which was communicated in Cablegram UN4602 (2 December) had been co-sponsored by a group of 'ASEAN plus' delegations including Australia. *Inter alia*, it appealed to the Timorese political parties to respond positively to the efforts of Portugal to seek a peaceful solution in Portuguese Timor through talks with them and requested Portugal to invite the Special Committee (the Committee of Twenty-Four) to send a visiting mission to the territory.

⁴ The amendments negotiated *ad referendum* with African and Eastern bloc delegations were communicated in Cablegram UN4672 (5 December).

⁵ The paragraph read: 'Reaffirming that any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations ...'

7. It has become clear in the course of the day, however, that the Africans and some of the communists will try to insist as a minimum on demanding Indonesia's withdrawal pretty well immediately. This will then take us into substantive questions of whether Indonesia proposes to occupy Dili and the rest of Portuguese Timor until such time as a United Nations presence, a special mission, or arrangements for UN supervision of an act of self-determination have been worked out. It raises the question also of whether the Indonesians will hand over to the Portuguese again or join with them in some form of interim shared administration. We have had *no* indication today of the Portuguese reaction. We can look to the Indian Ambassador for support in opposing any facile African call for a simple return to the *status quo ante* Saturday.
8. An immediate question also arises as to Indonesia's willingness to have a United Nations mission visit the territory and if so, how soon and on what terms. As indicated below, we believe there could be a call for the Secretary-General to visit the territory himself or to arrange a special mission and Mozambique was in fact pressing for this in negotiations on the Draft Resolution on Friday. The changes made to operative paragraph 4⁶ of the Draft Resolution reflected some concessions to Mozambique's proposals.
9. Sani has recommended to Jakarta that the Indonesian Government issue a statement to be available by Monday morning New York time clearly reaffirming its intention to abide by a genuine process of self-determination but says he has no views or instructions concerning a possible Indonesian withdrawal from Dili or any consequent steps.
10. Immediate outlook as of Sunday evening New York time is that a somewhat disorientated group of co-sponsors will meet first thing Monday morning before what had been scheduled as the last meeting of the Fourth Committee. Plenary had been scheduled to meet tomorrow afternoon after the closing of the Fourth Committee to take up all that Committee's reports including the Draft Resolution on the Portuguese territories.
11. At this stage we cannot tell you what the outcome will be. The possibilities we face include amendments to the revised Draft Resolution, especially to condemn Indonesia's intervention or call for immediate Indonesian withdrawal and to provide for an urgent mission to the territory possibly by the Secretary-General. The Africans may, however, be luke-warm about the latter because of the failure of the recent missions by the Secretary-General to settle the Spanish Sahara dispute. It is also possible that any decision by the Fourth Committee (and therefore by Plenary) on Portuguese Timor could be postponed tomorrow with a view to allowing for a hearing of Horta (and any APODETI/UDT petitioners who might arrive) by the Fourth Committee.
12. Fortunately the only request for a hearing cabled by Horta so far has been to the Committee of Twenty-Four. On the other hand, if he cables the Secretary-General without specifying the body he wishes to petition, the matter would be referred automatically to the Fourth Committee. Any action which could be taken in Lisbon therefore to ensure that Horta does *not* petition the Fourth Committee, and in any event to delay his arrival in New York, would be most helpful. Sani is trying to ensure that any cables from the pro-Indonesian parties are addressed to the Committee of Twenty-Four and not to the Fourth Committee.
13. We feel we would have a reasonable chance of delaying any hearings by the Committee of Twenty-Four until after the adjournment or closure of the General Assembly.
14. A reference to the Security Council is perhaps a less likely development in the early part of the week although it cannot be discounted. If a move is made in the Council it will at least be helpful to us that the United Kingdom has the presidency in December. Salim takes over in

⁶ The amendment read: '... requests the [Special] Committee to send a fact-finding mission to the territory as soon as possible, in consultation with the political parties and the Government of Portugal'.

January. At this stage, however, we would hope that the fact that developments in Angola have *not* been brought before the Council would minimise the chances of the Council meeting on Timor.

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, i]

362 SUBMISSION TO FRASER

Canberra, [8 December 1975]¹

SECRET

Portuguese Timor: Proposal for a Peace-Keeping Force

You have asked for a draft press release incorporating proposals for the setting up of a peace-keeping force in Portuguese Timor. Two alternative texts are attached. Both drafts would cover the possibility of a peace-keeping force being set up by the United Nations. But Draft B would make this a second alternative, with the main proposal being directed at the establishment of a *regional* peace-keeping body. Both proposals have considerable difficulties.

2. To the extent that the proposal for a peace-keeping force is designed to meet a domestic need for the Government to be showing its concern, it does, of course, have merit. But the Government should be under no illusions that the initiative is likely to succeed or that, if something were to get under way, the going would be easy. The fundamental point is that Indonesia is (and has been throughout) absolutely resolved that Portuguese Timor should be incorporated into Indonesia. Any Australian initiative which did not have Indonesian acquiescence or lead to, or facilitate, an Indonesian takeover could cause great difficulties in Indonesian–Australian relations.

3. A critical point therefore is that the proposal for a peace-keeping force has not been discussed with the Indonesians. We believe that they will not like it and that they will be very puzzled about our intentions. They may find the proposal hard to reconcile with your recent message to President Soeharto,² and they may embarrass the Australian Government by revealing the fact of this message as well as the fact that they had kept us in close touch and acquainted us beforehand of their plans.

United Nations Involvement

4. I understand that your preference would be for a peace-keeping body sent in under United Nations auspices.

5. The proposal for a peace-keeping force in the United Nations would take us out of the General Assembly (where we are already engaged with our draft resolution) and into the Security Council. In effect Australia would be taking Indonesia to the Security Council—a very grave step. At worst it could lead to considerable costs in terms of our overall relationship, not only with Indonesia but with the ASEAN world generally. It could affect our future defence and strategic environment. It could spill over into other areas of potential difficulties with the Indonesians, including perhaps PNG–Indonesian relations.

¹ The cited copy itself is undated. A handwritten marginal note states that Renouf had taken the submission to the Prime Minister on 8 December.

² See Documents 343 and 344.

6. The press release in draft A³ has avoided specific reference to the Security Council. This is deliberate. We should still hope that were the Government determined on a Security Council approach, there would still be time for us to explore with the Indonesians how we might approach the Security Council in a way which the Indonesians would not regard as hostile to them.

7. But the prospects would not be good. The prospects are rather that a Security Council debate would quickly polarise in the Council. It would also lead to a politicisation of the Timor issue in international terms to a far greater extent than such is the case at present. At present it is not a major international issue and there has been very little inclination on the part of the great powers or the international community in general to allow it to become one.

8. Any proposal for a peace-keeping body (as opposed to the visiting mission idea which is floated in the resolution at present before the General Assembly) would also run into the normal maze of great-power manoeuvrings which are the feature of the Security Council. Australia could soon lose control of events. The composition of a peace-keeping body, for example, and its terms of reference, would be determined much more by great-power considerations than by any regional preferences.

9. For all these reasons the Department has serious reservations about direct recourse to the Security Council. We understand from Lisbon, however, that the Portuguese Council of Ministers has now issued a statement foreshadowing an approach to the Security Council. That means that the matter could find its way into the Council on Portugal's initiative. But does the Australian Government wish to appear to be acting in concert with the Portuguese against Indonesia? It would be better in the Department's view to allow Portugal to make the initial running in the Security Council, and for the Government, in any public statement it may make about a peace-keeping body, to focus on the possibility of a regional body.

Regional Body

10. Such an approach would in our view be better regarded regionally and should be equally acceptable in domestic terms in Australia. But, having said this, we should also have to say that we are not sanguine that a regional peace-keeping body could be easily established. ASEAN countries, like the Indonesians, may be puzzled by our initiative. Their initial reaction will almost certainly be cautious. While all but Singapore have agreed to co-sponsor the resolution currently before the Fourth Committee, they did so because of Indonesian pressure. If Indonesia decides it wants a peace-keeping force, the other ASEANs might well consider it. But they might not react on the basis of a unilateral Australian initiative.

11. There has indeed never been much inclination on the part of the ASEAN countries to get involved in Portuguese Timor. The only exception has been Malaysia which tended to see any regional initiative only in terms of providing a cover for an Indonesian takeover (Malaysia was prepared to participate in the Joint Authority proposed by the Indonesians in early September and to provide a token contribution to what would have been a substantially Indonesian intervention force.)

12. We appreciate that the foregoing appears negative. But it is our considered view that the difficulties in the way of a peace-keeping body, whether it be proposed that it be established by the United Nations or ASEAN, are considerable. Were the Government to take such an initiative, however, we would *recommend* the approach in press release draft B.⁴

³ The draft suggested that a peace-keeping body could be established under UN auspices, with the approval of Indonesia and Portugal, and that Australia would be prepared to participate in such a body. A second alternative would be a peacekeeping force sanctioned and drawn from the ASEAN countries.

⁴ Draft B suggested an ASEAN peace-keeping force as a first option; if the second alternative of a UN force was preferred, it would have to be acceptable to the ASEAN countries, Australia and Portugal.

Preferred Approach

13. The Department's own preferred approach would be to build on what we have already been trying to do in the United Nations. We should like to see our delegation in New York instructed to do what it can to retrieve those parts of the present resolution which still have relevance—a cessation of the conflict, self-determination for the Timorese, and a UN fact-finding mission. The mission proposal could also now be upgraded to a proposal for a UN observer-team perhaps to be established by the Secretary-General. The resolution could also be strengthened to provide for the team to be constituted 'forthwith' and for an act of self-determination to be quickly and freely conducted under some form of UN supervision of participation.

14. The suggested approach would be a positive position to adopt: it would have the advantage of being, at the same time, less potentially offensive to the Indonesians and more likely to succeed—and thus to help the Timorese. The approach lends itself equally well to a public statement in Australia. It is also an approach which we could immediately use in the Fourth Committee or, if the Portuguese move the debate to the Security Council, could be equally adopted there.

15. A third draft release, incorporating the proposal for an observer team, is also attached.⁵ It is this course which we *recommend* to you.

ALAN RENOUF

[NAA: A1838, 935/17/3, xii]

363 DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS NEWS RELEASE

Canberra, 8 December 1975

No. M86

Portuguese Timor

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Andrew Peacock, said today that the Government was continually watching the development of events in Portuguese Timor.

Mr Peacock recalled that the tragedy of Portuguese Timor had really begun with the intense political difficulties which Portugal had experienced over recent months. This had led to the fact that successive Portuguese Governments had been unable to exercise sufficient influence in Portuguese Timor with the result that the Macau program for decolonisation had broken down. This had in turn precipitated a situation of disorder in the territory, leading, among other things, to the flight of some 40,000 refugees across the border into Indonesian Timor. This sudden and large influx of refugees had caused the Indonesian Government great difficulties. Conflict between the various political groups in the territory had begun simultaneously and fighting had gone on intermittently over the past few weeks. This had led to the recent unilateral declaration of independence by the FRETILIN party, a declaration which had been followed by a declaration by other political groups that Portuguese Timor was a part of Indonesia. The whole situation had culminated in the attack upon and capture of Dili.

⁵ Draft C recommended that a corps of UN observers be established to '... assist in maintaining the peace and to help prepare the way for an ascertainment of the peoples' wishes'. This body would have to be supported by Indonesia, Portugal and the UN. An acceptable alternative would be an observer body sanctioned by and drawn from ASEAN countries.

Indonesia's stated objective, Mr Peacock continued, was the restoration of law and order, a task which Portugal had been unable to carry out, as a necessary pre-condition to a proper expression by the Timorese people of their own wishes regarding their political future. While this objective was laudable, the means chosen by Indonesia to achieve it was a matter of deep regret and concern on the part of the Australian Government. On a number of occasions in the past, the Australian Ambassador in Jakarta had been instructed to point out to the Indonesian Government that the use of force was not an appropriate means to settle the problem of Portuguese Timor. The last occasion on which the Ambassador had made this point to the Indonesian authorities had been on 4 December 1975. The Australian Government did not condone the attack upon Dili which had just taken place. 'We do not regard the use of force as an appropriate means of solving international problems', he said.

The Australian Government, Mr Peacock continued, had just learned that Portugal intended to complain to the Security Council of the United Nations about Indonesia's action over Portuguese Timor. The Government understood that the Security Council was likely to meet during the course of this week to discuss the question. The Australian Government would seek to be represented when the Security Council met for this purpose. Its representative there would press for a call by the Security Council for an immediate cease-fire—'as indeed we do now'. Its representative would also express the strong view that the Timorese people should have the opportunity to exercise their right of self-determination. Australia would support the despatch of United Nations observers to Portuguese Timor to see that an appropriate process of self-determination took place. Australia would expect that if Indonesia appeared before the Security Council, Indonesia would respond to the international concern which had been aroused over the fate of the people in the territory and would explain clearly her motives and intentions.

Mr Peacock said that the Australian Government would be asking its Ambassador in Jakarta to explain to the Indonesian authorities the views which Australia would seek to present to the Security Council. The Ambassador would also be instructed to tell the Indonesian Government once again that the use of force in Portuguese Timor was not an appropriate way to solve the problems of the territory.

In the midst of the tragedy of Portuguese Timor, Mr Peacock continued, Australia stood ready to provide aid as soon as the situation on the ground permitted. 'We are approaching the Indonesian Government in this sense with a request for assurances about the security of the Australian personnel that would be involved', he said.

The Minister concluded by saying that when the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly resumed its discussion of Portuguese Timor tonight, the Australian representative would repeat Australia's call for an immediate cease-fire and wish to see a process of self-determination applied under proper United Nations supervision.

364 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCKCanberra, [9 December, 1975]¹

SECRET

Extract**ASSISTANCE TO THE PORTUGUESE ON ATAURO²**

4. On the whole, it has been our view that Australian interests would be served in present circumstances for the Portuguese to withdraw completely from Timor. But we think that Australia ought not, by refusing support for the few remaining Portuguese in the frigate off Atauro, to *precipitate* their complete withdrawal. Were Australian support to be cut off, Australia would be open to the accusation of helping Indonesian military action in Timor. On the other hand, if the Portuguese themselves are decided on a withdrawal, in part or complete, it seems to us that Australia should give them help in the process. Another point to bear in mind is that in giving help to the Portuguese on Atauro, we have acted with the concurrence of the Indonesians—in the wake of the Rome talks between the Portuguese and the Indonesians at the beginning of November. As recently as late last week, Australian representatives were speaking publicly about continuing Portuguese responsibilities in Timor. We think that on the issue of helping the Portuguese stay in the area or leave it completely, we should keep our heads down for the time being by continuing to do what we have done in the past, that is, provide them with help on an *ad hoc* basis.

ALAN RENOUF

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iii]

365 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 9 December 1975

O.JA3568 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

In response to your O.CH298236¹ I have requested an appointment with Malik as soon as possible. He is naturally under pressure at present but I hope to see him this evening or early tomorrow. In the meantime the following comments additional to those in our O.JA3517² may be helpful to the Minister.

¹ This date has been taken from a handwritten covering note from Renouf to Feakes which also noted that the Minister agreed with the submission.

² The Portuguese garrison on Atauro, with the exception of the Military Commander and two or three officers, was reported to be on board the *Joao Roby* en route for Darwin. The Portuguese proposed to maintain a naval presence off Atauro, with the remaining officers aboard, as a symbol of Portugal's continuing authority.

¹ 8 December. Foreshadowing the dispatch of the text of Document 363, it requested the Embassy in Jakarta to reiterate to the Indonesian authorities the Australian Government's opposition to the use of force in Portuguese Timor and also to notify them of its readiness to resume aid to the territory.

² Document 359.

2. I am aware of the widespread criticism in Australia of Indonesia's 'aggression' and 'territorial ambitions'. Indonesia has used force and cannot expect this to be condoned. But it has maintained that in the past it did not nourish territorial ambitions in respect of Timor. If it had, it could have taken it years ago when, under Sukarno, Indonesia had a more restless expansionist and unpredictable foreign policy or when India moved into Goa. On the other hand, the Indonesian Government has stated repeatedly for the past eighteen months that it could not live with an economically unviable and potentially unstable independent Timor lying as it does within Indonesia's archipelago.

3. Indonesia decided, reluctantly, to take the action it has because of the situation which has developed in the second half of this year. Indonesia can make out a case for the incorporation of Timor; in some ways a better case than the purely legal case it made out for the incorporation of West Irian. Admittedly, it has not put this case well, and while it is not up to us to put Indonesia's case for it, in any definitive statement on Timor the incoming Government might make it would be desirable to explain how Indonesia approaches the Timor issue.

4. The contention that Australia could have prevented the course of events in Timor is, I believe, hard to justify. Australia may have been able to alter the course of events if we had been prepared to intervene militarily ourselves or by agreeing to participate in some form of administrative role. Neither course would have been palatable to Australian Governments.

5. We have in fact been faced with decided Indonesian policy for some time based on its assessment of its long term security and national interests and tacitly or publicly supported by its ASEAN neighbours. The former Australian Government had also come to the conclusion that the best outcome of the decolonisation of Portuguese Timor was its incorporation into Indonesia. There was in fact a shared objective (integration through internationally acceptable means) and, however repugnant Indonesia's present methods of achieving that objective, the fact that the basic objective itself was shared, in addition to the geopolitical realities of the Australian/Indonesian situation, does impose some limits on Australia's capacity for action against Indonesia's interests.

6. Moreover, I consider Australia has done more than *any* other country in the region or outside of it, including countries like the United States, Japan, New Zealand, the Soviet Union and even China to explore with Indonesia alternatives to incorporation, to discourage the Indonesians from using overt force and to caution them about the difficulties military involvement could create for them, such as international criticism, diversion of resources and possible residual insurgency. The fact is that, rightly or wrongly, Indonesia regarded its national interests as being at stake and saw the East Timor situation, while important to us, as of greater and, in fact, critical importance to them. They were also given the clear impression at the highest level that the Australian Government attached overriding importance to relations with Indonesia.

7. The Minister has made several references to seeking regional support for an initiative. I think this may have been possible two months ago when I put forward proposals for a regional initiative in our O.JA2336 of 10 October.³ But at that time the Government could not accept several of the assumptions on which the proposed initiative was based.

8. As the present situation develops the opportunity may yet arise for Australia to propose a regional initiative involving, say, the other four ASEAN countries, New Zealand, Australia and possibly PNG. For example, those countries might be requested to send observers to East Timor after peace and order has been restored and when an act of self-determination is to be conducted. (As a first initiative the regional group could collectively urge upon Indonesia the need to carry out this step.) Of course any such initiative would need to have Indonesia's prior agreement. It follows that if Australia is to be able to play any useful and constructive role in

³ See note 4 to Document 255.

the future, both (*sic*) as an initiator or as a participant, we should not now undermine our credibility with Indonesia. (As you will recall, had talks between the parties taken place recently we would not have been acceptable to all the parties as a venue.) As I see it, it is in our interests and the interests of regional stability generally that the eventual incorporation of East Timor be as legally correct and internationally accepted as possible.

9. It may also be timely to redefine and assert Australia's own long-term interests in respect of the future of East Timor. The public debate in Australia seems to us to have been strongly influenced by domestic political pressures and cast in terms of a choice between support for Fretilin and independence or support for Indonesia and integration. (As it turned out neither independence under Fretilin nor integration could be achieved without the use of force.) Apart from the oversimplification of the issues involved in such a presentation, it also ignores what should, for Australia, be the key issue, namely Australia's own national interest in respect of the future of East Timor.

10. Portugal seems now to be in the position that Santos put to me in August, namely that if Indonesia were to move into East Timor without a Portuguese request to restore peace, then Portugal would be able to blame Indonesia, disengage itself from its responsibilities in Timor, and pass the problem over to the United Nations. Subject to Lisbon's views this seems, from here, to be what Portugal is now doing. If Indonesia's patience finally failed it is partly because of the fact that while it lives beside East Timor Portugal will retreat to Europe.

11. I recall that at the South East Asian plus Heads of Missions meeting in Canberra in July it was the agreed consensus of those present, including the then Minister, that even if Indonesia were to move openly against Portuguese Timor (which was not expected at that time given the President's attitude then) the Government would need to act to contain the damage to the long term Australian/Indonesian relationship and to limit the recrudescence of latent hostility towards Indonesia in the Australian community. Despite the very hostile media reaction to Indonesia's actions which is no doubt influenced by the Balibo affair, I believe this should still be our approach. Acceptable ends can be damaged by bad means and while we may not like what has happened, it has happened. Australia's criticism after the event cannot reverse but it could, depending on how far we go, affect our relations with Indonesia which will continue to be very important to us long after the Timor issue has been settled.

12. Seen from here the next few weeks seem likely to provide an important test of the sophistication and maturity of Australian foreign policy, calling for cool and realistic comments of our longer term interests in Indonesia and the region. Despite the strength of domestic pressures against Indonesia at present, Australia will still have to go on living with Indonesia and we should not lose sight of the assessment that Australia's long term interests, as well as those of Indonesia and the region (and, conceivably, even those of the majority of the indigenous Timorese in East Timor) are now likely to be served by the association of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia.

13. The Minister wrote on the leader page of the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 4 December that if the present Government is confirmed in office one of the principles of its foreign policy would be 'a hard-headed realism about what the world is, rather than what we would like it to be'. He also wrote that the 'level of our rhetoric should be related to what our power can sustain and our interests require'. I suggest that this is the way in which the Government—caretaker or incoming—now needs to approach our relations with Indonesia and the Timor issue, weighing carefully Australia's longer term interests against short term frustration and disappointment and seeking more to influence public opinion in the same direction.

WOOLCOTT

366 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 9 December 1975

O.JA3569 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Sunarso (BAKIN) phoned us this afternoon saying that he had been instructed to request that if any Portuguese warships passed through Darwin for refuelling or revictualling, that they be delayed from leaving Darwin until at least 15 December.

2. When asked for reasons for this request Sunarso said that request was aimed at preventing any possibility that the two Portuguese frigates currently in the Atauro area might obstruct or interfere with future military moves. If the frigates remained at Atauro this would *not* be a problem. However if they called at Darwin Indonesians would not wish the frigates to leave Darwin earlier than 15 December.

3. We stressed to Sunarso that we could give no guarantees that we could meet this request. Sunarso said that he understood this perfectly. He had made this same point to his superiors.¹

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvii]

367 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN SUNARSO, TAYLOR AND RODGERS

Jakarta, 9 December 1975

SECRET

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor; Laos; Cambodia; Detainees*Timor*

[matter omitted]

4. We asked Sunarso how he saw the situation in the immediate future working out in Portuguese Timor. What arrangements would be made to administer the territory? What form would the act of self-determination, the Indonesian Government was publicly committed to, take? Sunarso replied that leading members of the pro-Indonesia forces would be given prominent administrative functions. Nevertheless the Indonesians would need to play a considerable role in the administration. A United Nations-supervised referendum might be conducted in two to three months' time. United Nations intervention might be requested by both the pro-Indonesia leaders and by Indonesia itself. Those Indonesians who took part in the

¹ Cablegram CH299066 (10 December) instructed the Embassy in Jakarta to inform Sunarso that the Australian Government was unable to meet his request, 'as there could be no question of action contrary to international law, or for that matter Australian custom, to detain the vessels'. One of the Portuguese corvettes, *Joao Roby*, had arrived in Darwin on 9 December and was expected to depart on 11 or 12 December; *Afonso Cerqueira* had arrived in Darwin on 10 December requiring emergency repairs. Both were intended to return to Atauro.

administration of Portuguese Timor would be 'volunteers' as would Indonesian security forces operating in Portuguese Timor. Indonesia was acutely aware of the need to ensure that the eventual integration of East Timor was done 'properly' and 'legally'.

5. Sunarso admitted that the Indonesians faced a number of real problems over the next few months. In particular this involved the low level of administrative ability of the pro-Indonesia groups, and the financial drain which Indonesian involvement in Portuguese Timor was placing on Indonesia.

6. In the course of the discussion on Portuguese Timor we drew Sunarso's attention to the two recent statements made by the Minister, and emphasised that Australia could not condone the use of force in Portuguese Timor, and supported an act of self-determination.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvii]

368 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 9 December 1975

O.LB615 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

In view of Ambassador's present indisposition (our O.LB614) Foreign Minister Antunes asked Cousins to call on him this morning.

2. Antunes said he had asked a representative of the Australian Government to call so he could brief him on recent developments in Timor and on Portugal's position. He referred to the breaking of diplomatic relations with Indonesia,¹ describing Indonesia's military action against a territory still under Portuguese administration as 'intolerable'.²

3. He then went on to discuss Portugal's present position and its appeal to the Security Council for an urgent meeting, which he expected perhaps today (9 December) or tomorrow. Portugal saw the most urgent issues as an immediate ceasefire in Portuguese Timor followed by an immediate withdrawal of Indonesian troops. Secondly, Portugal would propose to the Security Council that the United Nations call a conference on Timor. Antunes thought the Security Council itself might convene the conference or perhaps the Committee of 24 or the Secretary-General. The conference, under the aegis of the U.N., would be attended by Portugal and representatives of the three Timorese political parties as the parties principal. Portugal would have no objection however, if other countries of the region (he mentioned specifically Indonesia and Australia) wished to address the conference and put their views. The organisation, dates and venue for such a conference would be up to the U.N. Portugal would not propose any.

¹ Cablegram LB612 (7 December) communicated the text of a Portuguese communiqué issued that day announcing that the Council of Ministers had resolved: to cut diplomatic relations with the Republic of Indonesia; to support the decision of the National Decolonisation Committee that Portugal should make recourse to the UN, and in particular the Security Council, to obtain a cease-fire and a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the dispute in Portuguese Timor under UN aegis; and to request the intervention of the UN in obtaining the release of 23 captured Portuguese soldiers.

² D. J. Fisher recorded in a note for file dated 10 December that the Portuguese Ambassador had commented to him that the 'break in diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Portugal was more a face-saving move on the part of the Portuguese than an angry reaction to the Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor'.

4. Asked what would happen in Dili after the withdrawal of Indonesian troops, Antunes said that Portugal thought the situation should revert to its former position. Under further questioning, Antunes said in effect that this meant reverting to the position of some two weeks ago before FRETILIN's UDI (i.e. a FRETILIN administration). Antunes ruled out any re-establishment of a Portuguese administration but thought on the other hand that it was possible that the U.N. might put in a peacekeeping force. He said nevertheless that Portugal's approach to the U.N. did not in any way represent a cession of Portuguese sovereignty over Timor to the United Nations.

5. Cousins also asked about the Portuguese presence on Atauro island. Antunes replied that the Portuguese military on Atauro had already embarked on one of the Portuguese navy corvettes. The second corvette would, for the time being, remain in Timorese waters around Atauro, with a representative of Governor Lemos Pires on board.

6. Antunes asked that Portugal's position be transmitted to the Australian Government. He hoped that Australia, in accordance with its foreign policy traditions and previous position on Timor, would adopt a 'just' position, which he thought would be favourable in many respects to Portugal's position. He understood, however, the complications of our relations with Indonesia as our largest and nearest neighbour.

7. Cousins drew to Antunes' attention the points in paragraph four of the Minister's statement of 8 December,³ to which Antunes indicated his agreement. Asked whether he expected the Security Council to be sympathetic to Portugal's proposals, Antunes replied that he had already spoken to the representatives in Lisbon of the Permanent Members of the Security Council and he thought the Council would support Portugal's position.

[NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, viii]

369 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 9 December, 1975

O.UN4697 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Consultations with Portugal and Indonesia by the President of the Security Council began today, 9 December. Informal consultations of the Council are to be held 10 December. Several Members (Richard, as Chairman, U.S., Japan, Italy, Sweden, France) are looking to Australia for a lead on action by the Council which would be constructive and feasible.

2. As the debate in Fourth Committee 8 December amply demonstrated a call only for a ceasefire would be regarded by the majority as inadequate even as the first step, unless accompanied by a call for withdrawal.¹ Call for a ceasefire would appear to accept Indonesian intervention as necessary, if not legitimate. We must accept the likelihood that the Fourth

³ Document 363.

¹ Cablegram UN4684 (8 December) reported discussion in the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly on 8 December, during which several delegates argued for a resolution calling not only for a cease-fire but also for an unconditional withdrawal of Indonesian forces from Portuguese Timor.

Committee tomorrow and within the next two or three days the Plenary and the Security Council will have urged or called upon Indonesia to withdraw its forces without delay.²

3. The Portuguese representatives here told the 'Vinci group'³ (which I also briefed) today, that Lisbon has no plan for reintroduction of Portuguese army or police (O.LB615⁴) and I can detect no sign of any intention to return any of the Administration from Atauro to the mainland of Timor. The Portuguese, while insisting on their sovereignty and seeking the termination of Indonesian intervention, seem to have few constructive ideas, though they are beginning to promote the idea of negotiations under the aegis of the UN and the possibility of a UN peace-keeping force. My impression is that should the Indonesians by any chance move out they would expect FRETILIN to resume control of Dili, though they are well aware that the situation will be irreversibly changed by even a few days of a strong Indonesian presence.

4. I assume that, in the absence of any effective resumption of responsibility by Portugal for law and order, and until such time as the APODETI-UDT Administration can maintain itself, if this is indeed a possibility, the Indonesian Government will not be disposed to respond to United Nations calls for withdrawal. I take it that while we support the need for withdrawal in principle, we would not wish to see any withdrawal which would leave in East Timor not a vacuum but a kaleidoscope of violence and reprisal.

5. Our immediate diplomatic problem and task has been to do what we can to reduce the pressure on the Indonesians. Campbell's skilled and pertinacious negotiation in the Fourth Committee has kept the 'ASEAN plus' group together and a relatively mild resolution seems to be emerging which will (A) avoid condemnation of Indonesia (B) avoid recognition of the so-called democratic republic (C) link withdrawal of forces with the programme of self-determination. The Indonesians have been given time to restore order and to set in train their plans for organising the act of self-determination, to which they are committed.

6. But according to *Antara* Malik has given a pledge that Indonesian forces will be withdrawn when law and order have been re-established. To prepare for that time, and to avoid the simplistic approach of some Council Members (Tanzania, China, USSR, Byelorussia) that Indonesia should simply withdraw its forces and restore authority to the 'legitimate representatives of the people' in Timor, i.e. FRETILIN, there may well be suggestions for a UN peacekeeping operation or assistance with administration pending self-determination on the model of Spanish Sahara.⁵

7. Our second and urgent task, therefore, is to develop sensible and constructive proposals for the Security Council, to supplement the call for withdrawal for which we shall now be voting in the Assembly.

² Cablegram UN4685 (8 December) communicated the text of several amendments, proposed by the delegations of Guinea-Bissau and other like-minded states, to the draft resolution before the Fourth Committee. One of the amendments 'strongly' condemned Indonesia for 'acts of aggression' committed by its armed forces in Portuguese Timor. Another demanded an unconditional Indonesian withdrawal from the territory and a third drew the attention of the Security Council to the situation. DFA instructed the Australian Mission to the UN (Cablegram CH298747, 9 December) to abstain on amendments condemning Indonesia even if Guinea-Bissau succeeded in having its amendments adopted. Cablegram UN4698 (9 December) reported that the Australian delegation had negotiated with the delegations of Guinea Bissau and Mozambique in the presence of the UN Secretariat 'on the understanding that if some improvements could be made to their amendments ... we would be able to support the resulting draft resolution'. The text of the resulting resolution, introduced in the first instance without co-sponsorship as L.1131, was communicated in Cablegram UN4699 (9 December).

³ Presumably the group of northern (European) countries within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

⁴ Document 368.

⁵ A fact-finding sub-committee of the Committee of Twenty-Four had recommended in a report dated 24 October that the people of Spanish (Western) Sahara should be enabled to determine their own future 'in complete freedom and in an atmosphere of peace and security' and that there should be some form of UN presence as Spain withdrew from the territory.

8. Any UN presence in Timor will raise some problems for Indonesia, but Jakarta, before its intervention, had agreed to accept a visiting mission after order had been restored. I feel our Embassy should discuss urgently with Malik whether the Indonesian Government would be prepared to acquiesce [in a] proposal in the Security Council to send a small force to Dili, or by the Assembly (Committee of 24) to send a UN civilian and police group to assist on the Spanish Saharan model in preparations to consult the people. It should, I feel, be stressed to the Indonesian Government that while we are being as helpful as we can in seeking to avoid unjust criticism of Indonesia and impractical or unhelpful UN action, we could not protect Indonesia from international condemnation if it ignores completely calls by the Assembly and Security Council to permit UN participation in arrangements for self-determination.

9. An immediate question is, of course, how any United Nations force or administrative unit could be composed. Australia did not respond positively to earlier Indonesian suggestions that we might contribute towards a regional effort to restore and maintain order, but in the present emergency it would not seem beyond the bounds of possibility, even before the election, that Australia offer a small contribution to a UN presence in the Dili area following the withdrawal of Indonesian volunteers. Malaysia might also be sounded out, if the Indonesian Government still regards Australia and Malaysia as appropriate. It might conceivably be worth considering a small element from Brazil, if no Portuguese are available.

10. In any event I should appreciate urgently your guidance as to whether you agree that we should be active in the Security Council to anticipate the problems which would be raised by the adoption of a resolution calling for Indonesian withdrawal. I should also appreciate authority in the period of consultations, to discuss at least as a hypothesis, the possibility of an Australian contribution to UN action.

HARRY

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, ii]

370 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 10 December 1975

O.JA3601 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I saw Malik this morning 10 December. I handed him a copy of the Minister's Statement of the 8 December,¹ copies of which had already been given to the Foreign Ministry and which he read without comment in my presence.

2. I said that as he would know the Australian Government was strongly opposed to the use of force in Timor and that force was not the appropriate way to solve the problem. Malik said he knew this was Australia's attitude and that it had been put to him on a number of occasions both under the former Government and the present Government.

3. Malik said that while accepting this Indonesia still wanted 'the understanding of its friends'. The action which it had felt obliged to take would in the long run be better for everybody.

¹ Document 363.

Portugal had shown it was quite unable to act. The civil war would have continued for longer and with more casualties if Indonesia had not agreed to step up its assistance. Indonesia had now done what Portugal should have done in August but which it had been unable to do itself.

4. I told Malik that Australia was keen to resume assistance, particularly humanitarian aid, to Portuguese Timor as soon as possible. In this context I mentioned that a barge with food was already in Darwin. We also hoped that Indonesia would respond positively to the ICRC's request that Red Cross personnel return in safety to Portuguese Timor. I also asked whether, in the event of Indonesian agreement, Indonesia would have any ideas on whether ICRC operations should be based in Kupang or Darwin.

5. Malik was quite responsive. He said there 'was a need' and Indonesia would have 'no objection' to the resumption of genuine humanitarian assistance as soon as the safety of personnel could be assured. Malik also said that he hoped to be able to give the ICRC an answer about the return of their personnel in 24 or 48 hours. He would also have no objections at least to their return to Dili. He said that unless there was a FRETILIN counter-attack, which he did not expect, security could be guaranteed in Dili by the *de facto* APODETI/UDT Administration and the Indonesian volunteers. I asked when aid might actually be resumed. Malik said he would need to check this but he hoped 'soon'. We should follow this up with the Ministry. He did not express a firm view on whether ICRC operations should be based in Kupang or Darwin but did comment that Kupang was 'closer'.

6. I asked Malik for his views on the situation in Dili and in fact in East Timor. I also referred to reports in the Australian media of brutality and the killing of women and children. Malik said that the situation in Dili was 'calm'. Reports of indiscriminate killing were 'nonsense'. He assumed they were based on FRETILIN propaganda which he said seemed to have a receptive audience in Australia.

7. Malik said that the Portuguese enclave of Ocuasi had declared its support for APODETI without bloodshed or any significant FRETILIN opposition. Malik added that FRETILIN was now divided and a considerable number, including soldiers, had 'come over' to APODETI. Some FRETILIN soldiers who had done so had expressed shock that their military commander and Horta had left Timor shortly after predicting an imminent attack and saying they would fight to the last drop of blood. Malik said he expected FRETILIN resistance to crumble rather than consolidate.

8. I then outlined our approach to the United Nations. (Harry's telegram O.UN4697² which arrived shortly before I saw Malik was helpful and timely but I had not at that stage seen O.UN4698.³) Malik said that any resolution calling upon Indonesia to 'withdraw' its forces would be strongly opposed by Indonesia. He said that Sani had been instructed to say that Indonesia had no troops to withdraw. I said to Malik that, frankly, I thought he was putting Sani in a difficult position as this would not be believed in the United Nations. Malik said that the only Indonesian forces in East Timor now were 'volunteers' who had responded to the request of the four anti-FRETILIN parties for assistance. Naval and air forces had already been withdrawn.

9. Malik said he hoped Australia would not support a demand for Indonesia to withdraw its forces. He said that if Indonesian 'volunteers' withdrew a chaotic situation would again arise.

² Document 369.

³ 9 December. It reported the 'reasonable result' of Australian negotiations with Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique in the form of a new draft resolution, qualifying the call for Indonesian withdrawal as a means to enable the people of East Timor to exercise their right to self-determination and independence. The earlier resolution, co-sponsored by the ASEAN-plus group of states, including Australia, was withdrawn, leaving the new draft as the only one before the Committee.

There could possibly be a hard-core FRETILIN counter-attack and more fighting. A settlement would only be further delayed. In any case Indonesia would not withdraw them.

10. I said we attached importance to an act of self-determination being conducted in East Timor. Malik said he wanted to make it clear that there would be an act of self-determination or free choice with which the United Nations could associate itself. FRETILIN supporters could take part in such an act provided they had laid down their arms. Malik repeated that he expected many FRETILIN supporters now to see that the best course for all was to co-operate with Indonesia. I asked him whether Indonesia would accept a United Nations presence before, during or after order had been restored. Malik said a United Nations mission or observer group would be 'welcome at any time'. The only problem would be guaranteeing their safety outside Dili and other major centres such as Bacau. Fighting could still be going on in the countryside.

11. Malik said that Indonesia would not repeat not accept a United Nations force or administrative group. I said that Indonesia had been prepared to accept something along these lines in August. Malik said that this was so but the situation had changed. Malik also added that there was now 'no chance' of Indonesia acting in a way which might enable FRETILIN to resume control of Dili or which would invite more fighting and casualties. In all the circumstances, the best and only practicable solution even in humanitarian terms lay in what Indonesia was doing. This provided the 'quickest road to a peaceful settlement'.

12. I asked Malik when he thought an act of self-determination could be held. He replied it would depend on a number of factors but he thought 'within six months'.

13. I asked Malik whether he was worried about the effect of its Timor policy on Indonesia's international standing. He said 'no not in the long run'. He repeated the well-known argument that Indonesia's long term security, territorial integrity and stability must be its first consideration. He said that so far only two countries, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau (is this correct?) had recognised East Timor. He also said that generally the criticism of Indonesia with the exception of Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, China, Algeria and to a lesser extent Tanzania, had been fairly restrained so far. Anyway Indonesia would ride it out if it got worse. He added that he was also aware of strong criticism in Australia of Indonesia. While Indonesia had sought and still wanted Australian support and understanding, Malik said he was aware that the Australian Government's attitude was much influenced by public opinion, especially during an election campaign. I did say that while the Government would want to limit as far as possible the damage to Australian/Indonesian relations Indonesia needed to accept that there would be widespread criticism in Australia of Indonesian military intervention, whether or not there was an election campaign in Australia. Malik agreed but added that it was unfortunate that outside of the other countries he had mentioned, it was only in Australia, which Indonesia looked upon as a good neighbour and a friend, that criticism of Indonesia was so strong.

14. Mainly to change the subject, I asked Malik whether Indonesia still regarded Portugal as having sovereignty over East Timor or not. He said '*de facto*, no, but *de jure*, yes'. He said Portugal had been foolish to break off relations with Indonesia because this limited scope for further consultations with Indonesia. Perhaps that was what it had wanted. But Indonesia still recognised Portugal's *de jure* sovereignty although APODETI/UDT were now in *de facto* control of Dili and most other major populated centres. The APODETI/UDT Administration would itself need to cooperate with Portugal in the future.

15. I said the Australian Government, if it was confirmed in office, would be anxious to assist in bringing about a peaceful settlement of the issue. Malik said that he would welcome

Australian cooperation, with the other ASEAN countries, in any moves which might help in bringing about a settlement. However any settlement would need to take account of Indonesia's interests and Australian attitudes would need to be in accordance with attitudes of the other four ASEAN countries if any regional initiative was to be taken.

16. As I left Malik said that Indonesia's policy on Timor had not changed. It was important that the issue should be settled quickly because it was not in the interests of either Indonesia or Australia for damage to be done to their wider relations.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, ii]

371 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 10 December 1975

O.LB617 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

*Ref O.JA3568*¹

I would not define the Portuguese position in precisely the terms used by Jakarta in para 10 of their reftel. The Portuguese certainly blame Indonesia for breaching the Rome Agreement (by their resort to force) and they also see UN involvement as now essential to any orderly decolonisation process. But by rejecting FRETILIN's UDI and the integration declaration of the pro Indonesia parties, and by reaffirming their (albeit symbolic) sovereignty in Portuguese Timor, it cannot be said that Portugal's reference to the UN was a means to 'disengage itself from its responsibilities in Timor'. Portugal has said all along that reference to the UN would be a last resort and only to be undertaken when they were convinced that the search for a political solution was beyond their means. They clearly regard Indonesian military intervention in this light.

2. The Indonesians have accused the Portuguese of breaching the Rome Agreement. But the Portuguese believe just the opposite. Antunes returned from Rome believing that he had achieved an understanding with Malik to restore the Macao decolonisation process and convinced that Indonesia could 'deliver' UDT and APODETI so far as round table talks were concerned. Moreover Antunes thought he had made it clear that, as a possible venue, Bali was simply not on, and Malik appeared to accept this. When therefore the pro Indonesia parties after a delay of some weeks finally proposed Bali the Portuguese concluded that Indonesia was not seriously interested in talks. (As Cruz remarked to me at the time both sides behaved in a very 'oriental' way at Rome.) In this context it is worth noting that Villas Boas (who accompanied Antunes to Rome) has told Cousins that Antunes was 'shocked and surprised' by Indonesia's decision to intervene. (Please protect Villas Boas.) It also helps to explain the subsequent relatively strong reaction by the Portuguese Government to what they regard as Indonesian duplicity in Timor.

3. In retrospect, I think that those of us who have lived with the Timor situation for the past few months have all been so mindful of the overriding importance of our long term relations

¹ Document 365.

with Indonesia that it has in my view inhibited us too much in what we have said to the Indonesians. Had we, for example, pressed the Indonesians much harder on the question of talks, and made it clear that public opinion in Australia and elsewhere simply would not understand any failure of our joint efforts to get the parties together, we might have headed off the tragic sequence of FRETILIN's UDI followed by Indonesia's almost inevitable intervention. As it was, Indonesia's decision to intervene seems to have been at least partly based on an incorrect assessment of the Portuguese position in respect of the FRETILIN UDI based on their Ambassador's interview with Crespo.²

4. As for the future there is some small consolation in the fact that, even at this late stage, Portugal is still prepared (unlike in Angola) to cling to its sovereignty in Timor long enough to implement an act of self determination, if it receives enough international backing for its position. Now that it has restored 'law and order', Indonesia could presumably afford to withdraw in the knowledge that any act of self determination, even under UN or regional supervision, would now be unlikely to yield a pro FRETILIN result. In any event this is a risk Indonesia must take if President Suharto still wants integration to be effected by 'legal' means.

5. One final point, I think it would be a mistake to attribute much influence to the Balibo affair in assessing Australian media reaction to Indonesian intervention. The Indonesians are themselves committed to the principle of self determination for the people of Timor and Australian public opinion is unlikely to settle for less.

COOPER

[NAA: A1838, 3038/11/64, ANNEX]

372 LETTER FROM MILLER TO WOOLCOTT

Canberra, 11 December 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

A note to sympathise with your present difficulties over Timor, provoked to a considerable extent it seems by the caretaker Government's sensitivity to Monday's editorials in an election week.

I have not always agreed with your line on Timor, thinking that we might have tried once more to get the Indonesians to accept the idea of living with a Fretilin-dominated East Timor. (The attached note to John Rowland as Acting Secretary in September indicates what I was unsuccessfully advocating.¹)

However I feel strongly that particularly since in the end we did not really seek to change the Indonesians' minds we should now make our main objective, as you urge in your O.JA3568² of 9 December, to limit the harm to Indonesia and to our relations with it which its action will cause. We have to accept that having made the decision to act, although knowing the international opprobrium which their action would inevitably bring, the Indonesians will not break off without achieving their goal. I only hope that we will be clear-headed enough to

² In Cablegram LB609 (5 December), Cooper reported that the Indonesian Ambassador to Portugal had interpreted a remark by Crespo on 28 November as indicating that Portugal was likely to recognise Fretilin.

¹ See attachment to Document 233.

² Document 365.

keep in mind that international observer groups, and our participation in them, will simply mean a continuation and institutionalisation of the clash between our relationship with Indonesia and our commitment to self-determination which has caused us so much difficulty already.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

373 STATEMENT BY CAMPBELL IN FOURTH COMMITTEE OF UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 11 December 1975

The draft resolution before the Committee in Document L.1131 co-sponsored by Algeria, Guyana, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, and others has the particular merit of incorporating all the points of importance from an earlier draft and a subsequent revision which Australia had co-sponsored. Those points have continuing validity, notwithstanding the changed circumstances of this week and we shall vote in recognition of that validity. In particular, there is emphasis on the right of the people of Portuguese Timor to determine freely their future political status. It is clear that the options before these people are essentially outright independence or complete freedom through joining the people of Indonesia and benefiting from their independence—an independence to which Australia is proud to have contributed.

In the original draft resolution Australia joined virtually all its neighbours and regional friends as co-sponsors, and especially Indonesia.

Indonesia is inevitably touched and troubled by the tragedy in Timor. There is no doubt about its concern that Portuguese Timor should not become another Angola subject to external intervention by great powers or others. We have understanding and sympathy for Indonesia's position that law and order should be restored in the territory, not just for the sake of its inhabitants, or to bring to an end the disruptive and costly effects on Indonesian Timor of the anarchy across the border in the territory for which Portugal remains responsible, but above all as the necessary pre-condition for a proper expression by the Timorese people of their own wishes regarding their political future.

The draft resolution calls on Portugal to exercise its responsibilities as administering power. This is not a ritual appeal. On the contrary, it expresses a real requirement that Portugal make good the deficiencies in its role in the territory which have been the basic factor contributing to the present crisis. The plain fact is that successive Portuguese Governments have been unable to exercise adequate influence in Portuguese Timor in recent months. The last elements of Portuguese administration arrived yesterday in Darwin, apart from the symbolic presence of one corvette at sea off Atauro.

In all these circumstances it is understandable that Indonesia should have been moved to undertake heavy responsibilities which properly belonged elsewhere.

While the objective of restoring order was laudable, the fact remains that the use of force is not an appropriate means to settle the problem of Portuguese Timor whether the force is applied by FRETILIN, APODETI, UDT, or the Government of Indonesia. As we have already made known, and as we shall register by vote, Indonesia's use of force is a matter for deep regret and concern on the part of the Australian Government and we are unable to condone it even in the difficult circumstances thrust upon the Indonesian Government.

The question is now one to be discussed in the Security Council. Australia's Permanent Representative will seek to be heard in the Council in order to contribute to its discussion both from our detailed understanding of the facts and from our strong desire to help bring about a settlement—a settlement which can flow only from the people of Portuguese Timor being given the opportunity, so far denied to them, to exercise their right to self-determination.

The draft resolution addresses questions which obviously are to be considered further by the Security Council and which ought not to be prejudged. In this connection the Australian Government has reservations about the operative paragraphs 4 and 5, the basis for which will be obvious from the remarks we have just made. It is in that light that Australia will vote in favour of the draft.

Australia, with others, has been attempting to negotiate a few simple amendments to L.1131 which in our view would have avoided prejudging the action of the Security Council in relation to the modalities of withdrawal and which would have avoided direct condemnation of Indonesia. We hoped that such a resolution would facilitate the co-operation of Indonesia, which is of course essential to a real solution. For the information of the Committee, the text of these possible amendments is as follows:

- (a) Delete the last preambular paragraph.¹
- (b) Replace operative paragraph 4² by the following:
'4. *Deplores* any military intervention by foreign armed forces in Portuguese Timor;'
- (c) Replace operative paragraph 5³ by the following:
'5. *Calls for* the withdrawal without delay of all such armed forces from the Territory, in order to enable the people of the Territory freely to exercise their right to self-determination and independence;'

Such efforts have not yet been successful—the debate in the Fourth Committee is closed—but we shall pursue the effort to produce a generally acceptable text in the Plenary.

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, iii]

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY AFTER THE INVASION

After the Indonesian invasion of Portuguese Timor on 7 December, the delegations of Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique proposed amendments critical of Indonesia to the ASEAN draft resolution on Portuguese Timor before the Fourth (Decolonisation) Committee of the UN General Assembly. The Australian delegation then negotiated with the delegations of Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, in the presence of the UN Secretariat, on the understanding that, if some improvements could be made to their amendments, Australia would support the resulting resolution. The Australian delegation reported (Cablegram UN4698, 9 December) that it had achieved a 'reasonable result' in resolution L.1131 (Cablegram UN4699, 9 December) which was left as the only resolution before the Fourth Committee when Thailand withdrew the

¹ The paragraph read: 'Deeply concerned at the critical situation resulting from the military intervention of the armed forces of Indonesia in Portuguese Timor'.

² The paragraph read: 'Strongly deplores the military intervention of the armed forces of Indonesia in Portuguese Timor'.

³ The paragraph read: 'Calls upon the Government of Indonesia to desist from further violation of the territorial integrity of Portuguese Timor and to withdraw without delay its armed forces from the Territory, in order to enable the people of the Territory freely to exercise their right to self-determination and independence'.

ASEAN draft resolution and Guinea-Bissau the African amendments to it. The new resolution was subsequently co-sponsored by Algeria, Guyana, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago. It 'strongly' deplored the intervention of Indonesian armed forces (paragraph 4) in Portuguese Timor and called on Indonesia to withdraw its forces from the territory without delay 'in order to enable the people of the territory freely to exercise their right to self-determination and independence' (paragraph 5). Still another resolution (L.1132) co-sponsored by India, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand requested the Committee of Twenty-Four to send a fact-finding mission to Portuguese Timor in view of the divided political opinions about the future status of the territory. On 10 December the Australian delegation was instructed to vote in favour of resolution L.1131, while abstaining on paragraphs 4 and 5 but voting for paragraph 6 which drew the attention of the Security Council to the situation in the territory. The delegation was also instructed to vote in favour of draft resolution L.1132.

The Australian delegation (Cablegram UN4723, 10 December) prepared amendments to resolution L.1131 designed to delete any specific reference to Indonesia and thus to encourage Indonesia to abstain on, rather than vote against, the resolution. Had these amendments been carried, paragraph 4 would have read 'deplores any military intervention by foreign armed forces in Portuguese Timor' and paragraph 5 would have read 'calls for withdrawal without delay of such foreign armed forces from the Territory in order to enable the people of the Territory freely to exercise their right to self-determination and independence'. The Embassy in Jakarta suggested in Cablegram JA3631 (11 December) that Australia should not vote in favour of any resolution which demanded an Indonesian withdrawal from Portuguese Timor, especially if that meant parting company with other regional countries.

However, on 11 December, when the Fourth Committee convened, 'the Chairman called it to order with unusual punctuality and, in a move which took members by surprise, secured the quick adoption of Portugal's outstanding procedural motion for the closure of the debate' (Cablegram UN4727, 11 December). The closure of debate prevented the Australian delegation from introducing its amendments, and resolution L.1131 went to the vote unamended. The Fourth Committee thereupon approved it by a vote of sixty-nine states (including Australia) in favour, eleven states (including Indonesia) against, with thirty-eight abstentions.

Campbell indicated that he could still put the Australian amendments, which the Fourth Committee had been unable to consider, to the General Assembly in plenary session on the proviso that Indonesia decided in advance to abstain from, or not participate in, the vote. However, the Department of Foreign Affairs, instructed him (Cablegram CH300194, 12 December) not to press the amendments because of the difficulties of dissuading Indonesia from voting against the resolution, because of the general state of confusion in the Fourth Committee and because of a desire not to encourage other delegations to introduce further amendments in the General Assembly. Campbell reported in Cablegram UN4745 (12 December) that it 'proved impossible to proceed with our amendments in plenary today 12 December, since Indonesia would have maintained its negative vote regardless and neither Portugal, the Africans nor the East Europeans were prepared to support our amendments without there being a change in the Indonesian vote'. Consequently the draft resolution as adopted in the Fourth Committee was adopted in plenary by 72 votes (including Australia) to 10 (including Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand) and with 38 abstentions.

374 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 12 December 1975

O.JA3669 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor

Australia's positive vote on the Portuguese Timor resolution in Fourth Committee was described to us today by Tjan as 'disastrous'. He said Indonesia had hoped that Australia would have been helpful in the United Nations. Australia's vote and approach in the United Nations was in direct contrast to that of other regional countries such as Japan, PNG, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and India.

2. Following receipt of Sani's telegram reporting developments in the United Nations on 10 December Tjan said questions were asked here about Australia's intentions. General Moerdani had referred to Australia's 'double-cross' and certain BAKIN Generals had spoken in similar terms (this was before the vote was taken in the Fourth Committee).

3. Tjan said that the United Nations vote would be very important in determining Indonesia's attitude towards Australia. Until the vote, there had been 'general understanding' of the anti-Indonesia activities in Australia—union bans, critical press comment and so on. Indonesia he said had gone out of its way 'to make allowances for certain things'. But now he doubted whether this understanding would prevail.

4. We defended at length our position again to Tjan. He was not receptive.

5. This is of course a first reaction and we shall also need to take soundings elsewhere in the Indonesian Government (although as you know Tjan is a central figure in the powerful 'Palace Group'). We shall report further as soon as possible.

6. Tjan has just rung to say he has spoken to General Ali Murtopo about Australia's vote. He said that Ali was extremely disappointed. Ali commented that Indonesia would have to consider what 'positive action' to take concerning Australia.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvii]

375 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 13 December 1975

O.JA3673 CONFIDENTIAL AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: United Nations

We saw Tjan again today 13 December (before receipt of UN4735¹). He said that an Indonesian Government statement on the United Nations vote was being prepared. It would be fairly

¹ 12 December. It reported Indonesian appreciation in New York of Australian efforts to moderate the position of Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, in spite of initial surprise and disbelief that the Australian Mission had been instructed to support a resolution amended by those countries to a position condemning Indonesian intervention. Members of the Western group, including Britain, the United States and Canada, who had been looking to Australia for a lead, had also been surprised. Sani had nevertheless advised Jakarta 'that Australia has been as helpful as possible to Indonesia over the last four days'. Harry assured Canberra: 'Our contact with the Indonesian Mission does not suggest that they feel in any way that Australia, in supporting L.1131, has placed itself in the vanguard of opposition in UN to Indonesia'.

tough. Certain quarters in the Indonesian Government had urged that Australia be mentioned in the statement as one of the principal opponents of Indonesia in the United Nations. Others, including Tjan, would try to keep our name out of it.

2. Tjan said that our vote in favour of the resolution (which of course was a vote against Indonesia) was bad enough. Indonesia, he said, could hardly be expected to be grateful to Australia for that. But even more damaging (than a single vote cast) was the fact that so many countries had looked to Australia for a lead. The Americans, he said, had already told the Indonesian Government that Australia's voting intentions had played a large part in their own consideration of how they should vote. Indonesia had also learnt that the Nine (including Britain) had been similarly influenced by Australia. No doubt there were many others. Australia's general approach in the United Nations on this issue had been 'extremely harmful' to Indonesia.

3. We explained to Tjan at some length what our United Nations delegation had done to help Indonesia's position. He said that the only thing that counted was the way we have voted. We had isolated ourselves from the other regional countries. In Indonesian eyes we were thus very much in the forefront of the opposition. In fact, of all the countries which had 'voted against' Indonesia, Australia was easily the most prominent for the simple reason that we were the only major regional country which had voted the way we had.

Comment:

4. As stated in our JA3669² Tjan's may be only an initial and temporary reaction. After all, he has been deeply involved in Australia/Indonesia relations for many years and his disappointment is understandable. But time and events *may* show that this reaction does reflect considered Indonesian Government views.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvii]

THE AUSTRALIAN GENERAL ELECTION: DECEMBER 1975

The election campaign following directly on the dismissal of the Whitlam Government was marked throughout the country by bitterness and partisan animosities. Supporters of the former Government focused on what they perceived as blatant disregard of constitutional conventions and an abuse of power by the Governor-General. Supporters of the caretaker Government saw the dismissal as further evidence of the former Government's unsuitability for office. The central issue of the campaign, however, was the economy. Fraser's policy speech of 27 November called for the revitalisation of the private sector through tax indexation, investment allowances and tariff protection. Labor stressed the economic respectability of shadow Treasurer Bill Hayden and offered apologies for past economic mismanagement. Foreign policy featured hardly at all during the campaign. On 13 December Fraser's caretaker Government was returned with a landslide: 91 Members of the House of Representatives compared to the Labor Party's 36, and a majority of 3 in the Senate.

² Document 374.

376 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 15 December 1975

O.CH300638 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: United Nations*Ref. O.JA3669, O.JA3673*¹

Tjan's reaction to Australia's voting at the United Nations shows an inadequate understanding of the help given to Indonesia by our delegation in New York and the strength of public feeling in Australia against Indonesia's action in Timor. Australian voting was consistent with the several public statements by the Australian Government following Indonesia's reported intervention.

2. You will now have New York's telegram UN4735.² We think it would be worthwhile having a further discussion with Tjan about these matters drawing on New York's telegram. The points might also be made that Australia and Indonesia had cooperated closely in the drawing up of the original, regionally-sponsored Draft Resolution, and that Australia had been very active in seeking support for it—more active we suspect than the Indonesians themselves. Thus, for example, it can be argued—and the point made to Tjan—that Fijian and PNG sponsorship followed Australian representati[ons] in Suva and Port Moresby. We also made representations, unsuccessful in the event, to Singapore. In addition, Australian diplomacy played a major part in the weeks preceding the United Nations debate in blunting or diverting criticism of Indonesia by Tanzania, Brazil, Western Europe and China.

3. Clearly the situation in New York was changed by Indonesia's military operations on 7 December. Mozambique, Guinea and Guinea Bissau, the East Europeans, China and others were insistent on some form of United Nations condemnation of Indonesia's action. That, in the event, this condemnation was not expressed in much harsher language, was due in no small measure to Australia's efforts in the Fourth Committee.

4. In this connexion, it may be useful to provide Tjan—perhaps in tabular form to enable quick comparison—with the several texts in New York's UN4737,³ along with the further amendments that Australia had proposed (New York's telegram UN4723⁴) but which we were unable to present because of the premature closure of the debate. In case Tjan is not aware of it, it might also be useful to take him through the separate paragraph voting (in which Australia abstained on the paragraphs most critical of Indonesia) as well as providing him with the texts of our delegations' explanations of vote in UN4728⁵ and UN4733⁶ along with the text of Campbell's initial intervention (UN4605).⁷

¹ Documents 374 and 375.

² See note 1 to Document 375.

³ 12 December.

⁴ 10 December. It conveyed the text of amendments to Resolution L.1131.

⁵ 11 December. It conveyed the text of Document 373.

⁶ 12 December. It communicated the text of an explanation of the Australian delegate's vote in the plenary UN General Assembly on resolution 3485 (XXX): Question of Timor, 12 December 1975. While agreeing with the main principles set out in the resolution, the Australian delegate considered that the operative paragraphs 4 and 5 as adopted in the Fourth Committee 'appear to prejudice the careful assessment relating to the intervention of Indonesia in the eastern end of the island of Timor, an assessment which can only be made by the Security Council after it has considered the facts, and the circumstances in which elements from the Indonesian forces landed in the Dili area, in support of the parties now in combat there'.

⁷ See Document 355.

5. The Timor issue now goes to the Security Council, where we have asked to present our views. Further instructions which are being prepared for Harry will ask him to keep closely in touch with the Indonesians.

6. You should know that the Indonesian Ambassador called on the Secretary this morning to convey the Indonesian authorities' disappointment at the Australian vote, which seemed to represent a change without warning in Australian attitudes on Portuguese Timor.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvii]

377 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 15 December 1975

O.JA3698 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Since my return from brief visit to Singapore I have seen the weekend cables from Jakarta and New York's O.UN4735.¹

2. As foreshadowed in our JA3669² we intend to test the reaction of several key Ministers and officials, including Malik, and possibly indirectly that of the President (although he is in hospital at present), to Australia's vote in the United Nations on Resolution L1131 and the situation here after that vote.

3. I hope I am wrong but I believe the Indonesian reaction at all levels will not differ much from Tjan's (our O.JA3669 and JA3673³) except that it may be outwardly more polite. Tjan's bluntness stems from the close relationship between him and the Embassy developed over several years.

4. I expect it will be one of surprise and disappointment which is going to take some time to repair. We may also have opened up something of a credibility gap in our dealings with Indonesia which we should act to bridge if we can. Those Indonesians who know of Mr Peacock's private discussions in Bali in September⁴ and Mr Fraser's message to the President which I delivered personally on 28 November⁵ will, I believe, find our action inconsistent, even accepting that they would expect Australia to exclude the use of force as a means to a solution 'appropriate' to Indonesia.

5. It is true that the Indonesians originally thought our attitude in New York was helpful (paragraph 2 of UN4735) and Malik told me so when I saw him on 10 December. It is also true that they are aware we acted to blunt criticism of Indonesia in New York which otherwise could have been stronger. The fact is that however we started off, Australia, in supporting L1131, placed itself when it came to the vote with the non-regional opposition in the United Nations to Indonesia.

¹ See note 1 to Document 375.

² Document 374.

³ Document 375.

⁴ Peacock had been briefed by Tjan during a private visit to Bali in September 1975. See note 1 to Document 357.

⁵ Presumably Document 343, which was in fact delivered on 25 November (see Document 344).

6. We have done our best to explain our attitude to Indonesians at various levels but on an issue which they see as being of great national and regional importance to them, we cannot reasonably expect to vote against Indonesia and out of company with other countries in the region (even Sri Lanka moved to an abstention in Plenary) and have them accept this without reaction.

7. The Indonesian Government's statement issued yesterday 14 December which we have cabled to you separately states clearly—in both the Bahasa Indonesia and the English text—that Indonesia is either 'highly concerned' (English text) or 'very disappointed' (Bahasa Indonesia) about the attitude of 'certain friendly countries, particularly countries situated close to Portuguese Timor' which either supported Resolution L1131 or which 'showed an attitude of indifference' to Indonesia's interests.

8. I telephoned Minister for Information Mashuri and asked him about the significance of this part of the statement (which was issued in his name, not Malik's) and asked him which 'countries' plural the Government had in mind. He said that although the plural was used as far as the region was concerned it was directed at Australia. He added that he was 'sorry to say so' but Indonesia felt 'let down by a friend'. He added that it was not really directed at Sri Lanka which was not closely enough involved in the South East Asian region to understand the issue fully. Anyway, it had changed its vote. Indonesia would have preferred Singapore to have voted against the Resolution but at least it had abstained and the Government statement was not directed at Singapore.

9. Another reason for Indonesia's disappointment is that it will believe that a number of countries were influenced by Australia's voting intentions. Some countries could in fact exploit the situation and make things more difficult for us by telling the Indonesians privately that they might have voted differently but for Australia. Our active role in the Fourth Committee may also have had the unintended effect of emphasising Australia's central position in the Timor issue in a way which, ultimately, the Indonesians have found unhelpful, despite our previous assertion that we were not a party principal.

10. One worrying aspect of the present situation is that I suspect that unless we can use the confirmation in office of the 'new' Government as an opportunity for a new look at the situation the reaction to our attitude could well have the effect of excluding Australia from playing an effective and constructive role in the Portuguese Timor issue from now on. This would be unfortunate in terms of the Government's stated wish to contribute to a regional initiative. As I have reported before, we could only do this if we move in company with the region and if any regional initiative put forward has Indonesian support. Moreover, Indonesia could be less likely to give the same weight as previously to our representations on resuming aid and on the ICRC if they decide we are acting against their real interests.

11. I am also surprised by the continuing, uncritical pro-FRETILIN anti-Indonesian tone of the Australian media in the past week and the apparent failure of the Indonesian Embassy to act to set the record right. One of the surprising features is the continuing tendency to accept as fact FRETILIN radio reports from East Timor. More dangerous however is the short-sighted stimulation of anti-Indonesian feeling in the Australian community, which it is clearly in Australia's longer term interests to prevent.

12. In this context too I am concerned that Indonesians might think that our vote and our statements in the General Assembly could have the effect of stirring up rather than placating anti-Indonesian sentiment in Australia, including that within the trade unions. This could ultimately lead to reciprocal actions in Indonesia to our own disadvantage.

13. Subject to further discussions here and a more detailed assessment of the present state of Australian/Indonesian relations which we hope to send in two or three days, I consider that we must accept that our vote in the United Nations has set back our relations with Indonesia. We shall of course be continuing to do our best to explain our position to the Indonesians and to mend the fences.

14. The Timor issue however and our response to it clearly constitute one of the major foreign policy problems facing the Government elected at the weekend. It will need to re-examine our total relationship with Indonesia and move to minimise further damage which could now easily be done to our longer term relations with Indonesia. Given our decision to participate in the Security Council debate I hope the situation will not be exacerbated by our role in that debate. I would also appreciate some guidance on the response I should give to the Indonesians if I am asked whether the Government now still regards Australia as not being a party principal in the Timor issue.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 2]

378 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 15 December 1975

O.LB640 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Ref. O.CH299253¹

In the absence of Antunes (who is still preoccupied with internal matters) I saw the Director-General of Political Affairs (Cruz) and his Deputy (Villas Boas) today. However before reporting on this interview I want to offer some observations on paragraph 2 of your reftel since it is relevant to any comments we may make this week in the Security Council. What you say about Portuguese irresolution is all true enough but to have hoped for or expected otherwise is to ignore the realities of the political situation in Portugal itself. During the period in question we were dealing first with a pro-Communist Government (under Goncalves) which was openly encouraging the politicisation of the armed forces, and then with one under Azevedo² which

¹ 10 December. It commented that the Portuguese Government did not appear to have fully considered the ramifications of its approach to the Security Council. Paragraph 2 pointed out that Portugal needed to acknowledge its responsibility for developments in Portuguese Timor, especially its 'equivocation' following the UDT show of force in August and its acquiescence in Fretilin's establishing a *de facto* administration with the assistance of Portuguese arms. In paragraph 4, DFA indicated that it had serious reservations about the suggestion for a conference between Portugal and the Timorese political parties that possibly included countries 'outside the South-East Asian region'. In paragraph 5, the Department noted that an Indonesian withdrawal from Portuguese Timor could only take place 'after a programme of resumed decolonisation is established' and that, despite recent developments, 'Portugal still needs to be encouraged to fulfill its residual responsibilities to the Timorese'. Paragraph 7 emphasised that the various draft resolutions being discussed in the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly all continued to accept Portugal as the administering power in Portuguese Timor.

² Captain, later Admiral, Jose Baptista Pinheiro de Azevedo, Prime Minister of Portugal, 29 August 1975 to 23 June 1976.

was so weak that its writ did not even run in Lisbon itself. In these circumstances, and apart from the logistic[al] problems of reinforcing the Timor garrison on which I have already commented (our O.LB634³), I am afraid that there was absolutely no prospect of any resolute action by Portugal in Timor at that time.

2. Unfortunately today's talk with Cruz and Villas Boas did not hold out much hope of any positive action by Portugal in the future. I referred to the prospect of today's Security Council debate and said that although our respective delegations were no doubt concerting in New York, it would be helpful to have some idea of Portugal's objectives, and the nature of the instructions they had sent to New York.

3. Incredible as it may seem I was told that no repeat no specific instructions had been sent to New York. The Portuguese Ambassador to the United Nations (Teles) had just recently returned to New York from Lisbon and was thoroughly familiar with Portuguese thinking and with the background to the Timor problem. Thus instead of sending instructions to New York, the Foreign Ministry is waiting to hear from their delegation about the outcome.

4. I nevertheless put to Cruz and Villas Boas the points in paragraph 4 and 7 of your reftel. I stressed that a substantial majority of the United Nations (including Indonesia) still recognised Portugal as the administering power in Timor. It was therefore important that Portugal should reaffirm its continued willingness to discharge its responsibilities in the territory so far as circumstances permitted.

5. Cruz saw little prospect of Portugal being able to do anything unless Indonesia agreed to withdraw. I said that in view of the public position taken by Malik this was most unlikely. We speculated as to whether Indonesia would agree to let its 'volunteers' be placed under some sort of UN mandate.

6. Both officials seemed content to leave it to the UN to work out. I said this was simply not good enough. Portugal owed it to her friends who had supported her in the UN—a position that was particularly difficult for Australia—to be prepared to take whatever initiatives were open to her. Otherwise they would simply be proving Indonesia's point—that Portugal was unable and unwilling to do anything to permit the Timorese to decide their own future.

7. We speculated about the possibility of reactivating the question of holding talks in New York. All the parties concerned were present in New York. I suggested that Portugal had nothing to lose by showing a willingness to hold talks in New York or anywhere else. We also discussed the prospects for a UN visiting mission and the security problems this entailed.

8. My general impression is that Portugal is still hoping that the United Nations will somehow resolve the problem and, that there is very little positive thinking being done in Lisbon. Condemnation of Indonesia is the overriding concern and it is going to be very difficult to persuade the Portuguese to focus on more positive aspects of the problem.

9. Incidentally I am now scheduled to see Antunes at 1300 hours tomorrow Tuesday.

COOPER

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, ii]

³ 12 December. It commented that most troop movements between Portugal and Angola in 1975 involved either replacements or withdrawals and that no valid comparison could be made 'between the logistic problems involved in sending troops by air to Angola and to Timor'.

379 CABLEGRAM TO NEW YORK

Canberra, 16 December 1975

O.CH301145 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Security Council¹*Ref. O.UN4754, O.UN4761²*

We should be glad if you would speak early in the Security Council proceedings and before a draft resolution firms up. Tuesday 16 December New York time would seem to be suitable.

2. In addressing the Security Council, you should speak in low key, bearing in mind the guidelines set out below, which have been approved by Ministers:—

- (a) The Security Council proceedings provide the first occasion on which the new Australian Government has to show how it regards its relationship with Indonesia. We know that Indonesia is watching closely.
- (b) The attitudes on Portuguese Timor which we expressed in the General Assembly brought out vividly our disapproval of the use of force. Given the meekness of others, ours was a courageous as well as principled stance.
- (c) We can now afford to be somewhat less harsh with Indonesia and to do so will improve our relationship with Indonesia.

The above are for your information.

3. This suggests that in our intervention before the Security Council we should concentrate [more] on the present and the future than on the past. We should, therefore, not condemn Indonesia but refer merely to our view on the use of force which [w]as expressed in the General Assembly. We support a cease fire (which is acceptable to Indonesia): in order to avoid a return to chaos, we support the withdrawal of Indonesian 'volunteers' once circumstances on the ground permit (as proposed by Japan). We should say that the main question now is to establish conditions under which a free choice can be made by the people of Portuguese Timor (which is Indonesia's stated objective) and we can support the despatch of some sort of United Nations mission to Timor (which is also acceptable to Indonesia). Our own preference remains for a visit by a representative of the Secretary General.

4. You should also draw as you think required on the points mentioned in our O.CH299252, paragraphs 9 (repeat 9) to 12.³

¹ Australia participated in the Security Council debate under Article 31 of the UN Charter, which reads: 'Any member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council may participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the latter considers that the interests of the matter are specially affected'.

² Cablegram UN4754 (15 December) requested advice on when Australia should speak in the Security Council meeting set for 3 p.m. 15 December (New York time). It added: 'Our own preference would be to speak late, when views of Council members and of Indonesia, as well as terms of Draft Resolution, are clear'. Cablegram UN4761 (15 December) reported the views of the UK, Indonesian, and French delegations on current proceedings in the Security Council. General feeling was that considerable debate was still necessary for the draft resolution to accommodate all the varied opinions within the Council.

³ 10 December. Paragraphs 9 to 15 suggested that the objectives of the Security Council's deliberations should be the adoption of a resolution calling for an end to hostilities, the affirmation of the right of Portuguese Timorese to self-determination, Indonesian withdrawal, restoration of civil authority in the territory and preparations for an act of self-determination. As an essential step to the last two points, the early dispatch of a representative of the UN Secretary-General was suggested. This representative would report on conditions in the territory and make recommendations to the Security Council on further action.

5. As to the Malaysian idea that Portugal should seek assistance from regional countries to discharge its responsibilities as the administering power, Ministers think for your own information that it has advantages and disadvantages:—

Advantages

The idea in origin is an Indonesian one. It is consistent with Liberal Party policy, before the election, of regional involvement in the search for a solution to the problem of Portuguese Timor. It would help implement the Government's policy of building up further relations with ASEAN countries. To approve it would respond to the wish expressed by the Australian media that we should be more involved.

Disadvantages

Involvement as suggested by Malaysia will undoubtedly mean that we will be called up[on] to specifically endorse a less than genuine process of self-determination. If we do not do so, we will damage our relations with Indonesia and other ASEAN countries.

6. Ministers, therefore, conclude that we should go along with the Malaysian suggestion in paragraph 13 (1) of your O.UN4751,⁴ but in general and guarded terms, for instance, by indicating that we are interested in the Malaysian suggestion and await to see how it is evolved if it finds the approval of the Security Council.

7. The Minister will wish to make a statement on Timor once you have spoken in the Security Council. We should be glad, therefore, if, as soon as you have spoken, you would advise the Department by immediate telegram. We should also be grateful for early advice of the likely timing of your statement.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/9/1/1, i]

380 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 16 December 1975

O.JA3706 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.LB617¹

We do not consider that Australia might have headed off events which led to FRETILIN's UDI and Indonesia's intervention as suggested in paragraph 3 of the telegram under reference. As we have reported before, Indonesian policy has been firmly fixed on achieving the objective of integration. Indonesia and the pro-Indonesia parties would not have agreed to talks under circumstances they considered disadvantageous to them, including the situation on the ground in Timor and the venue for talks.

2. We should like to record that we consider it misleading to state that we have been so mindful of the overriding importance of our long-term relations with Indonesia that we have

⁴ 13 December. It communicated the text, received confidentially by the Australian delegation, of a statement which the Malaysian delegation proposed to make in the Security Council. Paragraph 13(1) read: 'The Portuguese Government should be held responsible for the existing situation in Portuguese Timor and it should seek the assistance of the countries in the region to discharge its responsibilities as the administering power'.

¹ Document 371.

allowed this to inhibit us in what we have said to the Indonesians. The importance of our long-term relationship with Indonesia is very important but this has not inhibited us from speaking frankly to the Indonesians and impressing our views upon them.

3. On the question of talks, this Mission played an important part in persuading the Indonesians to accept the principle of talks long before the meeting in Rome between Antunes and Malik.

4. With regard to the decision taken at Rome to hold talks between the parties, the pro-Indonesia parties' proposal for talks in Bali was not intended as an absolute rejection of the invitation to attend talks. It was partly an attempt to stall talks until the pro-Indonesian forces were in a better position in Timor, and partly a negotiating position on the question of the venue of any talks. The pro-Indonesian parties knew that Bali would not be acceptable to FRETILIN and, we would guess, Portugal knew that Darwin was not acceptable to the pro-Indonesia parties.

5. Much of the present unhappy state of relations between Indonesia and Portugal can be attributed to the web of mutual suspicion and misunderstanding woven in the last six months or so. This situation was compounded by the incompetence of the Portuguese and Indonesian representatives here and in Lisbon, and by the fact that the Portuguese Chargé d'Affaires in Jakarta rarely if ever received instructions or advice from Lisbon.

6. Regarding paragraph 5 of LB617, we were simply making the point that the Balibo affair may understandably have had some influence on the tone of the recent comment on the Timor situation in the Australian media. While the Australian Government and the Australian public supports the principle of self-determination, Indonesia would contend that once order had been restored and the fighting stopped an act of self-determination could be held. While such an act would be suspect, no act could be conducted at all while the civil war was unresolved. The Indonesians would also argue that FRETILIN had on several occasions refused to have an act of self-determination at all. It is also a regrettable fact that there has never been a proper act of self-determination in any Portuguese colony and it is unlikely that there will be one in Macau. Admittedly Timor is closer to us but, with this background in mind, one wonders whether the Australian media and certain vocal groups were justified in believing that Timor would have been any different.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xviii]

381 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 16 December 1975

O.LB643 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Ref O.LB640¹

I am afraid that my call on Foreign Minister Antunes was not very encouraging. Antunes is still obviously very bitter about Indonesian 'aggression' and now feels that he was taken for a ride by Malik in Rome. (Contrary to the views of his more cynical advisers, Antunes returned from Rome in a fairly euphoric frame of mind.)

¹ Document 378.

2. As a consequence, Antunes' present attitude is pretty hard line and dominated by his views towards Indonesia. Portugal (he said) will not accept anything less than U.N. condemnation of Indonesia and a call for withdrawal of forces. Without such a withdrawal, it will be impossible for Portugal to fulfil its rightful role as the administering power in Portuguese Timor.

3. I said that while I understood his feelings—like Portugal Australia could not condone the use of force—a U.N. debate which was confined to mutual recriminations between Portugal and Indonesia was not going to achieve anything. We must now try to develop positive proposals that would command general acceptance not least by Indonesia. I asked Antunes whether, in the event of Indonesia refusing to withdraw its 'volunteers', as seemed likely, would Portugal accept any proposal whereby Indonesian 'volunteers' would remain as a peacekeeping force under a U.N. mandate? Antunes categorically rejected the idea and said that Portugal would not be a party to any such deception.

4. I canvassed the idea of trying to hold talks between Portugal and the political parties in New York. Antunes said that Portugal's willingness to do this was implicit in Teles' opening statement in the Security Council. But Portugal would not take the initiative. It would only act if the Security Council so requested.

5. About the only positive note in the whole conversation was struck when Antunes said that if a withdrawal of Indonesian forces could be secured, Portugal would be prepared to consider the reintroduction of a 'modest military presence' in Timor to supervise an act of self determination. But to do this Portugal would need to be assured of logistic support from Australia for its forces.

6. I adverted to Antunes' suggestion to Cousins that a conference be convened under U.N. auspices between Portugal and the parties possibly with the participation of other interested countries.² I said that we would have serious reservations about his earlier suggestion that such a conference might include countries outside the region.³ Antunes denied that he had ever contemplated anything other than a regional conference. In practical terms he thought that only countries in the region would be sufficiently interested to want to participate. (On this point Antunes seemed to be in accord with the Malaysian proposal.⁴)

Comment

7. In general, Antunes' attitude seems to be that Portugal is still prepared to soldier on in Timor provided that the Indonesian presence is removed. He had no suggestions to offer as to how this might be achieved. If it cannot be achieved, Portugal will presumably regard Timor as no longer its responsibility.

COOPER

[NAA: A1838, 3038/11/64, ANNEX]

² See Document 368.

³ There is no record on file of this suggestion coming from Antunes. On 9 December, however, the Australian Mission to the UN reported (Cablegram UN4700) that Portugal still wanted to re-establish conditions for the exercise of self-determination by means including a conference of all parties under UN aegis, whether of the Committee of 24 or of the Security Council. The Portuguese Ambassador to the UN had indicated that Portugal would attend such a conference, although not as a party principal, 'and so could observers from other countries, not only Asian ones'. Given an earlier statement by Sani (reported in the same cablegram) that Indonesia did not consider itself 'exactly a party to the dispute', and Australia's insistence that it was not a party principal, the Portuguese statement may have been phrased in such a way as to include Portugal, Indonesia and Australia in the discussions.

⁴ See note 4 to Document 379.

382 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 16 December 1975

O.UN4768 UNCLASSIFIED IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Security Council

Following is text of statement to be made in Security Council today 16 December by Ambassador.

[matter omitted]

The immediate requirement, as we see it, is for a ceasefire, to spare the people of Timor further bloodshed and to create a climate in which a constructive program of decolonisation can be resumed.

Clearly, however, some time and organisation will be needed before the actual process of self-determination can begin. Meanwhile we must avoid creation of a vacuum or a retrogression into chaos in the Territory. There must be some effective civil authority both to restore economic activity, ensure the food supply, and arrange medical attention to the victims of the fighting, and also to make the initial preparations for a subsequent act of self-determination.

Portugal has, of course, a continuing legal responsibility but since the Portuguese Government is not in a position to restore the framework of civil government even after fighting has ceased, or to make the administrative arrangements under which the people could freely exercise their choice, we must make the best of existing possibilities. Some United Nations presence is also clearly required to assist in arrangements for self-determination and we are glad to note that this is desired by all the parties concerned, including Indonesia.

The practical question which faces the Council is what type of UN presence would be appropriate, and how soon conditions on the spot will have returned sufficiently to normal for a UN commission to begin work.

The Australian delegation takes it for granted that the Council will require a ceasefire and that it will be observed. We are also confident that the Indonesian elements will withdraw as soon as fighting between the political parties has ceased.

It is regrettable that the various political parties, whose representatives are now appearing before the Council, failed over the months to respond to efforts—with which Australia as one of the countries in the immediate region of Timor was associated—to bring them together to organise jointly the preparations for self-determination. We hope that they will all, now, cooperate with the United Nations in finding a satisfactory way in which the process of orderly decolonisation can be resumed and completed.

Mr President, I have said that some form of UN presence is clearly required, but it is difficult, in view of the sometimes conflicting information as to the precise situation in Timor, to determine what would be the appropriate form and dimension of UN involvement, and the right timing.

The Australian delegation feels that the best course might be, as a first step, for the Secretary-General to be asked to appoint a special representative who could consult with the parties principally concerned, both in New York and on the spot, and who could recommend further action. Such action might be by the Council, which will we assume remain seized of the question, or if, as we hope, hostilities quickly cease and security is restored, it might be possible for responsibility to be assumed by the Committee of 24 under its mandate from the General Assembly.

The distinguished Representative of Malaysia suggested yesterday that the countries of the region may have a special responsibility in assisting the administering power. The Australian delegation endorses the principal of this approach but would like to see what sort of action the Council might have in mind to give effect to such a principle. Meanwhile the Australian Government, as it has already informed the Administering Government and Indonesia, stands ready to resume its humanitarian aid and the facilitation of appropriate international aid to the distressed people in Timor, while continuing its assistance to the many hundreds of people who have sought in Australia refuge from the fighting.

In conclusion, Mr President, I would once again emphasize, as the General Assembly did in its Resolution, that the purpose and aim of the United Nations, underlying any action which the Council may decide, is to enable the people of the Territory freely to exercise their right to self-determination.

The main question now is to establish conditions under which the Timorese people can make their own free choice.

[NAA: A1838, 906/30/14/3, ii]

383 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN RENOUF AND YOSHIDA¹

Canberra, 17 December 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACT

Courtesy Call by the Japanese Ambassador

16. *Mr Renouf* said that Foreign Affairs had found itself in an awkward position over the Timor problem. Initially the Department had counselled in favour of self-determination for the East Timorese people. Senator Willesee had agreed with this approach but Mr Whitlam had been in favour of the colony's incorporation into Indonesia. Mr Whitlam had expressed this view in talks earlier this year with President Soeharto and had, in fact, gone outside his brief in discussing Australia's position on the issue.

17. Foreign Affairs had therefore been faced with the difficult task of reconciling the diverging views of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. The result had been the irreconcilable position of advocating the incorporation of East Timor in Indonesia on the basis of the self-determination of the East Timorese people. Foreign Affairs had been criticised for its silence on the whole issue by the Australian press and publicly by a former Australian Consul-General to Dili. The Department, however, could hardly take a strong public position on an issue which had become a point of contention between the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The Timor question posed an additional problem for Australia in that an independent Timor could encourage separatism in Papua New Guinea.

18. The new Government's attitude towards the Timor question had made matters easier for the Department. The Government had criticised the use of force by Indonesia and had spoken out in favour of self-determination for the East Timorese people. The Government had felt that the integrity of Australia's foreign policy would suffer if the Government failed to take this approach.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xviii]

¹ Kenzo Yoshida, Ambassador of Japan to Australia.

384 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN PEACOCK AND THAYIB

Canberra, 17 December 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

Australia/Indonesia Relations: Portuguese Timor

*Mr Thayib*¹ referred to his program over the past eight days, during which he had been observing the progress of the Australian election campaign. He then turned to Australia–Indonesia relations and Timor. He suggested that the Liberal Party might be more sympathetic towards Indonesia than had been the Labor Party. *The Minister* noted that there were elements in the Labor Party which were unhappy with the military government in Indonesia. This kind of feeling did not exist in the Liberal Party. He stressed the importance which the Australian Government placed on its relationship with Indonesia. It was one of the Government's highest foreign policy priorities.

2. *Mr Thayib* referred to a newspaper report that Mr Malik had accused Australia of supporting FRETILIN. *The Minister* said that the Australian Government supported no party in Timor, and certainly not FRETILIN, whose UDI he had criticised less than two weeks ago. It was true that some trade unionists and academics, and elements of the press, were sympathetic towards FRETILIN, and he had been disturbed by this anti-Indonesian sentiment. It did not represent the views of his Government, which placed great emphasis on a strong and close relationship with Indonesia. The present situation was merely a temporary aberration. *The Minister* stressed that the Government had previously been operating in a caretaker role, bound to the policies of the previous Government. However, this was no longer the case. The General Assembly vote was now over and done with. The present Government's position was more accurately reflected in the statement made by the Australian representative at the Security Council last night.² Australia's view was that there should be some act of self-determination and that hostilities should cease. Indonesia also supported self-determination in Timor, and he thought had indicated that it too sought an end to hostilities.

3. *Mr Thayib* asked the Minister about trade union boycotts against Indonesia. *The Minister* made it clear that the Government deplored such actions. *The Minister* said that the primary responsibility for this issue was with the Minister for Labour.

4. *Mr Thayib* asked whether Australia's economic problems would affect its aid to Indonesia. *The Minister* replied that inflation within Australia was not affected by overseas aid; the economic situation involved domestic measures. Indonesia was the second largest recipient of Australian aid after Papua New Guinea (to which Australia had a special responsibility), and this situation would continue. The only thing which might change could be the nature and direction of the aid, and this would depend on what the Indonesian Government wanted, rather than the Australian Government.

5. *Mr Thayib* referred to the meetings which had taken place between Mr Whitlam and President Soeharto. These had been important to Indonesia, and he wondered if such meetings would continue. *The Minister* affirmed that they would. He said that his first overseas trip as Minister would probably be to Indonesia, and that it was likely that the Prime Minister's first trip (towards the middle of next year) would take in Jakarta and other ASEAN capitals, as well as China and Japan.

[NAA: A1838, 935/17/3, xiii]

¹ Thayib Ibnu Sadil, Managing Editor, *Indonesia Times*.

² See Document 382.

385 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 18 December 1975

O.JA3774 SECRET PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor: United Nations Involvement

Alex Alatas, Malik's personal assistant, told the Ambassador when he was arranging to see Malik tomorrow about some of his recent statements, that the Indonesians here are pleased with Harry's statement to the Security Council.¹ We appear to have recovered some ground in Jakarta since our vote in the General Assembly on Resolution L1131, the consequent stage-managed demonstration at the Embassy and some of Malik's subsequent comments.

2. In considering the questions raised in the telegram UN4789² it may be useful to have our brief assessment of the present Indonesian attitude.

3. We believe that we should keep in mind that Indonesia has not changed its essential policy and that it will not withdraw from East Timor whatever the Security Council decides. It remains determined to integrate East Timor although it will do so as 'properly' and as 'legally' as it can from a presentational point of view.

4. As has been the case for months and as we reported in our JA1758³ Indonesian policy is being conducted on two levels—the international diplomatic presentational level and on the actual level involving the achievement of Indonesia's policy objectives on the ground in East Timor. To a certain extent Malik and some other officials here as well as representatives of the Indonesian missions abroad, including Sani in New York, are charged with the conduct of the presentational level of Indonesian policy. The actual policy makers in Jakarta including the President, who are framing and executing the real policy however, look upon the United Nations consideration of Timor as something of a charade which they need to go through to ease as far as possible the international pressure on Indonesia while they continue to pursue their unchanged objective.

5. Having decided on the need to use overt military force to defeat FRETILIN and achieve their policy objective of integration the Indonesians are not going to be diverted by the United Nations. Indonesia's immediate military objective seems to be to gain control of East Timor and establish a viable pro-Indonesian Administration. Until that has been achieved the Indonesians will not allow foreigners into East Timor. (We expect this will be a piecemeal exercise. For instance when Dili is sufficiently in pro-Indonesian hands foreigners may be allowed into the city.)

6. Partly for presentational reasons Indonesia is looking for ways of associating the United Nations or some regional group with an eventual act of self-determination, the result of which would have been ensured during the period in which the Indonesian military seek to gain complete control of the Territory.

¹ See Document 382.

² 17 December. It reported that Salim, Chairman of the Committee of Twenty-Four, had asked the Australian delegation to contribute, with the non-aligned members of the Security Council, to the drafting of a resolution on Portuguese Timor. Salim suggested that non-aligned members would not accept 'a mere fact-finding or reporting mission', but might agree that a representative of the UN Secretary-General be requested to supervise and report on implementation of a Security Council resolution 'involving the making of recommendations regarding a transitional administration'. The Australian delegation sought guidance on its response to this request 'to draft the heart of the non-aligned working paper', and suggested consultation with the Indonesian Government regarding the acceptability of a transitional UN administration and the terms of a Security Council resolution.

³ Document 221.

7. Our information at present is that the Indonesians plan to have Dili administered by the pro-Indonesian parties by early January (it is now under military administration) and that they are thinking in terms of an act of self-determination (which Sunarso of BAKIN referred to as a 'referendum') in about March. The latter, especially, may be optimistic.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xviii]

386 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 18 December 1975

O.JA3783 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

Tjan told us today, 18 December, that APODETI/UDT issued a proclamation on 17 December announcing the formation of a temporary administ[er]ing body (the Indonesian word is *pemerintah* which also means government) to restore law and order, maintain security and normalise the daily life of the people. The proclamation explained the reason for establishing the temporary administration as APODETI/UDT's control of the main towns, particularly Dili and Baucau, the destructive results of FRETILIN's terrorism and the vacuum created by the absence of Portuguese authority in the territory. Tjan said the proclamation would become public this evening.

2. He also said that on 18 December the temporary administration would send a letter to President Soeharto requesting Indonesia's help in restoring order in the Territory and for assistance in the economic, social and other areas.

3. In answer to questions Tjan said that it was not the intention to seek recognition of the temporary administration as a Government. There would be an act of self-determination (which he referred to as a referendum, although he said the details of how it would be conducted and so on had not been fully worked out yet).

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xviii]

387 LETTER FROM ARRIENS TO FISHER

Bonn, 18 December 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

All of this will probably be very familiar to you, but I thought that it might be as well to record the main points of interest from what Bian Kie told me when he was in Bonn earlier this month.

Although he was here just before the invasion of Dili, and had been out of Indonesia for several weeks, Bian Kie was obviously fully aware of developments in Timor. He gave the impression that the takeover was proceeding according to a carefully orchestrated plan; indeed

he seemed a little surprised on the 5th that the Indonesian troops were still outside Dili. He said that 2500 Indonesian troops (i.e. a brigade) had been sent in.

I rather gathered that OPSUS' role had not been as great as we originally expected—i.e. nothing on the West Irian scale. Nor did he seem to foresee any hearts and minds campaign to popularise the Indonesian takeover. It had been a military exercise in which Benny Moerdani played the key role.

Bian Kie emphasised that the fighting that broke out between the parties in Timor had been providential. Until that stage Indonesian policy had been at an impasse. There had been no excuse to march in, and they had not been able to see their way clear. As recently as the National Day celebrations on 17 August, the President had refused to give the green light to a deputation of top generals who sought a ruling on Timor policy. Indeed, according to Bian Kie, the President made some disparaging remarks about Moerdani's desire for a military solution. A few weeks before the civil war however, Bian Kie said that Sudjono had had a 'vision' that Timor would drop like a ripe fruit before the end of the year; and so it had turned out.

At no stage did the President ever issue a clear instruction to go in. He simply indicated in a Javanese way that the job should be done, but that he didn't wish to know about it. The closest to an endorsement the military got was the President's remark that 600,000 people should not be allowed to jeopardize Indonesia's security.

In this context Bian Kie was plainly contemptuous and cynical about Timor. The wishes of its inhabitants simply did not come into account. When I asked him whether Indonesia was not concerned about the prospect of a festering guerrilla movement on its hands for many years, Bian Kie replied that the hills in Timor were only low, and would offer scant refuge. The ringleaders would be rounded up and deported to a camp for *tapol*¹ on Java.

For the rest, Bian Kie's most interesting observations concerned the succession. He said that Surono had proved a disappointment since last year, and was no longer seriously in contention to take over should anything befall the President. There was no line of succession, nor was any being contemplated. If Soeharto died suddenly, a successor would be appointed by the Dewan Revolusi. In other words, it would be regarded as a crisis situation similar to the Revolution and 1965, in which a new leader would have to emerge by consensus as having the *wahyu*.² There would be no co-sharing of power.

Although his views are naturally partisan, Bian Kie appeared to think that Ali Murtopo could well emerge as the leader in such a situation. I do not recall him ever saying that before; previously he has always admitted that Ali was too caught up with particular factions to secure the breadth of support required. This change of thinking seemed to me to coincide with a generally greater air of confidence on Bian Kie's part. The CSIS is obviously coming even more out into the open, and Sudjono's and Ali's positions are not in doubt.

[matter omitted]

[NAA: A1838, 3006/4/3, xvi]

¹ *Tahanan-Politik*. Bahasa word for political prisoners.

² Bahasa word meaning 'vision' or 'divine revelation'.

388 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 19 December 1975

O.JA3808 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor

10. I asked Malik about the announcement about the 'provisional government' in Dili.¹ I said that some might see this as a means of pre-empting United Nations involvement in the territory and of controlling any act of self-determination. Malik stressed that the administration was provisional. It was 'not permanent' and its task would be to prepare for an act of self-determination. Malik said there would be a proper act of self-determination within 12 months. He added that this would apply to Occussi. Although all parties there, including Fretilin, had hoisted the Indonesian flag and sought integration, the enclave would be dealt with for purposes of an act of self-determination as part of the colony of Portuguese Timor.

11. I asked Malik what transitional arrangements he saw between the establishment of the provisional government and the act of self-determination. What for example was Indonesia's attitude now to the idea of some form of United Nations transitional administration. Malik said a United Nations transitional administration would 'not be necessary'. (It is clear that a major purpose of the provisional administration is to preempt any United Nations administration.) The provisional government would have administrative 'assistance' from Indonesia during the transitional period. It would provide Tetum speaking Timorese officials from West Timor to help. I said that such arrangements might look suspect to the outside world. Malik said Indonesia would agree to United Nations or regional observation of an act of self-determination. He also said (although it is unlikely to be true) that Indonesia would withdraw its 'volunteers' once peace had been established and the provisional administration was working.

12. Malik seemed more optimistic about the outcome of the Security Council debate. He said while Indonesia had 'greatly regretted' our vote in the General Assembly before the 13 December, he had noticed a change in emphasis in our statement in the Security Council after that date. He said he was hopeful now that the Security Council would not repeat not go ahead with condemning Indonesia.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xviii]

¹ See Document 386.

389 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 22 December 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

With the formation of the new government, and in the light of recent developments in Portuguese Timor itself and of the United Nations proceedings, it is timely to review Australian policy towards Portuguese Timor.

2. There are two main questions:—

- (a) Do we want incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia? and
- (b) How far do we want to be involved in the problem of Portuguese Timor?

The incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia

3. With the change of regime in Portugal in April 1974, three options emerged for Portuguese Timor: continued association with Portugal for some years; independence at a more or less early date; or integration or association with Indonesia. In the period since April 1974, the first of these options has disappeared and the choice is between independence and association with Indonesia. Australia could live with either of these two options. But, without going into the question at length, we think that Australian interests in Portuguese Timor, deriving from the territory's proximity, its straddling of important shipping routes, its nearness to our seabed resources zone and some small residual Australian commercial interests would all be well served by its incorporation into Indonesia. It is difficult to think of any Australian interest of substance which would suffer as the result of the territory's incorporation into Indonesia. More important for Australian policy, it has become a firm objective of Indonesian national policy, over the last twelve months, that Portuguese Timor should be incorporated willy-nilly into Indonesia. It is an objective to which the Indonesians attach the greatest importance. The Indonesians have remained unresponsive to suggestions from us about the various ways in which they might achieve their objectives in Portuguese Timor, short of incorporating it. Given the importance of Australian relations with Indonesia, there seems no Australian interest in an independent Portuguese Timor which would justify Australian attempts to thwart the Indonesians in the pursuit of their objectives.

4. Nor are we able to ignore the potential for future difficulties in our relations with Indonesia in an independent East Timor. Evidence to date, including the highly successful activities of Mr Ramos Horta and FRETILIN in soliciting moral and material support from groups in Australia, suggests that a major objective of any independent Timor would be to continue to try to use Australia—and to manipulate Australian public opinion—to ensure continuing Australian support against Indonesian pressures. In effect, if Portuguese Timor were independent and under FRETILIN control, Australia's relationship with Indonesia could become a hostage to FRETILIN, and the seeds would be sown for continuing dissensions and strains in the area of greatest strategic interest to us for years to come.

5. In addition, an independent Portuguese Timor would be a small, weak state susceptible to outside influence. Admittedly in the Pacific there are already several such states; but to outside powers they do not provide the same means of pressure on large neighbours as an independent Portuguese Timor would do in the case of Indonesia. A further point is the fillip which an independent Portuguese Timor would give to separatist movements in Indonesia and perhaps in Papua New Guinea.

6. But the main point is that we cannot now alter the course of events in Timor. The Indonesians are already well on their way to integrating East Timor. Indonesian forces now in the territory will remain, whatever the Security Council decides, until Indonesia has her way.

The Manner of Incorporation: Self-determination

7. The manner in which the Indonesians pursue their objective of incorporating Portuguese Timor into Indonesia clearly remains very important to us. Ideally, this result should come about by an act of self-determination of the people of the territory: they should be able to decide their own political future. Indonesian military intervention to secure the incorporation has raised and will continue to raise a number of difficulties for Australia, namely:—

- (a) It excites anti-Indonesian sentiment in Australia and makes it more difficult for successive Australian governments to pursue their policies of close cooperation with the Indonesian Government—the program of defence cooperation would be an obvious target for criticism.
- (b) It tarnishes the reputation which the present Indonesian Government rightly enjoys for its responsible regional and international policies. Indonesian military intervention in Timor has added to regional tensions, in the short term at least.
- (c) It might not be successful. Although it now seems unlikely, the Indonesians might face armed opposition in Portuguese Timor capable of sustaining guerilla warfare for many years—with all that this prospect implies by way of openings for outside intervention, regional tensions and the rise of anti-Indonesian sentiment in Australia and in the territory.

8. Following on Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor, any act of self-determination will be contrived to bring about the desired result of incorporation with Indonesia. The act of self-determination, we should be prudent to assume, will be more or less falsified. But even if, because of our relations with Indonesia, Australia does not press for the principle of an act of self-determination completely free from outside interference, as Australian governments have done in other colonies, there are several reasons why self-determination should remain an important element in Australian policy. First, international pressure for self-determination helps to guarantee some measure of decent treatment for the Timorese. It may help curb excesses by the Indonesian administration and armed forces. Second, it is important that the incorporation of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia should be effected in as legally correct and in as internationally acceptable a manner as possible. Third, the abandonment of self-determination as an Australian objective in Portuguese Timor would have a bad effect on Australian public opinion. Fourth, if the Indonesians were to meet with substantial prolonged resistance in Portuguese Timor—the danger touched on in paragraph 7(c) above, and it is too early to exclude it completely—Australia would need to consider a new policy on Portuguese Timor, which, one way or another, would place a greater emphasis on self-determination.

The United Nations

9. Whether or not Portugal had taken the issue to the Security Council, the United Nations was inevitably involved in Portuguese Timor through the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly and the Committee of Twenty-Four. The problem for Australia has been to try to influence United Nations involvement so that Australian interests were served—or at least suffered the least possible damage. On the one hand, UN involvement in Portuguese Timor serves the humanitarian purpose mentioned in the preceding paragraph and for numerous other reasons it is difficult for an Australian government to oppose UN involvement despite

the qualifications attached to Australian support for the principle of self-determination in Portuguese Timor. On the other, it is not in the Australian interest for an internationally responsible regime in Indonesia, such as President Soeharto's, to be condemned publicly in the United Nations. These two considerations will conflict—but on the whole it seems to us that, despite the Indonesians' diplomatic ineptness and their resort to force in Timor, the second consideration should prevail and that we should do what we can to see that Indonesia comes out well from UN consideration of Portuguese Timor.

Australian Involvement in Portuguese Timor

10. The pressures for Australian involvement in Portuguese Timor are great. The territory is very close, communications between it and the outside world have passed through Australia, there are certain historical connexions which still have an impact on sentiment here and there is a natural public concern about an unstable territory so close to our shores. More important, the FRETILIN leaders, and in particular Mr Ramos Horta, have done all they could to arouse Australian public opinion in order to counter the threat they were right in perceiving from Indonesia.

11. But if it is accepted, first, that Indonesia is firmly set on taking Portuguese Timor, using as much force as is necessary to achieve her aims, second, that no Australian interest in an independent Portuguese Timor is important enough to justify Australian action to thwart the Indonesians and, third, that good relations with Indonesia are of great importance, then it follows that the policy of the Australian Government should be to limit Australian involvement in Portuguese Timor. The extent to which that policy can be pursued is, of course, itself limited, as the sources of pressure for involvement, the trades unions, the newspapers and the television, private organizations, are not susceptible to government control. But no one can argue that Australia should be as involved in Timor as the Indonesians or the Timorese themselves—or as the Portuguese are for the moment for essentially legal reasons.

12. In practical terms questions of Australian involvement in Portuguese Timor relate to the extent of Australian participation in relief programs in the territory and to the extent of Australian participation in some United Nations (or UN-sponsored regional) involvement in Portuguese Timor. We think that Australian involvement in aid programs can be managed in the interests of Australian foreign policy if Australian Government aid to Portuguese Timor is channelled through the International Committee of the Red Cross. It follows that it is in the Australian interest that the Indonesians should allow an early resumption of ICRC operations in Timor. It also follows that the Government should avoid entanglement in the operations of Australian non-governmental aid bodies in Timor (many of whom are committed to the FRETILIN cause).

13. It is not clear how the United Nations will become involved on the ground in Portuguese Timor or to what extent there should be some regional involvement. As to Australia's joining in UN or regional involvement, there are some contributions which can readily be excluded. We could clearly not provide troops or a military presence. As to some Australian civilian contribution to UN or regional involvement, it would be difficult to stand aside, if the Indonesians, the Timorese leaders and the Portuguese want us in. But the Government should be wary, we advise, of suggestions of Australian involvement on the ground in Timor in any form of administrative or supervisory function. Such involvement could easily lead to a situation where the Australian Government was cast in the role of a guarantor of Indonesian good behaviour, which it would be powerless to ensure, or in the role of an accomplice in Indonesian activities, which would provoke considerable problems with Australian domestic opinion.

Mediation and Regional Approaches

14. The same caution, it seems to us, should inform the Australian Government's attitude towards mediating in the problem of Portuguese Timor and towards initiating a regional approach to it. Moreover, the growth of pro-FRETILIN sentiment in Australia, the material and moral support individual Australians and private organizations have given FRETILIN, and the facilities the FRETILIN leaders have enjoyed here, have had the effect of cutting the ground from any regional or mediatory efforts the Australian Government might wish to consider. Australia is virtually disqualified in the eyes of anti-FRETILIN groups from the role of an impartial mediator. On at least half a dozen occasions the Australian Embassy in Jakarta has raised with the Indonesians, on instructions, the possibility of some regional initiative. The Indonesians showed no interest and indeed appeared to be opposed to regionalizing the problem of Portuguese Timor. It has been obvious that any regional initiative which did not have the active support of Indonesia, as the country in the region most concerned in the problem of Portuguese Timor, would not gain the support of other countries of the region, whatever Australia might think or do.

15. We recognize that the policy approach to Portuguese Timor reflected in the preceding paragraphs is not one for which it is easy to gain public support and, if that policy approach were adopted, its public presentation would have to be carefully and skilfully handled. So long as Portuguese Timor remains a public issue in Australia, it would seem reasonable for the two themes of the importance of Australian relations with Indonesia and of Australian attachment to self-determination to be kept in the public eye. Should these two themes be given equal weight, or should the importance of relations with Indonesia be given more weight than self-determination? There has been no recent public exposition of the reasons why relations with Indonesia are important to Australia. It is open to question whether to give one would not stimulate opposition to Indonesia here. We might gain more elbow-room by being critical of the Indonesian Government from time to time. The alternative may be to lie as low as one can, but to do so will, no doubt, give rise to charges of bureaucratic timidity or indifference. We believe that the going will be easier if in our diplomacy we take a step backwards from the Timor dispute and remain as uninvolved as possible.

16. There will continue to be many difficult issues on which decisions will have to be taken and publicly explained—for example, the Government's attitudes towards trades union bans, towards the continuation of military aid, towards political activities by Timorese in Australia, whether or not to allow Horta back into Australia. These will need to be taken up individually in the light of the Government's general policy on Portuguese Timor.

Conclusion

17. For use in drawing up recommendations on these issues and in our approach to the more general questions canvassed in this submission, *I recommend* that you approve the following guidelines:—

- (a) We should accept that incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia seems fast becoming an accomplished fact. Australia should not resist this trend and, indeed, should accept it as probably now the best solution. Otherwise we should have a running sore in the region poisoning relations between ourselves and the Indonesians for years to come. But if, against present indications, the Indonesians were unable to assert control of Timor, we should be alive to the need to review our policies with a view to persuading the Indonesians to accept something less than the incorporation of Portuguese Timor and a more genuine process of self-determination.

- (b) We should continue to remain as detached as we can from the Portuguese Timor problem and avoid becoming a party principal. In practice, such a policy would need to be tempered by the strength of domestic pressure for a more active Australian role. But as a general principle the less involved we are, the easier it will be to adjust to the realities of Indonesian control in Timor. If regional and international opinion pressure grows, Australia may not be able to escape some involvement on the ground in Timor, but we should limit that involvement as much as we can. Certainly, any involvement of Australian military forces is to be excluded.
- (c) We should continue to support publicly the need for a process of self-determination in Timor. Even if we believe that a genuine act of self-determination is not possible, we should encourage the Indonesians towards one.
- (d) We should continue to explain to the Indonesians the domestic difficulties which the Australian Government faces. We should continue to warn them that, while we understand and do not oppose their basic objectives of integration, we may still need to criticize publicly their methods of achieving it.
- (e) In the United Nations we should not play the role of an apologist for Indonesia but, equally, we should show understanding of its special position and not be in the forefront of its critics.¹

ALAN RENOUF
Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iii]

390 UNITED NATIONS PRESS RELEASE

New York, 22 December 1975

SC/3683

EXTRACT

Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution on East Timor

The Security Council¹ this afternoon unanimously adopted a resolution calling on Indonesia to withdraw without delay all its forces from East Timor, while calling upon Portugal to co-operate fully with the United Nations so as to enable the people in the territory to exercise freely their right to self-determination.

The Council also requested the Secretary-General to send urgently a Special Representative to East Timor to make an on-the-spot assessment of the existing situation and to establish contact with all parties in the area and all States concerned, and to submit recommendations to the Council as soon as possible.²

¹ Peacock annotated the submission as follows: 'Secretary: I ought not act unilaterally on this particular matter—Cabinet, or its Foreign Aff and Defence C'tee—should conclude determinations. I am not averse to decision making but the above is unquestionably one for Cabinet'.

¹ In 1975, membership of the Security Council, in addition to the five permanent members (China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States), was as follows: Byelorussia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Mauretania, Sweden, Cameroon and Tanzania.

² On 30 December the appointment was announced of Vittorio Winspeare Guicciardi, Director-General of the UN Office in Geneva, as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Portuguese Timor.

In the preambular paragraphs, the adopted resolution (document S/11915) recognizes the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence; deplores the intervention of Indonesian armed forces; and expresses regret that Portugal had not fully discharged its responsibilities.

[NAA: A1838, 935/17/3, xvi]

391 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TJAN AND TAYLOR

Jakarta, 23 December 1975

SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Timor

We discussed the latest draft working paper¹ before the Security Council. Tjan speculated that if the draft were accepted by the Council, Indonesia would agree to withdraw its troops and so on, but in fact would not do so. It would be easy to ensure that no foreign visitors saw what they were not meant to see. Indonesia would only allow visitors anyway, when the situation allowed. It would be easy to prevent visitors by getting the provisional government [t]o say that they could not guarantee visitors' safety, or the airport was out of action, or the like. I said that the Australian Government hoped the United Nations would be able to send a representative to East Timor quickly.

2. I asked how Indonesia intended to cover the legal aspects of any integration which might result from the proposed act of self-determination. Portugal so far was insisting that they retained their sovereignty over the territory. If the act of self-determination were too obviously bogus, I thought the Portuguese may not be prepared to renounce their sovereignty as a result of that act. The Portuguese were bitter about Indonesian actions. Tjan said that little consideration had been given to this point. In practise it would not make much difference. There would be *de facto* integration and criticism might be turned against Portugal for refusing to recognise the decolonisation. I said that for other countries, particularly those like Australia with a healthy regard for legal procedures, the lack of proper legal cover for integration would make it much more difficult to recognise that integration. In the longer term too, any legal argument that integration had not been carried out properly could provide legal basis for a separatist movement. Tjan took this point. He thought it possible that some form of United Nations involvement in the act of self-determination could assist Portugal in renouncing its sovereignty.

3. Tjan mentioned that Horta had contacted the APODETI delegation in New York during the weekend. He did not know for certain what Horta had in mind, but it seemed that he wanted to leave FRETILIN. Tjan had no illusions about Horta's support, or lack of it, within FRETILIN, but said that any anti-FRETILIN statement by Horta would be of enormous publicity value for Indonesia.

¹ Cablegram UN4807 (19 December) conveyed the text of a preliminary draft working paper which may have been the version referred to by Taylor. It proposed, *inter alia*, that the Security Council deplore 'the intervention of the armed forces of Indonesia in East Timor' and express regret 'that the Government of Portugal did not discharge fully its responsibilities as administering power in the territory under Chapter XI of the Charter'. The paper called for an Indonesian withdrawal 'without delay' as well as for 'the Government of Portugal as administering power to co-operate fully with the United Nations so as to enable the people of East Timor to exercise freely their right to self-determination'.

Pertamina

4. According to Tjan Timor was of relatively minor importance to the President. (Comment. Tjan has often argued to us that Timor was a relatively minor concern for the President.) Pertamina was the serious problem which occupied a great deal of the President's time. So far the President had generally supported Ibnu Sutowo. He had not been prepared to sack him. The President's tactics were to severely limit Ibnu's power and freedom of action and to get Pertamina operating along accountable lines.

[*matter omitted*]

The President

10. In answer to a question Tjan said that no one was moving to take advantage of the Pertamina crisis or Timor to challenge the President's position.

11. The President's sickness however, might lead to problems.² According to the medical bulletin, the President had recovered from his operation well. Tjan had no evidence to the contrary. But there were rumours that he was not so well, and even if not true, these rumours themselves could create problems, especially if it took the President some time to return to his full duties.

12. If the President were to be sick for some time and not able to exercise fully the range of Presidential power, there could be manoeuvring among the power groups for increased influence. (Tjan emphasized that what he was saying was personal theorizing. He made a point of saying he was not reflecting Ali's views.[]) According to Tjan, there were only two people capable of mounting a serious attempt to fill any power vacuum (not necessarily the Presidency). They were Ali Murtopo and General Soemitro.

13. Soemitro still had support from within the army, although because he had no official position now, it would be very difficult for him to mount a quick campaign. General Surono was in an advantageous position but was not a skilled enough political manoeuvrer to capitalise on any power vacuum. Tjan emphasised that neither Ali nor Soemitro would challenge President Soeharto and he was not sure whether Ali would even want to be President if Soeharto were to die.

14. Tjan said that a successor to Soeharto was not obvious. Any President in the next 10 to 15 years, would need to be nominally Muslim, Javanese and from the army.

15. I said I had thought that, if something were to happen to Soeharto, the army would agree on his successor without splitting. Tjan agreed but said that the process of selecting a successor would involve intense political in-fighting. The army was aware however, that its unity was all important for the stability of Indonesia, and indeed for its own future.³

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xviii]

² Soeharto had recently had surgery to remove his gall bladder.

³ On 30 December the Australian Embassy in Jakarta reported on a recent conversation with another source which indicated that although the Australian Embassy and the Australian Government might have the impression that Portuguese Timor was the major preoccupation of President Soeharto and his Government, 'This in fact was not the case. President Soeharto's major concern related to Pertamina. To put the two subjects in perspective [the] informant said that Pertamina absorbed "ninety percent" of Soeharto's thoughts and time. This had been the case now for "many, many months"'. On Timor and Australian relations: 'Soeharto had insisted all along that the final outcome—Portuguese Timor's incorporation—had to be "legal". At the same time he agreed that to produce the desired result certain less-than-legal things had to be done . . . Soeharto was not at all worried about action in the United Nations over Indonesian involvement in Portuguese Timor. He tended to dismiss it with the wave of a hand . . . the Australian Government could not have done anything at any stage to divert Soeharto from the course he had set for Indonesia over Portuguese Timor—its incorporation into Indonesia'. Discussion then moved to Soeharto's disappointment over Australia's positive vote in the UN on 12 December. The President had been pleased, however, to receive Fraser's personal message of late November; ' . . . Soeharto liked to conduct his own form of diplomacy. Confidential exchanges of this kind suited him'.

392 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 31 December 1975

O.JA3951 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Portuguese Timor

I saw Malik at his house this afternoon, 31 December, and handed over Minister's message.¹

2. Malik recalled our previous discussion on the 19th December and said that he had in fact since given instructions to the Indonesian Red Cross that it should send an official and a team of doctors to Dili as soon as possible. Malik said that when the Indonesian Red Cross was established, it would then be prepared to receive the ICRC. Malik added that he had 'insisted' to the provisional government on the importance of getting the Indonesian Red Cross established in Dili without delay.

3. Malik said that he thought that public concern in Australia, while understandable, was probably exaggerated. FRETILIN resistance had crumbled. The fall of Alieu was a decisive blow. Notwithstanding reports in the Australian media of increased fighting, fighting was in fact lessening. FRETILIN forces were tending to hand in their arms and surrender in increasing numbers. Those that did so were not being imprisoned. They were allowed 'to go home'.

4. Malik said that he had been asked by the provisional government to go to Dili tomorrow, New Year's Day. Because of commitments here, he could not do so. Cabinet was meeting on the 5th and the opening of Parliament would be on the 6th of January. The earliest he could get to Dili would be the 7th or 8th, probably the latter.

5. Malik said that he would take a party of local and foreign journalists, including the ABC representative (Joyce) with him.

6. I asked Malik whether HANKAM and BAKIN had agreed, both to the Indonesian Red Cross and the International Red Cross resuming work in Dili and whether they had also agreed to foreign journalists accompanying him to Dili. Malik said 'yes'. Malik is not always reliable and time will tell if this is in fact the case and if delays are not encountered or obstructions placed in the way of the journalists or Red Cross personnel and then blamed on the provisional government.

7. I also said that the Australian Government hoped that the Secretary-General's representative could proceed to Timor as soon as possible. Malik said that, as we have reported, the special representative would be welcome in Timor. He would arrive in Jakarta no later than the 12th January. He would be able to visit Occusi, Dili, Bacau and other areas and would be able to meet representatives of all the parties. I said that I had heard on Radio Australia that Horta had suggested that he should accompany the Secretary-General's representative. Malik did not say that Horta would be unacceptable, but said that his presence would be 'unnecessary' and that he would probably be in personal danger if he returned to Dili.

8. I also said that the reports of increased conflict in Timor had stimulated concern in Australia about possible refugees from Timor. Malik repeated what he had said to me previously, namely that there would be few, if any, refugees. The present situation was quite unlike the situation in August, when many people had sought evacuation to Australia. I said that while the situation may be calmer than some reports in the Australian media suggested, the safety of the civilian

¹ Cablegrams CH304776 and CH304775 (31 December) instructed Woolcott to pass on to Malik a message seeking 'any information available to the Indonesian Government on when the authorities in Dili might be able to agree to the return of the International Committee for the Red Cross to East Timor'.

population of East Timor was a matter of public concern in Australia. Malik simply said that the civilian population would be in no danger except in those few remaining areas where hard-core FRETILIN supporters might re-group. He added, however, that FRETILIN was really 'finished', militarily and politically. Civilians who had been in FRETILIN-held areas were cooperative and did not wish to leave Timor. (Malik may be being optimistic but this is what he said.)

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xviii]

393 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 5 January 1976

O.JA3981 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

Australia, Indonesia and East Timor

Early in 1976 and not later than at the time of the Minister's proposed visit to Jakarta, the Indonesian Government will be looking to the recently elected Australian Government to redefine present and future policy towards Indonesia, against the background of the Timor situation.

2. An updated assessment of Indonesia's present policy towards Timor follows together with our assessment of the present state of Australian/Indonesian relations and some thoughts on how it seems from Jakarta that we might approach the policy issues now involved in the Australian-Indonesian relationship.

Indonesian Policy

3. Indonesia will proceed to incorporate Timor. While President Soeharto¹ will want incorporation to be achieved in as presentationally acceptable a manner as possible, Indonesia will not be deterred from this fundamental policy objective.

4. Indonesia regards this outcome as essential to its longer term national interest and, indeed, as being in the interests of the region as a whole. Indonesia has held this attitude consistently since some months before I arrived at this post last March. What has varied in response to political circumstances as they have evolved is the means to the unchanged end and the approach to the public presentation of its policy. Security and stability considerations, not a desire for territorial expansion *per se*, motivate Indonesian policy.

5. Indonesia will be irritated but unmoved by pressure from other countries, including Australia, or from the United Nations to withdraw its forces, especially as it would see such a withdrawal as a recipe, not for a settlement of the Timor situation but, rather, as one for a recrudescence of continuing factional fighting and consequent instability. While Indonesia may pay public lip service to pressure from Australia or from the United Nations it will not

¹ Tjan commented to Taylor on 5 January that Soeharto was recovering from an operation and would 'probably not be working at top efficiency for about six months, although he was now fully back at work'.

welcome such pressure and it will not agree to any steps which it considers could have the effect of undermining its basic objective of incorporation. Moreover, Indonesia will actually be stiffened in its resolve to incorporate Timor, rather than weakened in it, by criticism of its actions in Timor by China, whether or not China is simply 'firing off empty canons' as Ch'iao Kuan-hua has suggested to Mr Fitzgerald (O.PK3850).²

6. Indonesia will conduct some act of self determination and, while the outcome is already clear, it will seek to make the act appear to be as genuine as possible.

7. As we have already reported the Secretary-General's representative will in all probability be admitted to East Timor later this month, but his movements and his contacts with Fretilin will be carefully organised by Indonesia through the Provisional Government. The ICRC will also be allowed to resume its operations—and Australian pressure has helped to bring this about—although initially it will have to do so through the Indonesian Red Cross.

8. While Indonesia may have a residual FRETILIN guerrilla problem on its hands, it will not be deterred by this and it is not inexperienced in coping with such problems. It has dealt with them effectively in the recent past in Sumatra, the Moluccas and West Irian.

9. Indonesia also will argue with some logic that, in the longer historical perspective, Portuguese Timor was a colonial anachronism and that the island of Timor had been artificially and temporarily divided. Indonesia sees no intrinsic reason why the people of East Timor would not be as free and as well off, if they are united with the people of West Timor with whom they have certain cultural, linguistic and ethnic affinities, as they would be in a weak, factionalised, independent state. They also believe that the majority of the people of East Timor can be persuaded to accept this.

10. Although Indonesia's means to its end have been mendacious and clumsy and have involved the use of obvious—if denied—force, the Indonesians would argue that they did not intend to act as they have done but were obliged to do so because of the breakdown of Portugal's decolonisation policy and because of FRETILIN's Unilateral Declaration of Independence. We believe that it is wrong to suggest that the invasion was timed to coincide with the Australian election or that it took place because Australia had given Indonesia the 'green light'. Indonesia had decided to act even if the lights were amber or red.

11. Notwithstanding the matters of principle involved and however unjust it may seem, the reality on which Australia needs now to base its policy assumptions is that, whatever the difficulties Portuguese Timor will be incorporated into Indonesia. Despite what some media critics in Australia have written, Indonesia could not have been diverted from this course by Australia especially as the other countries of the region and the major powers either supported Indonesia's objective—if not its means to that objective—or acquiesced in Indonesian policy. Also because of this attitude by regional countries a regional solution not based on assisting Indonesia attain its objective was not, I think, a starter.

12. Without the intervention of a great power on its side, (as for example the Soviet Union has intervened on the side of the MPLA in Angola) FRETILIN's cause has always been lost. Despite sympathy in Australia for the concept of an independent East Timor under FRETILIN control, FRETILIN's position is, we consider, now untenable. Room will however be found for those FRETILIN leaders like the Minister for Economic Affairs, Gonsalves, and those in Oecussi, who accept that their cause is now lost and decide to cooperate with Indonesia, UDT and APODETI. Those who encouraged FRETILIN to believe that it could adopt an anti-

² 24 December. Ch'iao's recent UN speech had contained strong language, surprising some Western countries. Ch'iao explained the speech to Fitzgerald in the following way: 'What they failed to realise was that China's practice was to "fire empty cannons": to launch strong verbal onslaughts where international morality had been transgressed was greatly preferable to attempting to influence events by force'.

Indonesian attitude and establish by force a left-inclined independent state within the Indonesian archipelago did, in fact, seriously mislead FRETILIN. In retrospect, FRETILIN's only tenable option, in the absence of a powerful ally prepared to give it military support, was to seek an accommodation with Indonesia and the other political parties in Timor.

The present state of Australian/Indonesian relations

13. Timor has become the first serious issue in Australian Indonesian relations since Confrontation.

14. To what extent has the issue damaged Australian Indonesian relations?

15. Reports in the Australian press that Australian/Indonesian relations have reached their lowest ebb since confrontation are, I believe, exaggerated. (But then I can recall no issue in foreign policy in the last twenty-five years on which the Australian media, with few exceptions, has been so lacking in objectivity.) Australian-Indonesian relations reached their high point about October 1974 after Wonosobo. They have, of course deteriorated somewhat since then. But that point of reference was so much higher and our contacts so much more extensive in October 1974 than they were in the pre-confrontation year of 1961, that the analogy is hardly reasonable.

16. But some damage has been done to our relations and the widespread publicity for some of the allegations of Australian support for FRETILIN and for the two demonstrations against the Embassy in Jakarta will have had an effect throughout the country.

17. Indonesia's confidence in Australia as a close regional friend has in fact been shaken somewhat. This results from Indonesia's understanding of Australia's Timor policy based on exchanges at the highest level between the two Governments, compared with the position reflected in our vote for the Timor resolution in the General Assembly and the Government's reactions to mounting public criticism of Indonesia and support for Fretilin in Australia.

18. We believe Indonesia identified two main features in the previous Government's policy; first, integration with Indonesia was the most logical and preferable solution for the decolonization of East Timor; second, that any solution had to be the result of an internationally acceptable act of self-determination.

19. Indonesia knew and understood that Australia would not condone the use of force and did not expect us to do so. But when Indonesia decided that force had to be used if integration were to be achieved and Indonesia's vital interests—as they see them—protected, Indonesia believed it had reason to hope that Australia would not make things more difficult for it than they would be anyway and that we would, like New Zealand, Japan, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea show more understanding of their approach to the problem. Alternatively, if we felt we could not do so, then the Indonesians hoped we would rest on the fact that we were not a party principal and like the United States and many other countries, including the Soviet Union, adopt as passive and uninvolved a role as possible.

20. They founded these hopes on the often-expressed importance Australian Governments place on good relations with Indonesia, on Mr Whitlam's talks with President Soeharto in Townsville,³ on Mr Whitlam's statement to the Parliament on 26 August⁴ and on the present Prime Minister's message which I delivered to the President on 28 November.⁵ Indonesia also made the assumption that Australia as well as other countries in the region saw no advantages and some potential dangers in an independent East Timor.

³ Document 123.

⁴ Document 191.

⁵ Document 343 was actually delivered to Soeharto on 25 November (see Document 344).

21. Despite Australia's attitude towards the paragraphs most critical of Indonesia, our vote on the Timor resolution was a shock to Indonesia from the President down. On a question which Indonesia considered touched its national interest and was vital to its future security and stability, Australia, alone among other regional countries and those with substantial relations with Indonesia, opposed Indonesia, even while countries like Finland and Austria abstained. Every cloud has its silver lining and personally I consider that our vote in the General Assembly, while a shock to the Indonesians, will, in retrospect, serve the useful purpose of reminding them that we are not a compliant neighbour but have principles and interests of our own. I suppose part of the problem is that the Indonesians believed that it was not just a question of our compliance with their policy objective but that it was our objective too—a shared objective—and that when they felt obliged to intervene to secure that objective, we took a leading role in criticising them for so doing.

22. I appreciate that the Indonesians have underrated the strength of vocal public pressure in Australia on the issue. We have constantly sought to impress this point upon them and the importance, notwithstanding a shared objective, Australia placed on an act of self determination. We have also made the point that sensible ends could be damaged by bad means.

23. But, regardless of how we may see them, the Indonesians interpreted the factors mentioned in paragraph 20 above as evidence of a greater understanding of their position than we eventually gave them.

24. Accompanying Indonesian disillusionment with and uncertainty about our policy and our General Assembly vote, have been the union bans on Indonesian ships and on handling military stores for Indonesia, the threat of a ban against Garuda, the defacing of several Indonesian official premises in Australia and the general pro-Fretilin line adopted by much of the Australian news media. I think the Indonesian Government has accepted our explanation that, except for the defacing of premises, which they deeply resent and which they believe a stable and well organized government should be able to stop, the Australian Government cannot prevent these activities, although it looks for an active Government role in ameliorating their affects.

25. On the practical side, however, no lasting damage has yet been done to our relations with Indonesia. Our aid activities here continue unhampered so far, although the Indonesians will watch carefully for any weakening of the Government's attitude towards maintaining these programs. Our access to Indonesian Ministers and officials remains good and, generally, officials and the people with whom we come into contact remain friendly and helpful.

26. The shipping ban is an irritant which if continued and extended could become a serious problem. Because the Indonesian market is more important to Australia than the Australian market is to Indonesia, the balance of disadvantage in an extension of the bans would rest with Australia. If the Indonesians choose to—and there is no present indication that they do—they could make it very difficult for Australian investments in Indonesia and could even—if the relationship were to deteriorate—harass vessels (e.g. bulk carriers) taking Australian cargoes to South East Asia and Japan.

27. The Indonesians are also worried about the possibility of restrictions on Garuda flights to Australia. I consider that if Garuda flights to Australia were stopped by union action, the Indonesians would take reciprocal action against Qantas. Refusal to allow overflights by Australian civil and military aircraft would be a drastic option open to Indonesia in this area which could have a very serious [e]ffect on Australia; but there is also no sign that this is contemplated yet although officials have mentioned the option.

28. I believe that while they are disappointed at our recent policy on Timor the Indonesians will seek to minimise the damage to our relationship provided they are confident that the Australian Government is actively seeking to do likewise. It is in Indonesia's interests to have the best relationship possible with Australia; to have Australian support and understanding on the Timor question; to have a helpful, friendly neighbour to the south; and to enjoy unimpeded commerce with Australia.

29. To achieve these ends I believe Indonesia will continue to seek:

- (a) to persuade the Australian Government to follow a course more helpful to Indonesia on Timor and
- (b) to limit, as far as possible, the effect of differences on the Timor issue on other aspects of our relations. (As we sought to do with France at the time of the French atmospheric tests.)

30. The only reciprocal action the Indonesians have taken so far is to arrange two demonstrations at the Embassy, one in October and one [on] 16 December. But Indonesia is not, and in fact, has not in the past been prepared to sacrifice what it assesses as a vital national interest to maintain good relations with Australia. We know that in late 1974, when the President decided that East Timor should be incorporated within Indonesia, this decision was taken on the assumption that Australia and China were likely to be Indonesia's most severe critics.

31. Australian policy and the actions of Australian unions are not going to divert Indonesia from its objective of incorporating East Timor. We consider that if the Indonesians assess that Australian actions, Government or non-Government, were likely to impede seriously the achievement of this objective or hurt Indonesia financially, then they would take action against Australian interests in Indonesia. But they would not abandon their decided objective.

32. I do not think we are near this point at present. But our policy in the next few months will be watched closely by the Indonesians. The accession to power of the Fraser Government provided the opportunity to redefine our attitude to Indonesia and Timor and, in Indonesia's eyes to arrest the drift. Indonesia regards Australia's statement⁶ to the Security Council on 16 December, in contrast to our vote in the General Assembly, on the 12 December as a positive step in this direction. But I believe Indonesia now wants a clearer idea about the Australian Government's thinking on the future of Timor; in particular do we still favour its incorporation within Indonesia? Also, what did the Prime Minister mean in his message to the President when he referred to a solution 'appropriate' to Indonesia? They accept that Mr Fraser would not see the use of force as 'appropriate' but they would argue that, given FRETILIN's prior use of force, its UDI and Portugal's impotence, they were left with no alternative other than the abandonment of their basic objective. Indonesia wants to know whether, privately, we still sympathise with their objective, even if we cannot condone the means they have adopted in pursuit of it.

33. Indonesia is also looking to the Government to breathe life into the Prime Minister's message, now the Government has been so strongly confirmed into office. Some indication of when the Prime Minister will follow up his expressed wish to develop a closer personal relationship with the President would also be valuable. (As you know it was tentatively planned that Mr Whitlam should visit Indonesia—Lake Toba in North Sumatra—for the next round of private talks with the President in about April 1976.)

⁶ Document 382.

Future Australian Policy

34. It is of course for the government to decide the basic thrust of Australian policy towards Indonesia throughout 1976 and for the rest of this decade. Although important decisions need to be faced in respect of the continuation of the defence assistance programme, the size and nature of the next triennial civil aid programme and in the field of our relations in civil aviation, it is the Timor issue which, at present, provides the main focus of the Australian/Indonesian relationship.

35. It is on the Timor issue that we face one of those broad foreign policy decisions which face most countries at one time or another. The government is confronted by a choice between a moral stance, based on condemnation of Indonesia for the invasion of East Timor and on the assertion of the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self-determination, on the one hand, and a pragmatic and realistic acceptance of the longer term inevitabilities of the situation, on the other hand. It's a choice between what might be described as Wilsonian idealism or Kissingerian realism. The former is more proper and principled but the longer term national interest may well be better served by the latter. We do not think we can have it both ways. In other words we cannot continue, as we see the situation from Jakarta, to isolate ourselves from other regional countries by public criticism of Indonesia and expect this to do no real damage to our relations, especially as the Indonesians believe that Australian Government criticism of Indonesia fuels the fires of existing union, student and media criticism of Indonesia.

However reprehensible their actions, they are also surprised that it is Australia more than any other country except China, Mozambique and Portugal which is putting them under pressure.

36. The Indonesian government will therefore be looking to the Australian government to help in redressing what it regards as an anti-Indonesian pro-FRETILIN bias in the more vocal elements of the Australian community. This may become easier as FRETILIN's own position weakens.

37. Indonesia will also be looking to the government to counter three theses which have gained some support in Australia and which they find false and offensive, namely that 'another Vietnam' is in the making in Timor, that if Indonesia's territorial appetite is 'appeased' in Timor, on the grounds of preserving stability, then Papua New Guinea and West Malaysia will be next on the list and, finally, the analogy with the Japanese occupation of East Timor during the war. The Indonesians would welcome some public statement by the Australian government disassociating itself from these concepts.

38. The Vietnam analogy was first used by Ramos Horta as part of his campaign to stimulate support for FRETILIN in Australia. The Indonesians regard the analogy as bogus. In Vietnam, the great powers were directly involved in supporting contending forces in a country of 35 million people. In East Timor the great powers are not involved—yet at any rate—and Timor is, in global terms, an unimportant territory with a population less than 2% of Vietnam. The Indonesians would argue that the main similarity between Vietnam and Timor is that both were artificially and temporarily divided notwithstanding their different colonial histories.

39. Both the Indonesians and the PNG government regard the PNG analogy as false. Indonesia sees Portuguese Timor as part of the Indonesian archipelago. It does not see PNG in this light. The fact is that it sees it as the eastern end of the archipelago as Malaysia and Thailand may be said to lie at the western end of Indonesia. Indonesia also regards PNG as a viable, independent state. It regards Portuguese Timor as a non-viable colonial anachronism. Indonesia also knows that Papua New Guinea is, to a substantial extent, underpinned by Australia. It knows this is not the case with East Timor. The Indonesians have also made a number of clear public

statements welcoming and supporting PNG's independence and they were very pleased with Michael Somare's recent statement on Timor.⁷

40. The Indonesians also reject the notion that because the Timorese helped Australian soldiers during the Second World War in Timor and that because they put up strong resistance to Japanese occupying forces, Australia owes the East Timorese support now and the East Timorese will put up an equally strong resistance to Indonesia. Indonesians contend that the East Timorese and the Australian forces were then facing a common enemy, Japan. Indonesia does not of course see itself as an enemy either of Australia or of the East Timorese people. In other parts of the archipelago, for example in Ambon, Indonesia gave the same support to Australians fighting against the Japanese as did the East Timorese. As far as guerrilla resistance is concerned the Japanese force represented a distant and invading army. Indonesia does not see its presence in East Timor in any comparable light. It sees its presence as being in response to calls for assistance from non-FRETILIN East Timorese who have much in common with the West Timorese of Indonesia. At the same time the Indonesians are well aware that before 11 August APODETI was not very popular and that a considerable effort will be required to win the genuine support of the East Timorese.

41. Indonesia would also welcome the Australian Government making some public comments on the situation in Timor with emphasis on the practical realities of the situation. Without detracting from the principle of self-determination, some reference to the difficulties of conducting a proper act of self-determination in Timor might be made, as the former New Zealand Prime Minister⁸ has done, with possibly some reference to the fact that there never has been a proper act of self-determination in any Portuguese colony yet.

Conclusion

42. Seen from the Jakarta Embassy there has always been a measure of inevitability about the outcome of the Timor situation. It is presumably now better that this outcome be reached as quickly as possible and with as little bloodshed as possible. In these circumstances we see no reason why the Australian Government could not acknowledge this by saying, quite fairly, that it accepted the realities of a situation which it inherited when it came to office.

43. The government could say that the former government had made it clear that it believed that the incorporation of East Timor offered the best solution for the decolonisation of the Portuguese colony. Preferably, it could add that it sees the logic of this outcome but regrets all those elements in the situation which led to a resort to force.

44. The government could also say that it inherited a situation in which all the countries of ASEAN and a number of other important countries also appeared to accept the view that the most logical outcome of the situation in East Timor lay in its integration with Indonesia.

45. Looking ahead, the government could make the point that whatever happens, Australia needs to go on living with Indonesia and within the region. While this does not mean it needs

⁷ A press statement by PNG Prime Minister Michael Somare on 10 December affirmed the close relationship between PNG and Indonesia and denied any similarity between PNG and Timor. Somare declared: 'I do not support the idea of military intervention but want to make it clear that Indonesia has been prepared to fully accept an international solution to the problem through the U.N. until intervention by powers external to the region interfered with this. I can understand the feelings of frustration in Indonesia that no action was being taken to correct a progressively deteriorating situation on their doorstep, but PNG will not endorse any intervention except for the U.N.'

⁸ On 8 December W. E. Rowling issued a statement that 'the important thing now was that peace and stability should be restored to the whole of East Timor. Even so, it would be a difficult task to ascertain the real wishes of the people and to arrive at a political solution based on an act of genuine choice'. Rowling went on to explain the difficulties of the situation given that 'the people of East Timor have not been adequately prepared for democratic self-government'.

to agree with Indonesia's every action; it does mean that Australia needs to weigh carefully its policy towards Indonesia in terms of Australia's long term national interests, including its position in the South East Asian region as a whole.

46. There are several options open to the government now. The government could place public emphasis on the need for a fair act of self-determination (but it would need to bear in mind that, as in the case of all other Portuguese colonies, there will not be a genuine act of self-determination in Portuguese Timor).

47. The government could also continue to give emphasis to the need for humanitarian assistance and food aid, depending on the actual needs. Beyond that, it could look ahead to some form of island-wide assistance program, possibly in the roads and bridges field, or some island-wide health program or economic development studies.

48. The Indonesians would also welcome it if the government—without seeking to apologise for Indonesian use of force or its lack of sensitivity in handling some aspects of the Timor problem—could act to blunt hostility in the Australian community and to help the Australian public as a whole to acquire a more objective picture of the Timor situation.

49. I appreciate the domestic pressures the government is still under (although the Indonesians will be unlikely to do so, given the magnitude of the government's majority) and I am aware of the positive response in the Australian media to the Minister's recent four statements and actions. But there are some dangers in too ready responses to domestic pressures in Australia. Already many prominent Indonesians feel that their national interests and the long term interests of the South East Asian region are being given less weight—only in Australia and not in any other country—than the wish to respond to the government's domestic critics. Also, there is a danger that if we make a number of statements which are not going to affect fundamentally Indonesia's course of action, and which they may interpret at least to some extent as domestic window dressing, then we could run the risk that we will lessen the impact of our official pronouncements here.

50. One of the most regrettable and potentially serious consequences of the way in which the Timor issue has evolved is that latent fears and suspicions of Indonesia which were never very far below the surface in Australia—fears which date from the days of the 'yellow peril' syndrome, the absorption of West Irian and Sukarno's strident, nationalist foreign policy—have been rekindled and it could be some years before they fall into proper perspective again. We believe that the Australian Government should do whatever it can—as a conscious policy objective—to discourage the further resurgence of these fears in the Australian electorate, especially as they could have ramifications beyond Indonesia.

51. Another not unimportant consequence of the Timor issue is, that Radio Australia, which has enjoyed a very large audience in Indonesia and a reputation for objectivity and accuracy for many years and which could be an instrument of considerable importance to us in Indonesia, has to some extent undermined its credibility with many Indonesians.

52. Finally, we believe the emphasis should now be on accepting the inevitability of Timor's incorporation into Indonesia, letting the dust settle and looking ahead, while taking what steps we can in Australia to limit the further growth of hostility towards Indonesia within the Australian community.

53. I regret cabling an assessment of this length but have done so because of the importance of the issue and the possibility that the Minister might visit Indonesia as soon as later this month.⁹

WOOLCOTT

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394 LETTER FROM FEAKES TO DAN

Canberra, 6 January 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

In Dick Woolcott's absence from Jakarta you may like to see the attached copy of a submission on Portuguese Timor that we prepared in some haste just before Christmas.¹ The Minister, who asked for the submission, has not yet pronounced on it and will, I think, need to discuss it with the Prime Minister. But there are signs that some at least of the ideas in the submission have been accepted by the Minister. You will have noticed, for instance, from telegram O.CH305491 of 6 January² that the Minister does not feel that Australia should become a party principal in Timor.

Our submission, I think, fits in well enough with the main ideas in your telegram O.JA3981³ of 5 January, which we were very glad to have. A continuing difference between the Department—and, I believe, the Minister—on the one hand, and the Embassy in Jakarta on the other, relates to the extent to which it is possible or desirable for Ministers here to come out directly to help in redressing the anti-Indonesian pro-FRETILIN bias in public statements from some quarters.

I wonder whether you would show the attached submission to Dick when he gets back to Jakarta. I need scarcely add that I should not want the submission referred to in ordinary correspondence or in cables between the Embassy and the Department.⁴

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⁹ A handwritten instruction from Woolcott addressed to Dan and Taylor stated: 'Pls have a final check—specially paras 7, 8 + 9—and send off Monday AM. Pls feel free to make changes you consider necessary. We have to strike the right balance between bringing home the realities of the situation to the Government and not, on the other hand, driving it into corner from which it [might] try to prove the Embassy wrong. (I see Hastings now writes in SMH of last Tuesday—following Fin Review Editorial—that Govt is playing a dangerous game)'.

¹ Document 389.

² It advised the Embassy in Jakarta that 'the Minister would be glad if you could do what you can discreetly to discourage Winspeare from coming to Australia at all. For Winspeare to come here even after his visits to Portugal would imply that, along with these others, Australia was a party principal in the resolution of the problem of Timor, an implication which the Government wishes to avoid'.

³ Document 393.

⁴ A hand-written annotation reads: 'Except perhaps for the rather unrealistic possibility that the Indonesians might not achieve integration I think para 17 is as good as we c[ou]ld get'.

395 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 6 January 1976

O.UN4851 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Portuguese Timor: Special Representative of Secretary-General*Ref O.CH305078, O.UN4844, O.UN4847¹*

Sani told me this morning 6 January, that his discussion with Winspeare on 5 January was more technical than political and concentrated on Winspeare's schedule and arrangements. Sani had asked whether Winspeare intended visiting Australia and the latter had thought this would *not* be necessary.

2. Winspeare had mentioned that Horta was in New York and that they would meet. (Arrangements for this meeting have been made for 6 January.) Horta had apparently indicated that he would like to accompany Winspeare. Sani had made plain that this would mean the end of the mission as far as Indonesia was concerned and Winspeare had likewise said that he did not treat the possibility seriously.

3. Winspeare was thinking of arriving in Jakarta on Thursday 15 January and remaining there for two or three days before moving on to Timor. Sani said that the schedule and arrangements for Timor would be worked out with representatives of the PGET whom Winspeare would most likely meet in Kupang for this purpose.

4. When I saw him this morning, Winspeare volunteered immediately that it was *not* his intention to visit Australia and that he wished the Government to be assured of this and that he was fully conscious of the difficulties which the Timor question had already caused and might still cause for the Australian Government. He recognised that Australia was *not* a party concerned and that these were limited to Indonesia and, for the time being, Portugal.

5. Winspeare said that suggestions had been made from FRETILIN quarters that he should go from Timor to Darwin specifically to see the FRETILIN refugees there who were claimed to be numerous and important. He had *no* intention of acceding to this request. I added that in any event the claim could not be substantiated and Winspeare commented that it was obvious that information reaching the outside world from FRETILIN sources via Darwin was being very considerably magnified. For this reason Winspeare said he would greatly appreciate an informed Australian view of the remaining strength and significance of FRETILIN in Timor. He looked to us as detached and close observers, but you will appreciate that there was very little indeed that I could say to him of any value on this score.

6. Winspeare is approaching his mission in a realistic and helpful way. If, therefore, there is any further information about the situation on the ground, including the position of FRETILIN,

¹ Cablegram CH305078 (3 January) advised the Australian Mission to the UN to let Winspeare Guicciardi take the initiative regarding a possible visit by him to Australia since the Government wished to preserve the position that Australia was not a party principal in East Timor. It added that, if Winspeare asked to visit Australia, he should be encouraged to make such a visit after visiting Indonesia, Portugal and East Timor. Cablegram UN4844 (5 January) mentioned Sani's suggestion to Campbell that Winspeare meet PGET leaders outside East Timor, a proposal which Sani intended to put to Indonesia when he arrived there later in the week. Sani also indicated that Indonesia's preference was for Winspeare to conclude his visit with a round-up discussion in Jakarta. Cablegram UN4847 (5 January) advised of Winspeare's call on the Portuguese Mission to the UN. Winspeare sought approval for a visit to Lisbon to speak with administrators who had first-hand knowledge of the Territory but received no offers of assistance from the Portuguese. Consequently he: 'acknowledge[d] that he would be depending on Indonesia alone for leverage with Dili administration, security of the mission and access to, and travel around, the territory'.

which could be passed to him on any basis it would be worthwhile trying to provide this assistance as soon as possible.

7. Winspeare leaves New York tomorrow night 7 January. He will spend Thursday 8 in Lisbon where he is to see the Foreign Minister and possibly one other, returning to Geneva this night. He will remain in Geneva until about Tuesday 13 January when he leaves for Jakarta. He has in mind a maximum of two or three days in Jakarta beginning on Thursday 15 and seeing Malik on Friday 16 followed by about a week in East Timor. Winspeare is prepared to meet the PGET in Jakarta, Kupang or elsewhere in Indonesia before entering East Timor provided the purpose of the meeting is exclusively to arrange his movements within East Timor.

8. Winspeare will be accompanied by a member of his staff, Eric Jantzen (?),² a Malaysian national of Danish origin, at present holidaying in Penang who will join him in Jakarta. He will also have a Brazilian Portuguese-speaker from Tan Ming-Chao's staff and a United Nations security guard, with secretarial or other assistance to be provided by UNDP in Jakarta. Because of UNDP resources in Jakarta, Winspeare is prepared to treat it as his base-camp and to return there briefly after visiting Timor.

9. In addition to his request to us for information, Winspeare asked whether we could look urgently at the possibility of arranging a private Australian charter aircraft at UN expense with some sort of temporary UN identification (for example UN decals) for his use in Timor. The aircraft would need to be small enough to use on airstrips other than Bacau to which he might have access and would need to carry up to six and possibly more passengers.

10. Winspeare attaches some importance to the transport problem because he must appear to be reasonably independent in his movements and because Tang Ming-Chao has already indicated Chinese political objections to the use of an Indonesian air force aircraft.

11. Winspeare is also having enquiries about aircraft charter made in Singapore (which he is concerned would be too expensive) and in Jakarta itself where he understands there may be several possibilities. He feels, however, that if he is to fly from Jakarta to Timor in a charter aircraft he would need something the size of a Fokker Friendship.

12. It is Winspeare's hope, if the chartering of an Australian aircraft for his use in Timor is the most feasible solution, that the Australian Government would not see any embarrassment in such a commercial arrangement. I said I thought it possible that there could be some Indonesian misgivings and made no commitment other than to relay his request and to undertake to let him have your reaction and any relevant information preferably in Geneva by 12 January.

13. As to the mission itself, Winspeare obviously did not yet feel well enough informed to make much comment of substance. He does regard it, however, as being 'so difficult as to be easy'. He intends to make a particular effort to reintroduce the ICRC into Dili and any other centres that may be open to them. We discussed this desirable objective at some length including in relation to domestic opinion in Australia and touched on the possibility of the Indonesian Red Cross being used initially as ICRC agents. I emphasised the Minister's and the Government's strong interest in arranging for ICRC activities to be resumed in Timor and for our aid to be channelled through the Red Cross and left with Winspeare copies of the Minister's statements of 23 and 29 December.

14. Winspeare mentioned at conclusion of our discussion that he hoped he could persuade the Secretary-General simply to present his (Winspeare's) report to the Security Council. He thought it better that Waldheim not risk burning his fingers by attempting a substantive report of his own at this stage.

² This should read Erik Jensen.

15. The Australian press have been asking to accompany Winspeare who has of course declined. In response to press enquiries, I have said that (A) I have seen Winspeare at the request of the Secretary-General's Office, (B) he described briefly the plans for his itinerary to Portugal and Indonesia, the two States concerned, and to East Timor itself, (C) these will of course be for Winspeare himself to announce when finalised, and (D) we discussed the importance of ICRC activities in East Timor and I confirmed to him the high priority given by the Australian Government to resuming immediately the programs administered by the Red Cross.

CAMPBELL

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396 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Peking, 7 January 1976

O.PK3875 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor—China

4. I endeavoured to draw from Cheng¹ any indication whether Fretilin had sought or been granted assistance, particularly military assistance. Cheng stated that China's policy of support for popular independence movements was grounded in principle and was well-known but added that it was sometimes inconvenient to discuss with third parties the complexities involved in bilateral relations. Cheng said that if the Indonesians withdrew, China would continue to support Fretilin. If they remained it was difficult to say although the people could be expected to persist in heroic struggle against the aggressor.

5. I suggested that the views of our two Governments had much in common, particularly opposition to armed intervention, although differences existed. We were concerned at the possible adverse reactions among countries of South East Asia to any suspicion of material, especially military, assistance from China. Indonesia had been apprehensive about outside interference and possible threat to its own stability and security. Chinese assistance to Fretilin would be cited by Indonesia as vindication of its action. I asked if China had considered the position of the USSR in this dispute and suggested that Chinese involvement might stimulate the Soviet Union to a more active interest in Indonesian affairs inimical to China's interest. Cheng responded that Australia should exert its utmost influence to secure the withdrawal of Indonesian troops and allow for peaceful settlement.

Comment

6. The present Chinese stand seems dictated by the moral imperative that Indonesia should be condemned for open aggression, where previously China had no wish or intention of becoming involved. Once the Indonesian invasion forced them, reluctantly, to take a stand and issue statements, Fretilin was apparently the indigenous party most easily identified with, as it

¹ Cheng Jui-sheng, Deputy Director of Asia Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China.

allowed consistency with their own policies. Silence might have been construed as condonement of the use of force in the settlement of disputes with implications for many countries in dispute with China. Failure of Indonesian Government to normalise its relations with China and constant assertion by Indonesia that it is China that interferes in the affairs of SEA countries has probably exacerbated Chinese feelings. China's wish for an independent East Timor seems much more determined now than it was two months ago.

7. The Chinese now seem committed to the concept of independence for East Timor, to Fretilin as the 'progressive' party pursuing that goal and to support of Fretilin consistent with China's support of other independence movements in South East Asia. The Fretilin delegation's call on Ch'en Hai-lien,² and visit to a PLA unit as well as Cheng's hedging with me on the question of military aid leads to the conclusion that the Chinese are contemplating material assistance. I think they are as yet undecided on the form and level of such assistance with Ch'iao Kuan-hua's³ remarks at the welcoming banquet on 29 December that 'the East Timorese people . . . would surely win the final victory of national independence so long as they persevere in self-reliance and hard struggle . . .' indicate that they would probably prefer to avoid any assistance beyond 'firing empty cannon' if they can.

8. I would recommend therefore that before China's policy finally hardens, we take the opportunity to make the most effective representations we can to deflect China from deciding upon a more active involvement in the Timor dispute. Cheng emphasised to me several times China's basic ignorance of the situation, imputed superior knowledge to Australia and therefore regarded an exchange of views with us as valuable. There is still room for us to influence Chinese thinking by well-considered inputs of information, since their own assessment seems to have been made initially through reliance on press reports and most recently through contact with Fretilin.

FITZGERALD

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397 CABLEGRAM TO NEW YORK

Canberra, 8 January 1976

O.CH306802 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Timor: Special Representative of the Secretary-General

Ref O.UN4851 and O.UN4853¹

Thank you for these helpful telegrams. We agree that Winspeare appears to be approaching his mission in a realistic and helpful manner. He nevertheless places us in some difficulties with his two requests which we feel must be considered against the background of the

² Presumably General Ch'en Hai-lien, Commander of the Peking Military Region, People's Liberation Army, and Deputy Premier, People's Republic of China.

³ Foreign Minister, People's Republic of China.

¹ Document 395 and Cablegram UN4853 (6 January). The latter reported Sani's concern about Winspeare Guicciardi's inquiry as to the possibility of his chartering an Australian aircraft for use in Timor since the Indonesian Government was attempting to arrange a suitable charter itself.

considerations outlined in our telegrams O.CH305078² and O.CH305491.³ In general, we wish to minimise the degree of Australian involvement in the Winspeare mission and to avoid, so far as possible, a situation where his visit becomes a source of further tension between Australia and Indonesia, or provides a focus for further hostility towards Indonesia among elements in the Australian community.

2. It would not be consistent with this approach to encourage Winspeare or the United Nations Secretariat to look to the Australian Government as a source of 'independent information' on what is happening in Timor. We believe that there could be a slippery-slope quality about such suggestions in that one request could lead to another until a situation arose where, despite ou[r] caveats, and in spite of what Winspeare himself has told you about his recognition of the problems facing Australia, we could be drawn into the role of party principal that Australian policy to date has been to resist. In any event, as you will appreciate, much of the information we have on developments in Timor comes from highly sensitive material which could not be conveyed to Winspeare.

3. It would probably be possible to charter a suitable aircraft from Australia for Winspeare's needs in Timor. But our strong preference would be for him to look elsewhere and we are glad that enquiries are being made in Singapore and in Jakarta itself. The United Nations might find as a suitable charter firm, the United States-owned National Air Charter, which operates from both Jakarta and Singapore. The Australian Government has occasionally chartered a Grumman Gulfstream aircraft from this company for flights between Singapore and Christmas Island. We were able to do so at competitive rates.

4. Sani's reaction reported in New York's O.UN4853 is probably indicative of the Indonesian Government's sensitivity over this matter. We agree that in the light of the enquiries that the Indonesians are currently making as to charter availability in Jakarta we should delay our own response to Winspeare. Should Winspeare approach the Mission in Geneva about the matter, however, we would like Geneva to respond in terms of paragraph 3.

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398 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 12 January 1976

O.JA4116 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Timor: Special Representative of the Secretary General

Akosah (Foreign Ministry) told us today that the tentative program for Winspeare's visit included calls on the President, Malik and round table talks with officials. Winspeare has apparently agreed to use the Pelita aircraft.¹ He will not be accompanied by Indonesian officials.

2. In Kupang Winspeare will have talks with a representative of the provisional government in Dili about his program in East Timor. Akosah said that the Foreign Ministry's responsibility

² See note 1 to Document 395.

³ See note 2 to Document 394.

¹ Cablegram JA4085 (9 January) reported information from Akosah that an aircraft from Pelita (Pertamina's airline) was being made ready for charter by Winspeare Guicciardi. A foreign aircraft, either from Singapore or Australia, would be unacceptable to the Indonesian Government.

for the visit ended in Kupang. After Kupang he would be in the hands of the provisional government.

Comment

3. In addition to pursuing the charade about their involvement in East Timor the Indonesians seem to hope that Winspeare's visit can be used to add credibility to the provisional government.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xix]

399 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 15 January 1976

O.JA4209 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Timor: Military Situation

Tjan told Dan in strict confidence today, 15 January, that he had visited Dili and Bacau yesterday with General Benny Moerdani, Sani (Indonesian Ambassador to the United Nations) and General Adenan (Asia and Pacific Directorate of Foreign Affairs). The main purpose of the visit was to have a final inspection before the Winspeare Mission's visit.

2. Tjan said he was generally pleased with what he had seen. Everything was well under control in both towns. He foresaw no problems from Indonesia's point of view in Winspeare's visit. In addition to Dili and Baucau, Winspeare could also visit Aileu if he wished.

Military Situation

3. General Moerdani has told Tjan that he is generally satisfied with progress on the ground. There are now only about 1,700 Fretilin under arms. They are concentrated in the area north and south of Ainaro (and in small pockets south-east of Liquica). Bobonaro, a significant Fretilin stronghold fell yesterday. The latest plan, which would be put into operation tomorrow, 16 January, comprised three movements. The first involved a landing of troops in the Southern coastal area between Cabo Suai and Betano and their movement north through Same and Maubisse to link up with troops from Dili moving south. The second involved a movement from Bobonaro through Ainaro to the central region. The third involved landing troops in the region around Beaco and their movement north to Baucau.

4. According to Tjan, Moerdani's latest tactic is to encourage Fretilin to surrender rather than to hunt them down. This has already been successful in some operations.

5. Moerdani believes that Fretilin's back will be broken by the end of this month. He expects only a few insignificant pockets of Fretilin troops to hold out for a little longer in the hills. In due course Moerdani believes they will surrender without a fight.

6. Please protect Tjan.

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400 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 16 January 1976

O.JA4226 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Timor: Statement by Malik

We consider it would be wrong to conclude from the ABC news item that Indonesia is moving away from self-determination in Timor.¹ We understand that the legal procedure for incorporating East Timor into Indonesia which Malik is reported to have described is necessary regardless of whether there is an act of self-determination.

2. Questioned about the report TJAN (please protect) commented that the leaders of the provisional government were tough and stubborn men. They considered the declarations of integration being made by areas of East Timor under their control as part of the act of self-determination.

3. Indonesia, Tjan said, would explore Winspeare's proposals before deciding the form of any act of self-determination.

4. Our present assessment is that Indonesia would like to follow Winspeare's recommendations, but would do so only if it is sure that integration would be the result. We doubt that Indonesia will hesitate to reject Winspeare's proposals if it does not like them. (Indonesia's attitude towards the United Nations and other foreign involvement in the East Timor problem has hardened recently. Their cynical approach is illustrated by the coincidence of the moves reported in our JA4209² and Winspeare's visit.)

5. Nevertheless we believe the Indonesians will seek to present whatever means is chosen to incorporate East Timor as an act of self-determination. As you know President Soeharto's policy guideline is that the incorporation should be achieved as 'legally' as possible.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xix]

¹ Cablegram CH308880 (14 January) reported an unattributed news item broadcast on the ABC on 14 January. It quoted Malik as having announced that the Provisional Government of East Timor had invited Indonesia to declare its sovereignty over the territory. Malik had indicated that the PGET had 'dropped' the idea of an election in East Timor in favour of the passing of a law declaring the territory part of Indonesia. DFA requested Jakarta's response to this adding: 'The report is a disturbing one as it seems to indicate that the Indonesians are moving away from self-determination in Timor'.

² Document 399.

401 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Kuala Lumpur, 17 January 1976

O.KL07586 SECRET PRIORITY

Timor*For Parkinson from Renouf*¹

Ministers want included in the paper Feakes is preparing for Cabinet a set of guidelines for use in public presentation of our policy.²

2. The Prime Minister wants studied in this connexion what may be called 'a lay it on the line' approach, that is, Indonesia is not to be deterred, Australia's relationship with her is very important, there is a limit to what we can do, we have reached the limit, we are not going to achieve anything for the Timorese people by rebuking and obstructing and, on the contrary, we will merely reduce our opportunities for influence.³

[NAA: A11443,[10]]

402 MINUTE FROM PARKINSON TO FEAKES

Canberra, 19 January 1976

SECRET

Indonesia and Timor

At a meeting with the Prime Minister today at which Tange, Menadue, Griffith and myself were present, various policy options were discussed in regard to Indonesia and Timor.

2. The Prime Minister is particularly concerned that Indonesia may be in the process of a long drawn-out military failure in Timor. Lee (and also K. C. Lee)¹ strongly suggested to the Prime Minister that Soeharto's position was not secure in Indonesia; that Mrs Soeharto's graft has now reached the point where the other Generals felt they were not getting enough of their share; that the sheer inefficiency and cost of Timor was placing strains on Soeharto's regime and could bring him down.

3. Against this background the Prime Minister wants us to explore ways of persuading the Indonesians to switch from a military to a political operation in Timor. He says that the Minister and Renouf will be testing out this line in Jakarta today and tomorrow.²

¹ Renouf accompanied Fraser and Peacock when they attended the funeral in Kuala Lumpur, on 16 January, of the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak.

² See Editorial Note, pp. 711–12.

³ In Cablegram SI10619 (18 January), Renouf informed Parkinson that Fraser had directed that Peacock should be provided, for the purposes of his visit to Indonesia, with an up-to-date assessment of the military progress the Indonesians were making on the ground in East Timor.

¹ Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore, and Lee Khoon Choy, Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, Singapore. Fraser visited Singapore after attending the funeral of Tun Abdul Razak in Kuala Lumpur.

² After accompanying Fraser to the funeral of Tun Abdul Razak, Peacock visited Jakarta with Renouf on 19 and 20 January.

4. In addition the Prime Minister has asked Tange to arrange a Defence Committee study of the strategic importance of Timor to Australia; the strategic effects of a long drawn-out and deteriorating situation in Timor in which outside assistance is sought and obtained i.e. supply of arms etc. He also said that he was concerned about Indonesian–American relations and that he was very disturbed to hear that the American Administration had made a secret decision to suspend military aid to Indonesia;³ he foresaw a great increase in Congressional attention to the moralities and events of the Timor situation. Tange's paper is to touch on all of this but we too need to consider our relationship with the Americans in regard to Indonesia and he would like consideration to be given urgently as to whether we should be seeking to involve the Americans more closely in the problem.

5. The general thrust of what the Prime Minister said is contrary to the Secretary's cable⁴ attached. He recognises that line of thought as being valid but now doubts whether it is a viable policy. He seems now to be much more concerned about developing lines of policy which are based on conscience but avoiding too much emphasis on self-determination.

6. As part of the Defence Committee consideration, the Prime Minister wants a JIO/Foreign Affairs assessment of not only the military situation and prospect in Timor but also of the internal position of the Soeharto regime.

7. Where all this leaves us in respect of the Minister's proposed draft Cabinet Submission I am not sure. I suggest you suspend further work on it until the Minister returns and talks to the Prime Minister and we in turn have a chance to discuss the issue again with the Minister.

[NAA: A11443,[14]]

403 LETTER FROM WOOLCOTT TO RENOUF

Jakarta, 21 January 1976

CONFIDENTIAL PERSONAL

At the time of your somewhat rushed departure we were unable to confirm that you or the Minister had copies of the record of conversation with General Panggabean. In case neither of you have it I am enclosing a copy in today's safe hand bag.

I am also enclosing a copy of our briefing notes which were prepared over the weekend in case the Department had not had time to compile a brief. You might want to pass this on to Graham Feakes, especially as the Minister took his copy with him.

Although the meeting with Panggabean was brief, I think the Indonesians could well seek to make use of General Panggabean's parting question, when he asked whether Mr Peacock agreed that 'the matter should be solved quickly'. Mr Peacock replied 'yes', adding that an act

³ In Cablegram JA4355 (22 January) the Embassy in Jakarta reported seeking clarification of this issue when Dan met with Rives, United States Chargé d'Affaires, who assured Dan that US military assistance to Indonesia had not been suspended. Rives added, however, that 'he had only just received confidential advice from the State Department that, as a deliberate United States Government policy, delivery to Indonesia of certain items of military hardware would be delayed ... The Pentagon and the State Department were concerned that if these items were used by the Indonesians in the Timor fighting, Congressional action could lead to pressure for the suspension of United States military assistance to Indonesia. In any case, if United States military equipment were used by the Indonesians this would contravene United States law'.

⁴ Document 401.

of self-determination should also be held quickly. The Indonesians, particularly in HANKAM, may choose to interpret this answer as indirect encouragement to them to settle the issue in the way they are currently tackling it and which they believe is the only way it can be settled quickly. I felt I should flag this with you.

The visit has had an excellent press this morning despite the somewhat abrupt nature of the press conference. We have had a bit of backlash from Indonesian journalists about the Minister's manner and it might be worthwhile dropping in his ear the idea that when he returns we shall need to do a bit of fence mending with the Indonesian press. Unfortunately some interpreted his fairly brisk attitude which was, on reflection, out of tune with traditional 'Javanese' courtesy—and the way they are treated by Malik and also by other Ministers who have recently visited Indonesia—as, I am told, unfriendly and superior.

I am still sore about the *Age* headline of 19 January.¹ As far as I know, I have not had a public rap on the knuckles from the Prime Minister and I would hope at some time this idea can be dispelled. The telegram itself stated clearly in para 34 that it was for the Government to decide policy towards Indonesia and it then set out some options and considerations.

Much will depend on whether or not the Indonesian assessment of the situation turns out to be reasonably accurate or excessively optimistic. Time will provide a judgement on the Embassy's advice but none of us here—nor indeed any of my colleagues in other Missions—see any outcome now other than the incorporation, sooner or later and, hopefully, with some act of self-determination, of East Timor with Indonesia.

It was good to have the opportunity to talk to you personally and we look forward to your return visit. Meanwhile we shall do our best to stay on the tightrope—on which we will balance.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xlii]

404 CABLEGRAM TO SINGAPORE

Canberra, 23 January 1976

O.CH312625 SECRET PRIORITY

Discussions in Jakarta: East Timor

For Birch/Singapore; For Woolcott/Jakarta: From the Minister

You will have seen the reference in O.CH311604¹ (to Singapore only) of my discussions in Jakarta and to our reporting to Lee Kuan Yew on them.

¹ The *Age* headline read: 'PM rejects Timor advice—Woolcott gets a public rap on the knuckles from Fraser'. The headline stemmed from the leak of Document 393, published in the *Canberra Times* on 16 January. The article, by Michael Richardson, stated that Woolcott had urged the Government to accept the inevitability of Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor and that Fraser had responded: 'It is the Government that determines policy. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Peacock, has stated policy clearly in relation to Timor. I believe he has done it clearly and well.'

¹ 21 January. It communicated the text of a letter from Fraser, which Birch was directed to convey to Lee Kuan Yew as soon as possible. After thanking Lee for his hospitality and extending an invitation to him to visit Australia later in the year, Fraser added: 'In regard to the problems we discussed, my Foreign Minister will, as you know, have tested the water by the time you read this. A report will be sent to our High Commissioner to convey to you'.

2. I should be glad if you would convey to Lee Kuan Yew the information about the visit set out below. If you cannot see Lee promptly, then you might go to Rajaratnam,² although we should prefer the information to be passed to Lee himself for a variety of reasons. In any event, you may think it desirable to speak to Rajaratnam as well.

Begins

I had substantial conversations with President Soeharto, Mr Malik and General Panggabean. In general, the Indonesians were inclined to argue that they were not running into trouble in East Timor and that everything was going well. They estimate that order will be restored in another three to six months and that there can be an act of self-determination in a year. They say that only 1700 men of Fretilin's original force of 3700 remain, there having been many surrenders. They admit that Communist countries could with difficulty still supply Fretilin but they believe that this is unlikely. From the discussions in Jakarta, it seems clear that the Indonesians will resist any decisions by the Security Council that, pending an act of self-determination, there should be a United Nations presence in East Timor—and I mentioned that Australia would be willing to participate. The Indonesians undertook that an act of self-determination would take place but they thought it would be better for the Provisional Government of East Timor (PGET) to conduct it.

The main relevant points from my discussions with President Soeharto and Mr Malik about Timor are set out below. The conversation with General Panggabean did not break new ground.

- (a) To President Soeharto, I said that the Australian Government hoped for an early cessation of hostilities in East Timor, an end to the bloodshed and an opportunity for an act of self-determination to be conducted. President Soeharto said that he shared these hopes. I said that, while we understood that the Indonesian Government's belief was that an act of self-determination could take place in six months, this estimate might prove optimistic. If trouble in East Timor continued, a number of serious consequences (which I described) could ensue. If, contrary to Indonesia's assessment, trouble continued, I wondered whether there would be scope for friendly countries like Australia and Malaysia to help in 'policing order' before an act of self-determination took place. The President did not answer directly. He said that Indonesia believed that the problem of East Timor should be solved as soon as possible. He also said that Indonesia believed an act of self-determination should be held and that the act should be witnessed by other countries so that the world could see that the people of East Timor had chosen their own future. [I] was left with the clear impression that the only solution acceptable to the Indonesian Government would be one involving full integration with Indonesia.
- (b) With Malik, I asked how long it would be before peace was restored. Malik replied that, on the basis of the experience of the last few months, all East Timor should be pacified within six months, enabling an act of self-determination to be held within one year. Malik indicated that this was the view of the PGET. It seemed that one year would be adequate to effect the return of the 'volunteers' and establish normal government in East Timor with infra-structural suppo[rt] from Indonesia. I asked whether there was any difference between that assessment and the one Indonesia had, say, two months previously. Mr Malik said that, two months ago, it would not have been believed that what had happened in Timor since then would happen. In

² Sinnathamby Rajaratnam, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Singapore.

reply to my suggestion that the current assessment seemed too optimistic Mr Malik said that he himself had had doubts and that was why he had gone to East Timor; now he had seen for himself. The PGET had the support of the people and the eight provinces under PGET control out of a total of 13 represented the most densely populated areas. As to aid to Fretilin from China, the Soviet Union or Viet-Nam, Mr Malik believed it was now too late as the lines of supply had been closed. Theoretically, it was still possible but it was very unlikely.

I asked Malik what Indonesian reaction would be if the United Nations recommended a presence in Timor and Australia with one or more ASEAN countries was prepared to participate. Mr Malik did not reply directly. I repeated that after the restoration of order and the withdrawal of Indonesian troops, Australia could be prepared to act with others with a view to arranging an act of self-determination. I asked for his reaction. Again Mr Malik did not reply directly. He did say, however, that if attempts were made to impose on the PGET a particular method of self-determination, it would be counter-productive because it would be interpreted as re-dividing the people of East Timor.

I assume Mr Rajaratnam will be following up this matter with his ASEAN counterparts, and I will be interested to know in due course the results.³

Ends

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

405 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 23 January 1976

O.UN4918 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

East Timor and the United Nations

Although there has been a temporary lull in the United Nations consideration of East Timor, it can be expected to come under active discussion again in the coming weeks. The Territory still remains on the agenda of the Committee of 24 and Portugal is already approaching various members of the Committee to ensure that it receives early consideration. We also understand from the Indonesians that the Secretary-General's representative (Winspeare) will be returning from Jakarta via Geneva to New York to present his report to the Security Council in mid-February, when a further debate could follow.

2. In both these United Nations exercises we would like to be able to be in a position to assist the Indonesians as much as possible as we did last year in the Fourth Committee, where we succeeded in securing some dilution of the language critical of Indonesia in the General Assembly Resolution, and in the Security Council where the Australian suggestion for a

³ Cablegram SI10733 (26 January) reported that the contents of this document had been related to Rajaratnam. Rajaratnam had expressed the view that unless the situation in East Timor were quickly resolved, 'he believed Indonesia could be in for trouble at the non-aligned meeting in August and afterwards at the United Nations itself'. Cablegram JA4406 (24 January) warned that the Indonesian Government might become suspicious of the Australian Government's motives if it discovered that the Australian Government was relating to Lee and Rajaratnam the details of Peacock's discussions in Jakarta on East Timor.

representative of the Secretary-General to visit East Timor (as distinct from a visiting mission from the Security Council or the Committee of 24) was eventually adopted unanimously.

3. The only information we have received so far on Winspeare's visit in Timor has been from the Indonesian Mission here and we have no details of his talks with the Indonesian Government. Similarly, we have only seen Radio Australia reports of the Minister's recent talks with Mr Malik in Jakarta and would appreciate further details. Any information which Jakarta could provide on the progress of Winspeare's visit to East Timor, his discussions with the Indonesian Government and the likely contents of his report to the Security Council would be of assistance in preparing the ground work here for any further United Nations consideration of East Timor.

4. The principle guidance we need is on the question of the withdrawal of Indonesian volunteers, the likely timing and circumstances of the proposed act of self determination and the degree of United Nations observation or supervision which would be acceptable. It would not be realistic to suppose that the Committee of 24 will not test Indonesian compliance with the General Assembly Resolution. The same applies to the Security Council in connection with its own unanimous Resolution. Our friends in both bodies will as in the past look to us for some views, at least privately, on the situation in East Timor and on Indonesian intentions. Most of them will be only too anxious to accept Indonesian assurances if it is reasonably clear that the people of East Timor have accepted or at least are not stoutly resisting integration. Naturally this is a question on which we shall need fairly detailed instructions if we are to have any significant influence.

HARRY

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

406 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 24 January 1976

O.JA4408 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

East Timor

Winspeare called on me this morning 24 January on his return from Bali and East Timor.

General Impressions

2. Winspeare said that he had not seen a single Indonesian soldier nor indeed a 'volunteer'. Moreover, he had seen no Indonesian supply ships in or near Dili Harbour nor any sign of what he called 'para-military personnel'. He had also seen no obvious evidence of logistic support for a campaign, either in East Timor itself or in Kupang.

3. Winspeare also said that Dili was relatively undamaged although services had not yet been restored and reports of a heavy bombardment of the capital must have been exaggerated.

4. Winspeare said however that his movements had been tightly controlled and he had not been able to visit much of East Timor.

5. He said he had asked to go to all places where there was an air strip on which a twin Otter could land. He was told that either for reasons of security, weather or technical factors (e.g. on one air strip the grass had apparently not been cut for 2 months) he was unable to do so.

6. Winspeare said generally the Provisional Government and their representatives did not seem to understand his mission. Some seemed to think it was a visit from the Committee of 24. For example his mission had occasionally encountered posters 'thanking countries for their vote' in the UN (the countries usually listed were Mauritania, Dahomey, Saudi Arabia, Yugoslavia and Japan.)
7. The line generally taken with him was that the United Nations now had no role to play. He was often told that his mission was either 'too late' or that it should 'not have come at all'. All representatives of the five parties he met including 'Fretilin' said they had now reached common ground on seeking integration with Indonesia. He had of course met only those former Fretilin officials who were now cooperating with the Provisional Government.
8. Winspeare expressed surprise at the 'backwardness' of the limited number of people he saw in rural areas near towns and said it was hard to imagine them understanding the issues involved in an act of self determination. He had been 'amazed' at how 'primitive' the conditions were of some people, for example, whom he saw in Enclave of Oecussi. He said he believed their lives would have been fundamentally unchanged by 500 years of Portuguese colonial rule.
9. Most of the soldiers and officials he had seen were wearing pale blue uniforms with 'Australian style hats'. The only Indonesian uniform he said he had seen with TNI insignia had been on Atauro, but the wearer was a Portuguese Timorese soldier who said blandly that he was wearing the uniform because he was now an Indonesian citizen and Atauro had integrated with Indonesia.
10. Winspeare said he was impressed by the Indonesian doctors in Dili and especially in Bacau who had been moved in recently by the Indonesian Red Cross. They seemed to have reasonable equipment including x-ray equipment and good stocks of medicines.
11. He said that he had met a number of Fretilin officials, including Gonsalves, the Minister for Economic Affairs. These were really former Fretilin leaders who had now apparently decided to come to terms with Indonesia. He said there were 'really two Fretilins now', the radical and the hard core group—with whom he had not been able to have any contact—and the moderates who were cooperating with the Provisional Government.
12. Winspeare said he had gained the impression that Fretilin now had 'no organized army' but rather a 'capacity for hit and run terrorist type attacks'.
13. Winspeare made the comment that in New York, 'who advertises better sells better' and that while Fretilin could maintain that one could not travel safely outside the main cities and towns, this did not in fact mean that they controlled the rural areas. They did however have a capacity to harass and they could exploit this.
14. Winspeare said that Horta told him before he left New York that Fretilin still controlled 80% of the territory of East Timor. This claim was clearly false. In any case he said it did not mean much. Fretilin may well have a presence or some control over some sparsely populated areas, particularly in the North East of East Timor, but pro-Indonesian groups clearly controlled most of the populated areas and the Provisional Government seemed well established in the towns he had visited.
15. Winspeare said he did not 'honestly think' he 'could say there were two governments' in East Timor. There was the Provisional Government and sparsely populated areas of what he called 'non-control'.

Possible visit from Darwin

16. Winspeare then said he had received a telegram from the Secretary General's office saying that he had now been invited by Fretilin, via Horta in New York to land at Same and to visit the

nearby towns of Suai, Com and Viqueque. Winspeare said Horta had not been able to give him the name of a Fretilin held airfield where he might land before he had left New York although he had asked him to do so. He suspected that the present request which he had only received on Friday might be a 'bluff'. However, he felt obliged to explore the proposal otherwise it could be said that he had not been in any Fretilin held areas. He said it had been suggested to him in the cable to contact a Mr Tony Belo in Darwin (telephone 818795) about arrangements to fly to Same.

17. Winspeare said he intended to telephone Belo. What should he do if Belo told him that he could arrange a charter flight from Darwin to Same? I said that I would need to consult Canberra. My understanding was that our civil aviation authorities were not at present giving clearances from Darwin for any flights to East Timor for security reasons. But the Australian Government supported his Mission and I appreciated his need to visit Fretilin held areas if possible.

18. Winspeare said he felt he must be able to say he had made an attempt to do so even if this meant he would have to do so via Darwin. It would be impossible to get into a Fretilin held area from Kupang. I undertook to try to let him have a reaction from Canberra by Sunday night.

19. Winspeare also said that he understood that a barge was to leave Australia with two doctors, a radio operator, several journalists and some medical and other supplies on board. He had also been told from New York via Horta that the barge would land at Betano. I said that my understanding was that the barge had intended to go to East Timor but had returned to Darwin because of engine trouble. Since then the Australian Government had declined to give clearance for the trip. I did not know whether the party would try to make the trip in the face of the Government's opposition. Winspeare asked me if I could also check this point. Also, was the barge still in Darwin? What he really wanted to know was whether it would be possible for the barge to reach Betano safely. I said I thought this would be hazardous. There would be little chance that the barge would escape the notice of Indonesian patrols. Anti-Fretilin forces would presumably be ready for it if its occupants tried to go ashore.

20. Winspeare said that he would be talking to Malik again on Monday. He expected then to receive Malik's reply to the Security Council's call to Indonesia to withdraw its forces from East Timor. He said that based on his preliminary discussion with Malik this morning he thought Indonesia would come up with a form of words to the effect that it was prepared to 'withdraw its military assistance in consultation with the Provisional Government' and as soon as order was restored.

21. Generally, I had the impression that Winspeare found the Provisional Government to be more in control than he had expected and the Indonesian presence less obtrusive than he would have thought possible even for the short time he was in East Timor.

22. At present Winspeare expects to leave Jakarta on Monday, hopefully for New York, but alternatively for a Fretilin held area, via Darwin, if this proves possible. I would therefore appreciate your early response to Winspeare's questions in paragraphs 17 and 19 above.¹

¹ Cablegram CH312768 (25 January) instructed the Embassy in Jakarta to advise Winspeare Guicciardi not to look to Australia to provide an aircraft to take him to the Fretilin-held areas of East Timor. For security reasons, Peacock could not agree to an Australian aircraft taking Winspeare to Same. The proposed undertaking to Betano had been abandoned and one of the reasons for the Australian Government denying clearance for the barge was its assessment that the security situation in the Betano area could quickly deteriorate. Peacock had previously issued a statement, on 23 January, confirming that the Government had not agreed to the request by a medical team from ASIAT to proceed to Timor on the barge *Alana Fay*. The decision, Peacock said, 'was based on safety factors and the risks that would be entailed to the Australian citizens aboard the barge if it were to proceed into the war zone in Timor'. The text of the statement is given in DFA, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, vol. 47, no. 1, January 1976, p. 41.

23. I have not said this to Winspeare pending your reaction but our own view here is that it would be dangerous for Winspeare to attempt to visit any of the places mentioned in paragraph 16 above.

Roger East

24. Winspeare said that following our conversation before he left for Dili he had asked about Roger East on several occasions. He had found no knowledge of his whereabouts.²

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

407 LETTER FROM WOOLCOTT TO FRASER

Jakarta, 28 January 1976

CONFIDENTIAL PERSONAL

I very much regret that our cable O.JA3981 was leaked to the *Canberra Times* by some disloyal and misguided official.¹

Equally, I regret that other newspapers indulged in their own interpretations of those paragraphs of the cable published in the *Canberra Times*.

I also regret very much any embarrassment the leak my have caused you and the Government.

The leak has of course caused me personally and members of this Embassy embarrassment here and it has exposed me to some public criticism in Australia, including criticism from two Opposition Members of Parliament, Senator Primmer and Mr Fry,² against which I am not in a position, as a public servant, to defend myself publicly however ill-founded some of the criticism might be. It has also to my surprise prompted a number of letters of support from individuals in Australia whom I do not know saying these things should be said.

The suggestion I resent most, however, is that I have in some way been representing Indonesia's interests rather than Australia's interests here. (Senator Primmer's comment and a cartoon in *The Age*)³ An Ambassador is, of course, obliged to ensure that his Government understands fully the attitude of the Government to which he is accredited on issues of mutual interest. I have of course done this. But I have put the Australian Government's views here firmly on many occasions since my arrival in March and I lower my colours to no-one as a representative of my own country and its interests abroad, as defined by the Government of the day.

² Roger East, an Australian journalist, had been employed by Fretilin to run its East Timor News Agency (based in Dili) from October 1975. He had refused all offers of evacuation prior to the Indonesian invasion of 7 December and had not been sighted since. On 5 January reports of his death at the hands of the invasion forces began to appear in the Australian press. On 7 January AAP-Reuters carried a story indicating that East had fled with the retreating Fretilin forces and was safe in the hill country behind Dili. In response to the initial Australian Embassy enquiries Indonesian officials were unable to provide any information about his fate. On 5 March General Moerdani informed Woolcott that they could only assume that East was dead.

¹ The *Canberra Times* had published a front-page article by Bruce Juddery on 16 January. The article, entitled 'Envoy Puts Jakarta's View', published key sections of Document 393.

² Senator C. G. Primmer (ALP, Victoria) and Ken Fry MHR (ALP, Fraser, ACT). Senator Primmer asked questions in the Senate on 19 and 24 February and made a long statement on 24 February criticising the Government's alleged complicity in Indonesian military intervention in Portuguese Timor.

³ The cartoon in the *Age* depicted Woolcott as Indonesia's Ambassador, not Australia's.

I must also admit that my professional pride has been somewhat unsettled by reading headlines such as 'Woolcott gets public rap over knuckles from Fraser' (*The Age* of 19 January) and 'Prime Minister rejects envoy's advice' (*Sydney Morning Herald* of same date).⁴

The point which I believe should be emphasised in such circumstances—and which in fact I made in the leaked cable—is that it is for the Government, not officials, to decide Australian policy towards Indonesia. You are reported to have made this point. I think emphasis should be given to the fact that it is the duty of an Australian Head of Mission to tender to the Government the most competent, objective and frank advice he or she can. I believe I have done so. I believe you would expect no less from me.

In fact you put these sentiments admirably, if I might say so, in your interview with Peter Cross published in the *Australian* of 17 January in which you stated that you wanted senior public servants to put their views strongly and that you wanted them to give impartial advice regardless of what they considered your personal attitudes to be. I have always done so. But one has a right to expect protection of this advice from unauthorised and possibly damaging public disclosure.

I also believe that it is the duty of an Ambassador to bring the realities as he or she sees them of any situation, even if they are unpalatable, to the notice of his government so that a government can make its decisions with these realities in mind. Many international problems have arisen in the past because slogans or emotions have led governments to take decisions not based on realities and which have led, in some cases, to governments painting themselves into corners from which they have been unable to emerge for some time.

Incidentally, I stand by the advice in the cable which is in fact the agreed and considered view of the Political Section of this Embassy. The basic assessments in the cable are also shared by all of our well-informed diplomatic colleagues in Jakarta, including the American, Japanese, Malaysian, Singaporean and New Zealand Ambassadors and, perhaps strangely, even the Soviet Ambassador.

The crux of this advice was in paragraph 11 of the cable, a paragraph which was not leaked. This is that notwithstanding the matters of principle involved and however unjust it may seem, the realities on which any Australian Government now needs to base its policy assumptions are that, whatever the difficulties, Indonesia is committed to the incorporation of Portuguese Timor and will proceed to secure this objective.

Whatever public position the Government might choose to adopt—and I know the Government could not now adopt such a position publicly at a time when the Winspeare Mission is still in progress and when it is publicly committed to an act of self-determination which it would be wrong to prejudice—I believe I would be doing you, Mr Peacock and the Department, a disservice if I were to suggest that Indonesia would accept or permit, at this stage, any other outcome. The best we can hope for and press for is that this outcome will be reached through an acceptable act of self-determination.

I am sending copies of this letter personally to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to the Permanent Head of my Department.

I am aware of the demands on your time and I do not expect you to answer this letter. But I did want to record my views on this matter.

I look forward to your visit and hope that satisfactory arrangements can be made for you to come to Bali next month.⁵

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/10/1, iii]

⁴ See note 1 to Document 403.

⁵ In a discussion with Malik in Jakarta on 19 January, Peacock had suggested that the Australian Prime Minister might be invited to visit Bali at the end of the Summit Meeting of ASEAN leaders to be held on 23 and 24 February.

408 NOTE ON TIMOR

[January 1976]

CONFIDENTIAL

Timor is now a major preoccupation. In a sense, however, it represents a distortion in our Foreign policy perspectives. Australia has no vital interests at stake in Timor. Whether it is independent or part of Indonesia is irrelevant to Australia. Indeed, what interests we have there, deriving from the Territory's proximity, its nearness to shipping routes and to our seabed resources zone, and some small residual Australian commercial interests, would all be well served by its incorporation into Indonesia.

But this is to ignore the strength of public sentiment in Australia. Timor has become a Viet Nam in reverse with public opinion pressing the Government to plunge itself more deeply into the Timor morass than the Government would wish. A good deal of the pressure comes from the Australian left—ironically the very groups who were most vociferous in demanding Australia out of Viet Nam. They now want us 'in' to Timor. More recently demands for a more involved Australian policy have been joined by Church and other like-minded groups.

Yet Australia cannot permit itself to become a party principal in the Timor conflict. To do so would place us on a collision course with Indonesia. It could quickly lead to Australia assuming responsibilities in Timor which could bedevil relations with Indonesia for years to come. We could find ourselves back in an F111 syndrome¹ defeating years of patient diplomacy aimed at building bridges of confidence between Australia and its South East Asian neighbours.

Australia thus has no national interest in involving itself too deeply in Timor. Nor have we any international obligation to do so. We are not the administering power. We have no duty to Lisbon or to the Timorese to exercise a delegated authority on Portugal's behalf. It could be said that Australia is already 'out on a limb' on East Timor. No other country has been as active or involved, certainly no other country in the region, most of which are inclined to avert their eyes or even to encourage the Indonesians to get on with the job of taking over Timor. In a sense Timor is a casualty of the fall out from Indo China. Indonesia's ASEAN partners accept Indonesia's contention that in the wake of Viet Nam it cannot tolerate a potentially unstable and probably leftist dominated, East Timor in its midst.

The Australian Government will continue to be under heavy domestic pressure in the weeks ahead on Timor. But realistically we probably now have to accept that integration of East Timor into Indonesia is fast becoming an accomplished fact. The Indonesians have throughout remained unresponsive to suggestions from us about how their interests might be protected short of incorporation. It is unlikely that the Australian Government would now wish to be able to thwart this objective. Indeed incorporation is probably now the best solution from our point of view. Otherwise we should have a running sore in the region poisoning relations between ourselves and the Indonesians for years to come.

The Australian Government will nevertheless continue to support publicly the need for a process of self determination in Timor. If it does nothing else it may help ensure that the Indonesians go about absorbing Timor in as humane and civilised manner as possible. It is also in the interests of regional relations and indeed of Indonesia itself that it effects the incorporation of Timor in as legally correct and internationally acceptable a manner as possible.

¹ The Australian Government's decision to purchase F-111 bombers in 1963 was regarded by the Indonesians as a clear threat against them and went some way to undermining the careful diplomacy that had led to an understanding between Australia and Indonesia on the future of Dutch New Guinea.

In the United Nations we shall not play the role of an apologist for Indonesia but, equally, we shall wish to show understanding of its special position and not be in the forefront of its critics.

We shall also do what we can to contain any change to the long-term Australian/Indonesian relationship caused by Indonesia's military intervention. This implies an appro[ach] to bilateral relations which emphasises 'business as usual', including in the aid and defence co-operation areas. We shall similarly do what we can to blunt the growth of anti-Indonesian sentiment in Australia. While recognising that the sources of domestic pressure—the Trade Unions, the newspapers, the television etc—are not susceptible to Government control, there may be some scope for trying to shape public opinion rather than simply reacting to it.²

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/2/1, xii]

409 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN RENOUF AND WOOLCOTT

Canberra, 30 January 1976

East Timor

1. In accordance with the Minister's instructions, I telephoned Mr Woolcott at 10.45 a.m. on 30 January. I impressed upon Woolcott the need for him to do everything possible to persuade Indonesia to allow Mr Winspeare to visit Fretilin-held areas in East Timor.¹ I told him that in the opinion of the Australian Government, Indonesia would be well advised, in its own interests, to allow this to happen.

2. Woolcott said that he understood and would do his very best. He had already lined up a number of appointments on 30 January for this purpose. Of course, the going would be hard as Indonesia was already falling back upon the argument that she would have to consult the PGET; in other words, it was not strictly Indonesia's business.

3. Woolcott also 'flagged' discreetly with me the point that if we wanted Indonesia to be receptive about the idea of Mr Fraser visiting Bali at the end of the Asean Summit, it would be helpful not to be too critical of Indonesia's policy in its various aspects towards East Timor at this particular time.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/2/1, xii]

² The origin and purpose of this document is unknown, but from its content, format and classification, it might well have been part of the brief for Peacock's visit to Jakarta in January 1976. Unlike other ministerial visits to Indonesia, no collected brief exists for the January 1976 visit, probably a result of the ad hoc nature of the trip (following Tun Razak's funeral). In any case, the sensitivity of the issue meant that briefing notes on Timor were sometimes kept separate from the collected brief, such as the brief for Whitlam's September 1974 visit [NAA: A2539, B74/70]. It is also worth noting that the appearance of otherwise unidentified documents on official files is not unusual. This is particularly so with the 3038/13/2/1 files, created in some haste by DFA Central Registry after the first leaks in 1975.

¹ On 27 January Peacock issued a statement that the uncertain security situation would preclude any Australian aircraft carrying the Winspeare mission 'into the war zones in Timor'. The two Portuguese corvettes could possibly take the mission to one of the Fretilin zones in East Timor. On 28 January, Peacock added that the powerful radio transmitters on board the corvettes were the best means of Winspeare's establishing contact with Fretilin. A third statement, issued on 29 January, requested the assistance of the Indonesian Government 'in the areas where it had influence' to guarantee the mission safe passage in their efforts to contact Fretilin. Cablegram CH314284 (29 January) instructed Woolcott to discuss with the Indonesian Government Peacock's proposal that Portuguese corvettes be used to help Winspeare make contact with Fretilin and to transport him to East Timor. It added: 'time is now very much against Winspeare's chances of holding talks with Fretilin in Timor, but we do wish to make every effort to assist'.

410 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 30 January 1976

O.JA4520 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

East Timor—Minister's Visit

For Minister and Secretary; For Birch (Singapore)

During his visit to Jakarta the Minister asked me to let him have some considered advice on Indonesian reactions to the idea he put forward here in an exploratory way of Australian participation in a possible future UN peace-keeping force in Timor.

2. As I understood it, the Minister's main concern was that the pro-Indonesian forces would not defeat Fretilin in the near future and that a 'festering sore', in the form of continuing guerilla warfare would develop in East Timor. Such a development would make it increasingly difficult for Indonesia's friends, inside and outside the South East Asian region, to maintain close relations with Indonesia. In particular anti-Indonesian feeling in Australia would be exacerbated. Also stability in the region immediately to Australia's north would be threatened. The Minister also suggested that United States military assistance to Indonesia would also be stopped.

3. In these circumstances and depending on the results of the Winspeare Mission's visit to East Timor, the Minister was weighing in his mind the possibility of Australia, with possibly another regional country (he mentioned Malaysia) participating in a UN peace-keeping force or the like while an act of self-determination was held in East Timor. This force could be established, as I understood the Minister, after Indonesian forces were withdrawn.

4. On reflection I would have serious reservations about such an initiative. I do not think it would succeed and it would lead to further strains in our relations with Indonesia.

5. Indonesia's unchanged policy is to integrate East Timor. It will provide sufficient force to do so as quickly as possible but without needlessly antagonising the local population. Indonesia is also publicly committed to some form of act of self-determination. Present indications are that it would be conducted by the Provisional Government in Dili within a year, with some form of international observation (but not supervision).

6. In the light of Indonesian policy as I see it, I should like to comment on five aspects of the Minister's ideas on Timor. I shall try not to repeat what I said in JA3981,¹ but these comments should be read in conjunction with that telegram.

7. On the concept of the 'festering sore', I am not in a position to comment authoritatively on the likelihood of sustained and serious guerilla warfare developing in East Timor. The Indonesians certainly will do all they can to prevent it. They expect small scale resistance in restricted areas to remain for some time. But they are not too concerned about this because of the difficulty hard core Fretilin supporters who do not surrender when the dry season comes will have in getting supplies and because they do not consider there is much grass-roots support for Fretilin (or the other parties). If, however, a 'festering sore' looked like developing, I believe the Indonesians would, to maintain the medical analogy, act to cauterize it.

8. If they were to fail to do so and a serious resistance movement were to develop, that would be a new situation demanding a new approach. At such a stage they might look to regional countries to help them off the hook but it seems unlikely. Indonesia has the proven

¹ Document 393.

ability to cut off its nose to spite its face and to ignore the strictures of other countries if it suits it to do so (it is the only country to have left the United Nations).

9. In any case I have not seen any firm evidence from any reliable sources that
 - (a) the Indonesians will not be able to defeat Fretilin in the next few months and;
 - (b) that the Indonesians will not be able to contain the Fretilin remnants, even though they may hang-on for some time; or
 - (c) that significant outside support—including arms—for Fretilin is likely.
10. *Secondly*, the Indonesian attitude to international involvement in Timor has changed with the circumstances since it suggested in August 1975 a multi-national force including Australia and Malaysia to restore peace and order. So has its attitude to Australian involvement. In August they thought it would be helpful. Now they would not. This initiative failed and the Indonesians now consider that they are carrying out the task of restoring peace and order. The Minister raised the possibility of international participation during his visit here. While the President and Malik (twice) did not reply directly their response in Indonesian, especially Javanese, terms was a negative one. Panggabean said it was 'too late' for such a proposal to be put into effect when the Minister mentioned it to him.
11. *Thirdly*, the Indonesians will not withdraw their forces until they have established control and are confident of the outcome of any act of self-determination. This is settled Indonesian policy although they will say publicly and to the United Nations that the[y] will withdraw their military assistance in consultation with the Provisional Government.
12. *Fourthly*, while the Indonesians may allow and may even encourage, some international observation of the act of self-determination, I wonder whether Australia would want to be associated with what will inevitably be a questionable act. It is most unlikely that international supervision—as distinct from observation—of the act of self-determination will be allowed by Indonesia or the Provisional Government in Dili (which appears to need no coaching from Indonesia on this point).
13. *Finally*, the Minister referred to the possibility that another regional country, perhaps Malaysia, might participate with Australia in the proposed force. I do not know whether this possibility has been discussed with the Malaysians, but I very much doubt whether the Malaysians would agree to any such initiative without the prior agreement of Indonesia. I would guess that the Indonesians would in any case have consulted the Malaysians following the Minister's visit.
14. I realise that the idea was exploratory and that the details had not been worked out. As the Minister himself said he was simply 'putting his toe in the water'. Our assessment is that the water is decidedly chilly.
15. Short of a basic change in Indonesia's policy—which we do not expect—I am certain that the sort of proposal he has in mind would not divert Indonesia from its present course and that Indonesia would resist it firmly if we were to pursue it. We consider it would place Australia in opposition to Indonesia and further complicate our relations in the next few years.
16. We have not repeated this cable to New York because we are not sure of the extent to which the Minister's proposal is known there.

WOOLCOTT

411 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 30 January 1976

O.JA4537 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

The ASEAN Summit and Australia*For Birch (Singapore); Parsons (Kuala Lumpur); Nutter (Manila); Johnson (Bangkok); Shann (Tokyo)*

Since the Minister's visit to Jakarta during which he raised with the President and Malik the proposal that the Prime Minister might visit Bali at the end of the ASEAN Summit for talks with other ASEAN leaders and President Soeharto, we have had a number of indications from Indonesians, at various levels, that they are cool towards the idea.¹

[matter omitted]

7. Malik's former personal adviser, Alex Alatas, who has been very frank with us (and who is a good friend of Australia) told us recently that Indonesia's attitude to a visit to Bali by the Prime Minister at the end of the ASEAN Summit could not be disassociated from our present approach to Timor. Alatas said that although the subject had not been mentioned during the talks—and this was due to 'Javanese courtesy' despite protestations of frankness—our vote in the General Assembly for the resolution condemning Indonesia had not been forgotten. Also, although nobody would have told us officially, the Indonesians have expressed 'disappointment' in their discussions with each other that the Minister did not show more private support or public understanding for Indonesia's position than he had done during and since his visit. Alatas added that Indonesia resented being 'lectured' by other countries.

8. According to Alatas some of the President's advisers are arguing now that Indonesia should be less responsive towards Australia's interests while Australia continues to adopt a public position critical of Indonesia on a matter of great importance to it. Indonesia did not favour the possible future initiative in the United Nations which the Minister discussed in an exploratory way when he was here.² (This subject is covered in our O.JA4520.)³ Whether or not they have a right to expect it, Indonesia hoped for a greater degree of understanding of its position, especially following Mr Fraser's message⁴ to the President during the period of the Caretaker Government, than it considers it has so far received. We also detect an increasingly unresponsive attitude to the more recent Australian statements on Timor.⁵ These command more Indonesian attention than usual because no other country seems to have made any recent statements at Ministerial level on the subject.

9. There is also the complicating factor of the way in which Indonesia's attitude to Singapore has hardened since Razak's death and Indonesia's awareness of the personal links between the Prime Minister and Lee Kuan Yew. While this should not normally be an inhibiting factor, it is in the present situation in which Indonesia is suspicious of Singapore and certainly does not want other countries to see it through Singapore's eyes.

¹ See note 5 to Document 407.

² See Document 404.

³ Document 410.

⁴ Document 343.

⁵ See note 1 to Document 409.

[*matter omitted*]

13. During Ali's visit to Singapore he had had a very frank discussion with K. C. Lee. Ali said that Indonesia was upset by Singapore's abstention in the General Assembly on Portuguese Timor. (To ensure that he got his point across Ali told K. C. Lee that Indonesia would not forget 'for two hundred years' what Singapore had done.) He had also conveyed Soeharto's views on the Kuala Lumpur 'mini summit'. At the Australia Day reception on 26 January Ali's private secretary, Lim Bian Kie spoke to the Singapore Ambassador, Rahim Ishak, along similar lines.

[*matter omitted*]

15. President Soeharto's interpreter, Widodo, asked me on 26th January whether Mr Peacock 'had understood the nuances' in the President's reply to Mr Peacock's question about the suggestion for a post-Bali meeting with Mr Fraser. (Soeharto did not answer the Minister directly but said the proposal would need to be discussed at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and that one problem could be commitments of some ASEAN leaders immediately after the Bali Summit.)

16. Widodo 'dropped in' 20 minutes before the start of the Australia reception on his way from President's house to say he was not well and could not stay. He then asked the question about 'nuances'. Although we know Widodo well he normally does not discuss matters of substance unless under instructions. I asked Widodo directly if what we had heard from other sources was true, namely that the President had reservations about the proposals, either for a meeting with the Japanese, Australian and New Zealand Prime Ministers or for a meeting with the Australian Prime Minister only. Widodo said the President did in fact have reservations about both proposals.

17. We are aware of the Prime Minister's wishes and without putting ourselves in the position of importuning the Indonesians, we have done what we can to counter the various arguments mentioned earlier in this cable. But we must face the fact that in its own indirect way and for its own reasons related in the main to our attitude to Timor and to Singapore's suspected role in the proposed summit meeting, Indonesia is likely to be lukewarm to a post-summit taking place if the question is pursued by Japan, which now seems unlikely, and that it is unenthusiastic about a visit by Mr Fraser by himself immediately after the Summit. Timor is the real problem and it gets back to the basic issue of the choice.

18. As we have said before we cannot act in a way which Indonesia sees as contrary to its national interest, however reprehensible we may think Indonesia's actions have been in pursuit of these interests, and at the same time expect our simultaneous expressions of our interest in maintaining close and cooperative relations with Indonesia to placate them. If we want support from Indonesia in pursuing our objectives in the region then they will expect us to be as helpful to them in their present difficulties as we can be. Indonesia may also see a contradiction developing between our policy toward East Timor and our policy towards ASEAN and closer cooperation with the countries of the South East Asian region. Indonesia sees itself as central to both policies and could seek to exploit this.

19. In these circumstances the Minister and the Prime Minister will need to give some thought as to how they wish to proceed. If Japan and New Zealand decide not to maintain their interest in a meeting in Bali immediately after the Summit (as appears from agency reports now to be the case) and if we press the Indonesians ourselves and disregard their hints we would probably secure agreement for Mr Fraser to go to Bali immediately after the Summit, provided the other four countries agree. Soeharto may not like the timing and the way he suspects the idea has developed but if no one is prepared to veto it in Pattaya he will probably go along with it.

20. If Mr Fraser were to attend in these circumstances the Indonesians might think that we had been insensitive, in contrast to Miki who, according to latest press reports, has discreetly and in an Asian way backed off by now saying he is too busy to go anyway. Mr Fraser could find himself received politely but there could be a degree of resentment behind the mask of courtesy. But this would probably be short lived if the visit itself went well.

21. We are making provisional arrangements in case the Prime Minister does come to Bali on the 25 February. One problem is of course that the matter cannot now be finalised until after it has been discussed at the Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Thailand on the 10 February. A decision would probably be *ad referendum* to Heads of Government and so we might not know the final decision until about 10 days before the Summit is due to start.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/10/1, iii]

412 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 2 February 1976

O.JA4562 SECRET PRIORITY

EXTRACT¹

East Timor: Winspeare Mission

8. It is for the government to determine Australia's attitude to Indonesia in Timor and we shall explain and execute that policy as decided as forcefully as we can here. But I consider it my duty to repeat the agreed Embassy view—which is shared by virtually all our colleagues here—that, notwithstanding the matters of principle involved, the realities on which any government now needs to base its policy assumptions are that, despite the difficulties they may encounter, Indonesia is fully committed to the incorporation of Portuguese Timor and it will proceed to secure this objective. It also believes that Fretilin is crumbling despite the activities of its activists outside of East Timor and such international interest and sympathy for Fretilin as there was is weakening, except in Australia.

9. I consider we would be doing our government a disservice if we were to suggest that Indonesia would accept or permit, at this stage any other outcome and if we did not emphasise, at this stage, the possible ramifications for our important relationship with Indonesia, if Indonesia were to decide that Australia is supporting Fretilin's interest (or what remains of Fretilin bearing in mind that a number of former Fretilin leaders and officials within East Timor are now cooperating with the PGET) against Indonesia's interest.

¹ Omitted paragraphs include Woolcott's discussion with Winspeare Guicciardi and his Special Assistant, Erik Jensen, of Peacock's 29 January statement (see note 1 to Document 409); Woolcott's opinion that the Indonesian Government would not undertake any action, except of a 'presentational nature, at Australia's request, which they consider might prejudice the unchanged objective which they are pursuing'; and Woolcott's preference for the Australian Government to seek the cessation of hostilities in, rather than the withdrawal of Indonesian forces from, East Timor.

10. In these circumstances it seems from here that realistically the best we can press for is that there will be a reasonably presentable act of self-determination (although even on this score we need to realise that the act will not be held until the Indonesians consider the outcome is assured). If this prognosis is borne out by events—as we are confident it will be—then perhaps we could derive some comfort from the fact that there are ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious ties between the peoples of East and West Timor which may in fact make integration less difficult and, indeed, less unpopular in East Timor than it may now seem in Australia.²

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

413 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 2 February 1976

O.JA4573 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

East Timor: Winspeare Mission

Winspeare's senior aide, Jensen, told Dan late yesterday that the United Nations Mission had up until then not received from the Indonesian Government any official comment concerning the Portuguese Corvette exercise.¹ The only comment was by Adam Malik at the Indonesian Press Club on 30 January when he was reported to have said that Indonesia had no objection to the proposal if Winspeare was prepared to take the risks involved. Malik said that the areas the United Nations Mission wished to visit were either held by pro-Indonesian forces or were being contested (JA4554).

2. Jensen said the Mission had hoped the Indonesians might have been able to express support in principle for the proposal. The United Nations Mission had told the Indonesian Foreign Ministry that it was Fretilin's responsibility, not the PGET's or Indonesia's, to arrange the meeting in East Timor between the U.N. Mission and Fretilin. Fretilin publicly claimed control over a significant part of East Timor. If this claim were true it should have little difficulty in finding some place for a meeting.

3. The Winspeare mission had assured the Indonesian Foreign Ministry that if Fretilin was unable to make suitable arrangements for a meeting the responsibility for this would be borne only by Fretilin. The Mission did not expect the PGET forces to make military concessions to Fretilin, for example, by giving up ground already won by the PGET to facilitate a meeting with the U.N. Mission. But once a place had been selected by Fretilin and assuming that it

² In Cablegram CH315406 (2 February), Renouf reiterated for Woolcott the main points of the Australian Government's policy on East Timor. These were (a) a cessation of fighting; (b) a withdrawal of Indonesian forces as soon as the need to maintain law and order could be otherwise met; (c) a genuine act of self-determination; (d) an early resumption of international humanitarian aid; (e) a willingness on Australia's part to give favourable consideration to participating in any UN (or ASEAN) presence in East Timor pending self-determination. Renouf added that the last point had not been stated publicly.

¹ Cablegram JA4536 (1 February) reported that Winspeare Guicciardi intended to fly to Darwin on 1 February in order to try to make contact with Fretilin in East Timor through the use of the radio transmitter of one of the Portuguese corvettes in Darwin. It added that Erik Jensen, Winspeare's Special Assistant, had stated that the onus was on Fretilin to identify a port where the corvette could land in Timor and to nominate a place in Timor for the meeting with Fretilin leaders.

really was within Fretilin-held territory the U.N. Mission of course would expect the pro-Indonesian forces not to do anything to upset the meeting.

4. Jensen said that from their point of view all this seemed to be perfectly reasonable. They were at a loss to understand why Indonesia seemed so cool about it.

5. We told Jensen we had discussed the subject again on 1 February with Indonesian officials. We had repeated the Australian Government's hope that the Indonesian Government would do everything within its power to help the United Nations Mission in this exercise. We told Jensen that we had been left with an impression that the Indonesians were suspicious about the plan. They seemed to look upon it only as a manoeuvre to blame them if and when it failed. Jensen said this was also the impression of the Winspeare mission.

6. We discussed with Jensen the various traps in the Corvette exercise. One was that Fretilin might nominate a landing place for the Corvette and/or a place for the meeting which were not in fact under Fretilin control. After the U.N. Mission's arrival Fretilin could then claim that pro-Indonesian forces had intervened to sabotage the meeting. Before leaving Darwin the Mission would have to assure itself that Fretilin's advice was accurate.

7. Another possible trap for the Mission would be to set out for a secret rendezvous with Fretilin. If under those circumstances pro-Indonesian forces should stumble upon the gathering and bombard it, the PGET could claim that their forces had believed the group to comprise only Fretilin. East Timor was after all a war zone. It therefore seemed best to announce publicly where the Corvette would land and where the meeting would be held. Public exposure of this kind would in itself act as a safety guarantee for the United Nations Mission. In any case the pro-Indonesian forces could probably monitor the progress of the Corvette and accurately identify the meeting place.

8. It also seemed desirable that once Fretilin has nominated the landing and meeting places and, assuming they were in Fretilin controlled territory, the United Nations Mission should request the PGET (and Indonesian Government) to guarantee that pro-Indonesian forces would not take any action that would interfere with the meeting or put at risk the security of the United Nations Mission.

9. Jensen said the Winspeare Mission did not intend to take unnecessary risks. They were conscious of the pitfalls. As Winspeare had already reported to the Secretary General, the Mission was having to carry out its tasks in 'shark infested East Timor waters'.

Comment

10. Our own feeling at this stage is that when Fretilin nominates landing/meeting places in East Timor (assuming that it will in fact do so), the PGET will announce that the Portuguese Corvette may go there only at its own risk. The PGET will say it does not recognise Portugal or Portuguese Sovereignty over East Timor. The Portuguese corvette will be considered an intruder. Further, the PGET will deny that the places nominated by Fretilin for the landing/meeting were Fretilin-held. The PGET will say that Fretilin will try to use the meeting with the U.N. Mission to provoke a clash with PGET forces and thus seek to discredit the PGET publicly. Finally the Indonesian Government will say that the United Nations Mission had assured it that it was Fretilin's responsibility alone to make arrangements for a meeting. Should Fretilin be unable to achieve this the Indonesians will say that the United Nations Mission had told the Indonesian Government that the Mission would conclude that Fretilin's claim of substantial control of areas of East Timor was clearly false.

414 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN SUNARSO AND RODGERS

Jakarta, 2 February 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

EXTRACT

Portuguese Timor

On 2 February we asked Sunarso how the Indonesians viewed the projected visit to a Fretilin controlled area in Portuguese Timor by the Special United Nations Envoy, Mr Winspeare Guicciardi. Sunarso replied that a visit by Winspeare to a Fretilin controlled area would clearly not be in Indonesia's interest. Indonesia for some time had been emphasising the growing weakness of Fretilin's position. A visit by Winspeare to a Fretilin controlled area would only bring into fresh focus the question of the validity of earlier Indonesian claims.

2. For this reason said Sunarso, Indonesia would do all it could to ensure that the visit did not take place. Indonesia would be as obstructionist as possible over the visit. If, for example, the Portuguese Corvette carrying Winspeare sought to land at a pro-Indonesian controlled area to enable Winspeare to travel overland to a Fretilin controlled area permission for this would be refused absolutely.

3. I asked Sunarso about the actual extent of Fretilin's control in Portuguese Timor. Sunarso said that Fretilin was very much confined to a small area to the east of Bobonaro.¹ He said the terrain in this area was very difficult. This combined with the current wet season conditions meant that progress against Fretilin in this area was slow. An important and additional element hampering Indonesian operations, said Sunarso, was the Indonesian lack of effective fire support from the air.

4. Nevertheless, in spite of these problems, when questioned as to the likely period before the remaining Fretilin resistance collapsed Sunarso was optimistic that it would be less than a month. He said it was probable that a move against Fretilin positions around Bobonaro would be made from the direction of Aileu, rather than from the west around Bobonaro itself.

5. In passing Sunarso said that an example of the difficulties of clearing operations in the terrain of Portuguese Timor was that it was not until 23 December that Indonesian ships had been able to anchor in Dili Harbour in daylight. This had been caused by the danger of ships coming under Fretilin mortar fire from the hills surrounding Dili.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

¹ Cablegram JA4531 (30 January) reported information from a reliable Indonesian source that pro-Indonesian forces had recently gained control of Uatolari and that Fretilin forces were now mainly in the hills in the area surrounded roughly by Bobonaro, Atsabe, Aileu and Same.

415 TELEGRAPH MESSAGE TO CANBERRA

Darwin, 4 February 1976

O.CE862 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Please pass to Jakarta, UN New York and Lisbon: From Miller

1. Following summarises situation as at 5 PM Darwin time Tuesday 3 February, and telephone conversations with Joseph of last two days.
2. Winspeare arrived here in early hours of 2 February irritated with Portugal for having taken Timor to the Security Council, with Horta for having attempted to turn the sanctioned use of the Portuguese corvettes' radios into a *de facto* Fretilin radio, and with Indonesia for not having given him better access in East Timor. By the afternoon of 2 Feb he was talking of Horta as a 'clown', and of having come to Darwin to 'listen to maniacs'. Although his annoyance had moderated by today, it is clear that he does not expect to be offered a reasonable proposition to go to Timor to meet Fretilin leaders, and that he will not wait very long in Darwin for what he regards as an improbable and unwelcome proposition to materialise. He has come in order to be seen to be exhausting all the options.
3. Winspeare told me today that this morning he had put it to Horta that, despite adequate radio facilities and the availability of the Portuguese corvette, and Winspeare's own willingness to travel, the fact was that Horta could not indicate to him a destination to which he could proceed. He said it was rapidly becoming time—today or tomorrow—for Horta, as the man who had invited him to Darwin and told him he could go from there to Timor, to acknowledge this situation in a written communication to Winspeare. In any case, by tomorrow Winspeare would have to say, in response to press questions, not that he was still investigating the situation, but that no communication could be made with Fretilin on Timor. He said that he had said to Horta that this was not Winspeare's fault and not Horta's fault: in his communication Horta could blame the Indonesians, if he liked. Winspeare said Horta had indicated he would draft something.
4. Winspeare appears therefore to be thinking in terms of presenting his position as having been ready to go anywhere and to accept a 'reasonable' degree of risk on his own responsibility, provided only that 'someone tell me where I should go'. That this is to some extent a disingenuous presentation can be seen from Winspeare's comment to me that the PGET might as well have given him assurances of safety 'since there is nowhere for me to go'. On the morning of 2 Feb he refused to accept an assurance by Horta that he could go to Same, on the very reasonable grounds that he knew, from Jakarta, that Indonesia is 'consolidating its position' there.
5. Up till this morning's conversation with Horta Winspeare's thinking had appeared to be to point to Fretilin as the lacking party, for not being able to designate an area under its control to which he could responsibly go, rather than to Portugal or Australia for not being able to prepare to take him to such an area: but his suggestion that Horta 'blame Indonesia' is of course more basic.
6. Nevertheless Winspeare was put out to discover on the morning of 2 Feb that the Portuguese corvettes were forbidden to go closer than 12 miles to the Timor coast. He asked both the Portuguese and his headquarters in New York to take the matter up, and the Portuguese had an answer back from Lisbon this morning saying that the restriction had been a mistake and that Portugal would honour its undertaking to transport Winspeare to Timor, subject only to security guarantees being available from the PGET and Fretilin.
7. During their call on him on 2 Feb the commanders of the Portuguese corvettes, in the presence of the Portuguese Consul-General in Sydney, had suggested that the problem might

be resolved by the UN Mission borrowing a helicopter, together with 'ground' and flight crews, from Australia for use from a Portuguese corvette off Timor. Winspeare was not put out, however, when I told him this morning that the Minister was not attracted to this idea.

8. In conveying the Minister's attitude I mentioned both the security consideration which was the reason for last week's ban on flights by Australian fixed wing aircraft,¹ and the serious doubts of Captain Dadswell, the naval officer commanding Northern Australia (NOCNA), about attempting to operate helicopters off a corvette-sized ship in northern waters at this time of year.

9. In mentioning the helicopter suggestion to me, with the wish that I obtain a governmental reaction to it, Winspeare had emphasised that he was not making a formal request, and repeated his assurance that he had no intention of embarrassing the Australian Government, or questioning the decisions of a member state which was not in the dock in the Security Council. On this occasion as on others he said he understood the factors, both internal and external, which the Government had to take into consideration. Winspeare said that he had in fact accepted the Government's view of last week that it could not allow flights into Timor on security grounds, and noted that a helicopter and crew, which would presumably be drawn from the Australian armed forces, would represent considerably more of an Australian Government involvement than merely allowing a charter would. Winspeare acknowledged that while a helicopter would have much greater flexibility as to landing site than a fixed wing aircraft, the basic security problem remained the same for a helicopter as for a fixed wing. Winspeare said he was not seeking to reopen the fixed wing question.

10. Winspeare apparently suggested to Horta on 2 Feb that he might think in terms of getting a small boat-load of Fretilin leaders from Timor to meet Winspeare on board one of the Portuguese corvettes off-shore. This would clearly be more possible following the lifting of the Portuguese 12-mile limit than it appeared yesterday, but I think the suggestion was again at least partly disingenuous on Winspeare's part. While Winspeare would clearly be happier meeting Fretilin representatives on a Portuguese ship than after having made his way to a probable dangerous rendezvous in Timor, I doubt if he believes Fretilin any longer has any area of Timor sufficiently under its control to allow safe movement of its leaders to a coastal departure point and return.

11. In regard to radio communications with Fretilin in Darwin, the Portuguese corvettes' radios, which NOCNA thinks have ample power for the purpose, have not so far produced any effective result despite protracted attempts and Bello's advice on frequencies, etc. NOCNA doubts that use of the much more powerful transmitters available to the Australian Government in Darwin would produce a different result, or that the failure to communicate has been caused by a technical fault in transmission from Darwin. However, this morning some 'noises' were heard which Winspeare says the Fretilin people on the ship say may have been an attempt at a message, although the Portuguese naval communicators are sceptical. This afternoon's Darwin newspaper quotes Bello as saying that the Indonesians are jamming the Fretilin frequencies. (Winspeare by the way seems to regard the message allegedly picked up yesterday by Telecom describing continued Indonesian bombardment of Betano as an old message, saying that it seems to be one of which he had been advised from New York some [d]ays ago.)

12. Subsequently Horta made the approach to Winspeare, which Winspeare passed to me and of which I have advised Joseph by phone, for the confiscated radio² to be released for use

¹ See note 1 to Document 409.

² Cablegram CH313220 (27 January) explained that the Australian Government had confiscated a Fretilin radio transmitter in Darwin following evidence that it had been used for 'conveying information of a military character between Fretilin's forces in Timor and representatives outside the country', thus compromising Australia's 'neutrality in the Timor fighting'.

under supervision, perhaps on the Portuguese ship, to assist efforts to establish contact. Winspeare has been adamant that the Portuguese ships' radios will only be used for the United Nations Mission's purposes, and that he will not allow the ships to become a *de facto* 'Radio Fretilin'. (He apparently gave some assurances to this effect in Jakarta, apart from his concern for our own Government's position.)

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

416 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 4 February 1976

O.LB708 SECRET ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

We have noted from O.JA4453¹ that Guicciardi is hoping the Timor issue will be defused by the passage of time and from O.CH316328² that he has been irritated with Portugal's latest protest to the Security Council concerning renewed Indonesian aggression. In considering the Timor question after Guicciardi's departure from the area, it is our assessment that Portugal is likely to try and keep the issue alive at the United Nations for a while yet. We believe that Portugal's two principal objectives are to recover their prisoners and to seek to embarrass Indonesia as much as possible by emphasising the illegality of its presence in Timor and by maintaining the international pressure on Indonesia to withdraw. The Portuguese however do not harbour any illusions about the likelihood of an Indonesian withdrawal.

2. Timor could also have important effects on Foreign Minister Antunes policy towards the Third World. The recent deterioration in Portugal's relations with Luanda and Lourenço Marques³ has left his Third World policy in tatters, especially in Africa, and a public stand at the United Nations in favour of self-determination in Timor is a way of salvaging what is left of it.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

¹ 27 January. It reported comments made to officers of the Embassy, Jakarta, by Winspeare Guicciardi. He had expressed the view that 'only the "passage of time" will allow the Security Council to divest itself of the problem of Portuguese Timor'. He was critical of Portugal for taking the Timor issue to the Security Council when the 'far more serious' issue of Angola was not before the Council. Winspeare had added that there was a deep-seated antagonism towards Portugal in East Timor because of a perception that Portugal had deserted the territory.

² Cablegram CH316328 communicated the text of Document 415.

³ The capitals of Angola and Mozambique respectively. Poor relations between Portugal and these two newly independent states were the consequence of over ten years of bitter guerrilla warfare and a grudging hand-over of power.

417 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PAPERCanberra, [4 February 1976]¹

CONFIDENTIAL

Attachment

Australian Relations with Indonesia and the Issue of East Timor

Introduction

1. Australia's relations with Indonesia are strongly influenced by political and strategic factors, as in the past arose regarding Dutch New Guinea and Indonesia's confrontation of Malaysia. This paper discusses such factors, with particular reference in Part I (pp 5–9) to South East Asia and Papua New Guinea. Against this wider context it discusses (Part II, pp 16–25) immediate policy issues regarding East Timor.

[matter omitted]

PART II
EAST TIMOR

19. The discussion of East Timor developments in this Part of the paper is based on the intelligence contained in the paper entitled 'Assessment of the Timor situation' issued by the National Intelligence Committee (NIC) on 27th January, 1976.

20. No Australian national interest, such as trade or security, is directly affected by the situation in East Timor. In terms of some hypothetical future conflict with Indonesia, or a third power operating from there, it has been assessed in the Defence Department that it is a matter of military indifference whether Indonesia absorbs the territory or it becomes independent.

21. The NIC assesses, however, that Indonesian integrationist policy is 'firmly set' and that there is 'little scope for flexibility'. Any prospect of political negotiation with Fretilin is 'virtually unacceptable'. Indonesia is also unlikely to accept a UN role that would impede the achievement of Indonesian objectives or open the way for other countries to involve themselves.

22. Attempts to deny Indonesia its objective and to secure its co-operation in a military withdrawal from East Timor and in a genuine act of self-determination are therefore likely to meet intractable political and practical difficulties and ultimately to prove futile. Given this, such attempts would appear to risk Indonesian resentment and, if pressed, animosity.

The Australian Interest

23. The Australian interest rests on the following considerations.

24. As noted above, no tangible national Australian interest is directly involved in East Timor and likely to benefit or suffer from developments there.

25. Australia's strategic interests could suffer, however, were prolongation of conflict in East Timor to attract the involvement of powers such as China or Vietnam by way of aid to Fretilin or by interference in Indonesia itself, were the Timor embroilment so to distract and weaken Indonesia as to offer worthwhile opportunity for this. Similarly, it would be of concern to Australia were continuing conflict in East Timor to generate mounting international interest

¹ This paper was requested by the Prime Minister on 19 January (see Document 402) and was considered by the Defence Committee on 4 February. The cited copy bears no date. Although not prepared specifically for Cabinet the paper was discussed in the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Cabinet on 9 February.

to settle the dispute, directly involving more remote countries of varying political sympathies in the affairs of Australia's neighbourhood, and often in support of Fretilin. Particularly in these circumstances, elements in Indonesia could seek to replace President Suharto with a more combative type of leader.

26. On the NIC assessment, however, the East Timor situation is developing in the opposite direction from these prospects. Indonesia's political and military operations are proceeding effectively. Within months Indonesia can be expected to be in a position of firm control over the principal administrative centres of East Timor, most of the coastal areas and all ports of sea and air entry, to which any substantial external supplies to Fretilin would have to be delivered. Indonesia's military and political ascendancy in these respects is likely to reduce the scope for external involvement and, with this, international interest would appear likely to decline—apart from routine denunciations by Indonesia's political opponents. President Suharto's position is at present unchallenged and on the NIC assessment it appears likely to remain so.

27. Now that Fretilin has become politically radicalised and established connections with Peking and Hanoi, which we know have recently been considering providing it with material aid, it would not be in Australia's strategic interests that Indonesia be frustrated in the absorption of East Timor or that this process be made complicated or delayed. This would enhance the Fretilin group's political status and both encourage and facilitate its development of connections with countries interested in supporting it against Indonesia. There would be risk for Australia of much more substantial involvement with East Timor of countries such as China and Vietnam, and of this continuing into the long term. Such developments would constitute a considerable and unfavourable change in Australia's strategic circumstances. If Australian policy had been instrumental in bringing such developments about, there could be unwelcome complications in our relations with Indonesia.

28. Were East Timor now to achieve independence under a Fretilin regime, it would be poor and weak. Its relations with Indonesia could be expected to be unfriendly. The territory could become a source of political, and potentially strategic, instability in an area closely neighbouring Australia. There are already risks in this respect in the present situation. However, given the progress of Indonesian operations and the prospects for a substantial consolidation of Indonesian control without too protracted a delay, these risks are judged to be less than those arising from attempts to frustrate Indonesia or from the establishment of an independent East Timor.

29. In particular, insofar as movement in these latter directions supported activity by Australian elements politically opposed to Indonesia, there could be significant irritation of Australian–Indonesian relations.

30. A prominent Australian role in opposition to Indonesian interests in Timor could prejudice co-operation over bilateral matters (eg, Indonesian fishermen in Australian waters, the Timor Sea boundary, communications through the archipelago). If strain were prolonged, there could be growing political criticism from Indonesia, with response from various Australian quarters, risking difficulty for important Australian international interests, as earlier discussed (paras [6–8], Part I). Short of this, Australian policy could be seen by Indonesia as ineffectual and lacking regard for common interests.

31. From the strategic point of view Australia therefore shares Indonesia's concerns about the future of East Timor. Although not accepting that these concerns were in fact urgent enough to have ruled out political handling of the situation and warranted seizure of the territory by force, the Australian strategic preference, in the light both of the assessment of the Timor situation itself and of the wider factors in Australia's relations with Indonesia, is now for the

early integration of East Timor into Indonesia and policy acceptance that this now involves the continuation of Indonesia's present operations to their planned conclusion.

32. Despite the foregoing, three factors suggest that Australia respond in some way to the situation in Timor. These are:

- i. domestic reaction, which display some genuine concern at Indonesia's use of force and the denial of Timorese self-determination—as distinct from elements that are exploiting the situation to pursue opposition to Indonesia's present regime on political grounds. In this respect it is to be noted that, even given the Indonesian military and political successes expected, there is a possibility of guerilla-type operations by Fretilin and of delay in a final political settlement for an indefinite period (para 19 of the NIC paper). During this period, the Government can expect continuing domestic political interest regarding Timor, particularly from elements sympathetic to Fretilin;
- ii. political principle, which supports the right of self-determination for colonial populations;
- iii. strategic concern at Indonesia's use of force to annex a neighbouring territory.

33. It is for policy decision whether the strategic interest stated above (para 31) should be overridden by considerations in these respects.

Policy Considerations

The Scope for Policy

34. On the NIC assessment, the Indonesians will not permit any interference with their activity in East Timor. Whether earlier they might have been genuinely persuaded to self-determination or some other political process is now irrelevant. Any opportunity for this passed many months ago. Australian policy that did not acknowledge these limitations could therefore now appear both futile and conducive to strained relations with Indonesia.

35. An attempt to maximise influence on Indonesia would appear to involve Australia in co-operation with such countries as China and Vietnam, which would not be in Australia's strategic interests, especially in relation to Indonesia. There would be no prospect of adequate support for Australia from its traditional friends and regional associates, most of whom either support Indonesia or do not wish to become closely involved in the situation. (The US in particular has clearly indicated Indonesia's importance to it in the wider regional context and its desire not to jeopardise relations by action against Indonesia over East Timor. The Administration appears confident that it will not come under Congressional pressure on the matter.)

Self-Determination in Future

36. Some act of self-determination, but *after* Indonesia has secured effective control in East Timor, remains a professed object of Indonesian policy, and it appears the only feasible culmination of UN efforts to promote a settlement in Timor—assuming that there was adequate support in the UN for such efforts. Australia could hardly oppose such a course; but it would seem desirable to recognise the probably inadequacy of any act of self-determination that might be finally arranged, and to be careful about the degree of Australian association with it. It can be argued that Australia should not be a principal party to an act that was not genuine and merely formalised a *fait accompli* achieved by force of arms. Such connivance is not called for by the Australian interest, particularly when Australia has repeatedly urged Indonesia not to resort to arms. It could also prejudice Australian prospects of support in the UN from African and other critics of Indonesia at some time when this could be important to our interests. It is further argued that there are no advantages of a humanitarian or political kind that Australian

participation in support of self-determination could gain for the East Timorese that would outweigh the disadvantages indicated.

A UN Peace-Keeping Force

37. The NIC assessment together with the foregoing considerations strongly suggests that any Australian support for an initiative to introduce a UN peace-keeping force into Timor, in order to establish conditions for a political process and genuine act of self-determination, would be neither effective nor politic. It is not in Australia's interests to support in this way the now radicalised Fretilin and its foreign associations (however strongly it may be held that it was Indonesia's inflexibility that nurtured Fretilin's extremism). It would not be in our interest to clash with the Indonesians over an initiative for peace-keeping. It is the Defence judgement that such a clash would be inevitable unless we were prepared to advocate or accept conditions that, in practice, consolidated the Indonesians' grip and facilitated their final absorption of the territory by force—and the implications of that course by Australia are indicated in the foregoing paragraph. It appears highly unlikely that Indonesia would withdraw its own regular forces unless it was first assured of those conditions. There must also be doubts about the practicability of securing in the UN the necessary political and legal basis, as well as the financial support, for any peace-keeping force.

38. Were, nevertheless, a proposal for peace-keeping to gain acceptance, it would be desirable that any Australian participation be subordinate and of a character that would not risk the Australian Defence Force's direct involvement in the maintenance or restoration of 'order' by use of military force, particularly against Indonesian forces, whether declared or 'volunteer'. It should be noted that any peace-keeping operation in East Timor would be much more difficult and hazardous than, for example, the UN operations on the Kashmir border or in the Middle East, because of the terrain in East Timor and the inadequacy of the administrative and political infrastructure for stable control of a cease-fire. A precondition for successful policing is that influential political leadership on both sides has renounced further use of force and has authority over its followers. If any Australian soldiers were attacked by uncontrolled, irregular personnel, they would be bound to retaliate. If Indonesians were involved the implications would be more serious. A 'police' force is a misnomer in such circumstances.

Indonesian Use of Force

39. Australian policy earlier to promote a political process in East Timor and to avoid Indonesia's use of force has failed. Any further approach to Indonesia in these respects has, on the NIC assessment, no prospect of success, at least until *after* the Indonesians are confident that they can control a political process. This involves their prior elimination of Fretilin as a viable political force—by defeat, repression and the winning of Fretilin elements to the Indonesian side. In neither case—Indonesia's rejection of an Australian approach or Indonesian acceptance, because its military objectives had been substantially achieved and the way was clear to some essentially spurious act of political legitimisation—does Australian intervention to persuade the Indonesians from further use of force commend itself.

40. Nevertheless, the Australian Government may consider that it cannot simply accept, and persuade the nation to accept, Indonesia's use of force to annex a neighbouring territory. To do so would be to condone a standard of conduct that could in some future circumstances directly jeopardise the security interests of Australia or PNG. It would also reduce inhibitions on those elements in the Indonesian regime (and they are likely to be influential in any Indonesian regime) that lack scruple about the use of military force to secure Indonesia's national interests across its frontiers.

An Australian Objection to Indonesian Use of Force

41. A clear statement to Indonesia of Australia's objections to the use of force in East Timor therefore needs to be made. This appears the central point of concern for Australia in the Timor situation as it now has developed. There appear to be no other Australian interests significantly affected or that Australia could now effectively pursue.

42. The Indonesians could be expected to respond to such an objection that they had had no realistic alternative—and also that they had throughout kept the Australian Government well informed of their policy and plans. They could also refer to earlier expressions of Australian support for their objective and query whether the Australian attitude to this had changed. It would seem important to resist involvement in argument about these matters, as also any substantive discussion of how to handle the Timor question in future. The substantive content of any Australian approach should be confined to an appropriate statement of Australia's basic position, that it is strongly of the view that neighbourhood affairs should be settled by political process, however unpromising and protracted, and not by resort to military force. This position were best not obscured by substantive discussion of other aspects of the Timor situation.

43. There could appear to be an apparent inconsistency in an Australian objection to force and a policy posture that did not carry the objection to active opposition against Indonesia's continuing military operations and control in East Timor. The Indonesians could seek to exploit this. On this aspect also it might be best to avoid substantive response. However, to recognise as inevitable (and, indeed—see paras 27–30—as now desirable in the strategic interest) that the Indonesians will not be deflected from military action to achieve their political objective now that they have gone so far on this course is not inconsistent with an objection in principle to the resort to that force in preference to political process. Beyond the upholding of a standard of conduct in neighbouring affairs, there would be implicit in the Australian position proposed the risk for the Indonesians that, if in some future situation they resorted to force rather than political process, Australia might take action against Indonesia to make good its objection. However the Indonesians might respond to such an approach, this consideration should not be lost on them.

44. It could be desirable to give tangible support to the approach suggested by some measured distancing of Australia from Indonesia, expressed, for example, in a postponement and reduction of aid programs.

45. This approach would not satisfy all elements of Australian opinion. But, particularly if Governmental reservations about Fretilin were publicly stated, it would satisfy many. (These reservations need not be confined to the question of political alignment, but could, eg, query how representative of the East Timorese population Fretilin was, draw attention to its own militant and inflexible posture and indicate doubt about its ability to give the Timorese people good government and a stable relationship with Indonesia.)

46. The approach suggested would be in accord with the practical realities of the situation, as assessed by the NIC, and with the consequent lack of scope for constructive political action. It would focus Australian policy on that element of the situation that most relates to the Australian national interest, provide a firm basis for Government action and counter the dominant presentation in Australia of the East Timor issue in terms of Fretilin interests.

47. The fact that there is a new Government in Australia, which was not associated with earlier discussions between Australia and Indonesia on this subject and can take a new and limited position, allows the approach proposed to be put forward as a practical proposition.

SUMMARY

48. In summary, it is argued that the policy options for Australia in respect of the East Timor situation are very limited. For practical purposes Australia is faced with an Indonesian *fait accompli*. It is now too late for any useful purpose to be served by attempts to alter the course of developments: intervention in the Timor issue will either meet with Indonesian resistance or merely serve to facilitate and confirm Indonesia's take-over of the territory (and be seen publicly to be doing this).

49. It is not in Australia's strategic interest to support Fretilin or in any way to encourage and facilitate the involvement with East Timor of political forces unfriendly to Indonesia (and potentially to Australia). It is not in Australia's interest for the Timor situation to become a source of regional instability or of prolonged strain in Australia's relations with Indonesia. The strategic preference is for the territory's early integration into Indonesia.

50. As far as the handling of the Timor issue itself is concerned, Australia therefore appears to have no realistic and acceptable alternative but to disengage and maintain a low profile, leaving the running to the parties principal—Indonesia, the Timorese and the relevant UN organs or agencies—while supporting, but not becoming a prominent party to, any political process under the UN that may develop to confirm Indonesia's absorption of the territory.

51. But Indonesia's use of force should not be disregarded and a clear Australian objection should be lodged with the Indonesian Government, and made public, as the position of the new Australian Government.

52. Whichever way the situation develops, early final settlement appears unlikely. The Government therefore can expect continuing domestic interest in it, and pressure from quarters sympathetic on ideological or other grounds to the Fretilin group. Together with a clear objection to Indonesia's resort to force in East Timor, it would seem desirable for the Government to give the Australian public its own views about the Fretilin group and whether or not it should command Australian support.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/13/1, ANNEX 1]

418 COMMENTS BY SOUTH-EAST ASIA BRANCH

[Canberra, 4 February 1976]¹

SECRET AUSTEO

Defence Committee: Timor

Essentially, and although there are some differences tending to suggestions for policy, Defence's paper need not be incompatible with our own.² In particular, to the extent that it fits the Timor problem into a strategic environment, it serves a valuable purpose. It says much more flatly than we are able, that in Timor the Australian Government faces a *fait accompli* and that policy options are thus extremely limited. It also advances some pretty compelling arguments why Australia should leave it that way. Departmentally, we should find it difficult to disagree. If our own paper is somewhat more positive, this reflects our Minister's own more forward position.

¹ The cited copy is undated. It bears no signature, but has Joseph's initials, as well as those of the typist.

² The Defence paper is Document 417; 'our own' was the proposed DFA paper for Cabinet.

2. The question arises as to what extent the Department of Defence and the Defence Committee should be addressing policy issues in relation to Timor, most of which fall more appropriately into this Department's area of responsibility. Defence may have done better to draft a paper which simply set the strategic parameters to policy, and which did not go on to advocate particular lines of policy. Nevertheless I think we can live with the paper with a number of changes.

Part I

[*matter omitted*]

5. The Department should have no quarrel with the sentiment in paragraph 8 that 'ultimately Indonesia appears to be more important to Australia than Australia to Indonesia'. But of course nor need we be too timid in regard to the Indonesians. If the relationship with Indonesia is to be worth anything it should be able to stand some strain especially on a matter of principle like Timor. The Indonesians themselves can be expected to act to minimise the damage to the relationship, and to do what they can to quarantine differences over Timor and to prevent the spilling over into other areas of the bilateral relationship. Something like this could go into the paper and perhaps into our own paper as well.

[*matter omitted*]

Part II

7. This constitutes the core of the paper. Again there is much we would endorse, in particular the discussion of the national interest in paragraphs 19 and 20 (and again in paragraph 24) and the assessment that Indonesia cannot be diverted from its present course (paragraphs 21–22). It might be useful to add to the end of paragraph 25 something like the following: 'There would also be risks to President Soeharto's internal position were international pressures to lead him to consider withdrawing from Timor.'

8. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the points in paragraphs 28 and 29. The evidence to date, including the highly successful activities of Ramos Horta and FRETILIN in soliciting moral and material support from groups in Australia, suggests that a major objective of any independent East Timor would be to continue to try to use Australia—and to manipulate Australian public opinion—to ensure continuing Australian support against Indonesian pressures. In effect, if East Timor were independent and under FRETILIN control, Australia's important relationship with Indonesia could become a hostage to FRETILIN and the seeds would be sown for continuing dissension and strains in the area of greatest strategic interest to us for years to come.

9. The second sentence of paragraph 34 could be deleted. It implies that efforts made earlier might have deterred the Indonesians from their intervention in Timor. It is our assessment that the Indonesian policy was firmly fixed from at least October 1974, and probably well before then.

10. The discussion of *self-determination* in paragraph 36 needs to make clear that what the Defence Committee is being asked to caution against is Australian identification with a phony act of self-determination. I do not think that the paper is attempting to take issue with a policy of support for *a* process of self-determination. It would in any event be quite impossible domestically to reverse the Government's public support for self-determination. Perhaps this needs to be made clear in the paper.

11. There are obvious difficulties in the section on a *UN peacekeeping force* (paragraphs 37–38). Again, technically, the Department would not wish to contest Defence's arguments: the

risks involved in participation would be very considerable and need to be spelled out, and Defence has a legitimate interest in this. But, the Minister (and as I understand, the Prime Minister) wishes to leave the option open and I guess we should seek this in the Defence Committee. Perhaps something like the following might be included as an additional paragraph:

‘Despite all these problems it would be difficult for the Australian Government to stand aside if a viable proposal under the United Nations for a peacekeeping force were to emerge. Domestic opinion in Australia would not understand any Australian refusal to participate.’

12. Of course we may be unnecessarily concerning ourselves about this matter. A viable proposal for a peacekeeping force assumes not only a UN decision (and probably in turn recommendations from Winspeare and Waldheim) but also Indonesian acquiescence. Our (and Defence’s) assessment is that Indonesia would only agree to a UN force if its present policies had conclusively failed. The corollary is that there may not be too much risk in our being ‘forthcoming’ in regard to suggestions that Australia should be prepared to consider participation in a UN force. On the other hand were Defence’s arguments to lead the Government to decide that we should be ‘cautious’ about, and ‘weigh carefully’, any proposal to participate in a UN force, then this Department should not lose too much sleep.

Indonesian Use of Force

13. Australia has already registered its opposition to the use of force, in the United Nations and outside it. What more are we to do? I suppose that in any definitive statement in Parliament on Timor the Government should need to repeat its opposition to the use of force. But the idea of making a fresh diplomatic approach to the Indonesians does not appeal. Perhaps this section of the paper could be recast in terms of restating what Australia had already done, including what Mr Peacock had to say to the Indonesian leaders in Jakarta last month, and concluding that Australian interests would be served by *maintaining* our stated firm opposition to the use of force.

14. The paper argues that it is the use of force which is the most objectionable feature of Indonesian policy, and that, unless the point is brought home clearly and unequivocally to the Indonesians, Indonesia might be tempted to act likewise in some other future situation of more vital concern to us. If Defence are firmly attached to this argument, then let us hope it can be stated in a more succinct way.

15. Paragraph 44 canvasses the rather dangerous notion that we might consider distancing ourselves from Indonesia by postponing and reducing our aid programs, presumably the economic aid as well as the defence cooperation program.³ The Foreign Affairs interest would not be served by such postponement or reduction. In our own paper we have canvassed the option, but come out firmly against it, suggesting only that a possibility would be to seek an assurance that all our military aid not be used in Timor. (Thus extending what we did in the case of the Nomads.) Unless the Defence Committee does the same I should hope that paragraph 44 could be deleted, or recast in accordance with our own suggestion. (This would incidentally provide an opportunity to reiterate disapproval of the use of force.)

Summary

16. The summary seems alright, although paragraph 51 might be redrafted as follows:

³ A minute dated 28 January by J. H. Brook, Assistant Secretary, Defence Policy Branch, DFA, noted that the Prime Minister appeared to have given the impression to Sir Arthur Tange that he favoured putting some distance between Australia and Indonesia in the defence relationship.

'But Indonesia's resort to arms cannot be disregarded and Australia should maintain its position, both publicly and privately, of opposition to the use of force.'

17. Paragraph 50 reflects the policy shaped by this Department during the Whitlam Government. As long ago as December 1974, we urged on the then Government a policy of studied detachment and maintenance of the position that Australia was not a party principal. As you know, our present Minister believes that this policy was wrong. In any event, Mr Peacock will not adopt a low profile on Timor as now suggested in the Defence paper. But you may not wish to make an issue of this in the Defence Committee, beyond perhaps seeking deletion of 'disengage' and 'the parties principal'. It will do no harm for Ministers to see the arguments for non-involvement outlined again.

18. Finally, the Defence paper recommends a certain bucketing of FRETILIN. This has been done before, but, not publicly, by the present Government. We had some damning things to say about FRETILIN in the Willesee statement of 30 October 1975.⁴

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xliiii]

DEFENCE CO-OPERATION: 1974-1976

Throughout the period covered by this volume Australian governments followed a policy of 'Business as Usual' with respect to relations with Indonesia on matters not directly connected with Portuguese Timor. One of the key areas where this policy operated was defence co-operation. In July 1972 the Whitlam Government had initiated a defence co-operation program worth \$20 million over three years. It provided materiel, including sixteen Sabre jets (see Document 312), training, maritime surveillance (including 4 patrol boats) and intelligence co-operation. In March 1975, the then Defence Minister Lance Barnard, committed the Government to a continuation of the program over the next three years, and promised General Sunarso that there would be no diminution in the level of assistance. DFA proposed a figure of \$20 million in real terms (an approximate increase of \$11 million); Defence believed this to be too high and recommended a \$5 million increase. No decision on the amount had been finalised when the Whitlam Government left office.

The incoming Coalition Government was also committed to the 'Business as Usual' policy. In December 1975 it agreed to the transfer of several unarmed Nomad aircraft for the Indonesian maritime surveillance project, insisting that the aircraft travel to Indonesia under tight levels of security to avoid criticism in the press. In January 1976 the Prime Minister raised with the Secretary of the Department of Defence the possibility of 'putting some distance between ourselves and Indonesia in the defence area'. Paragraph 44 of the Defence Paper (Document 417) was clearly intended to offer this option, a change of policy opposed by DFA (see Document 418). When Cabinet considered the matter on 9 February it was decided that the defence co-operation program should continue. Treasury initially proposed committing only \$20 million for the program, a decision overturned by the Prime Minister on the recommendations of Peacock and Killen, the Defence Minister. The \$25 million finally settled on was offered to Indonesia on the proviso that none of the aid be used in East Timor, conforming to the Whitlam Government's insistence that defence aid not be used for the purposes of internal oppression.

⁴ Document 308 as amended (see notes 4, 5 and 6 to Document 310, and notes 2 and 3 to Document 311).

419 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TJAN AND TAYLOR

Jakarta, 5 February 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

EXTRACT

Timor

I noted that the *Antara* report of 3 February on the PGET's attitude to the Winspeare mission's proposed visit to FRETILIN-held areas and the note from the Indonesian Embassy to Winspeare on 4 February, were confusing in their contradiction.¹ Apparently Winspeare too had been confused by them. Tjan said the *Antara* report had been based on a Radio Dili broadcast several days before. The broadcast was intended for internal consumption to inspire the pro-Indonesian forces. At that time also several of the areas Horta hoped to get Winspeare to were not in PGET's hands. By yesterday, however, the situation on the ground had changed, and there was nowhere FRETILIN would meet Winspeare. Thus the PGET could take a more accommodating line towards the visit.²

2. Winspeare's visit had led to a change of military tactics, Tjan said. Moerdani had wanted to force FRETILIN to surrender with the minimum of bloodshed. But the possibility of Winspeare's visit to FRETILIN-held areas had meant that, instead of forcing some towns to surrender, they had to be taken by military means. This had not proved a problem, he said.

3. Tjan said that Sani had been reprimanded for informing the Secretary-General some time ago that Indonesia would have no objections to Winspeare's visit to East Timor. What Sani should have said, according to Tjan, was that it would be necessary for the Secretary-General to check with the PGET about the visit and if the PGET had no objections, then Indonesia would do all it could to assist the visit.³

4. I told Tjan that the Australian Government was serious in its policy which called for cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of Indonesian troops when law and order could otherwise be maintained, and a genuine act of self-determination.

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¹ *Antara* had reported a PGET instruction to shoot at any aircraft and warships approaching East Timor 'in order to maintain security in the newly liberated areas'. The PGET could not guarantee the safety of Winspeare Guicciardi if he visited 'areas described as still being occupied by Fretilin'. Cablegram CH316281 (4 February) communicated the text of a note passed from the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra to Winspeare in Darwin. The note stated that the PGET had no objection to Winspeare's mission landing on the south coast of East Timor provided that the Portuguese vessel transporting the mission came no closer to the coast than four nautical miles, that the crew ferrying the party ashore did not carry arms, and their boat flew the UN flag.

² Cablegram JA4675 (5 February) emphasised that, in spite of the apparent change of approach, the Embassy in Jakarta believed the Indonesian Government to be strongly opposed to a visit to Fretilin-held areas. It noted a report that the Indonesian Government had at one stage considered mining places where Winspeare might attempt to land.

³ Cablegram CH317271 (6 February) reported that Horta had received a radio message from Fretilin to the effect that Winspeare could proceed by air to East Timor, landing at one of four places: Lautem, Viqueque, Suai or Same. Having requested from the Indonesian Government an assessment of the security status of those places, Winspeare was informed (Cablegram CH318358, 9 February) that a visit could be arranged under the auspices of the PGET. Winspeare, however, had departed from Australia for Geneva on the previous day, 8 February.

420 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN SUNARSO AND TAYLOR

Jakarta, 6 February 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

EXTRACT

Timor

4. Sunarso showed me a map where FRETILIN forces were now. Roughly the area he indicated was between Suai, Emera, Aileu and Ainaro. He said progress by the pro-Indonesian forces had been slower than hoped for (there had been 'many problems'), but he thought the main FRETILIN forces would be defeated totally by the end of February. I repeated Mr Peacock's comments that a festering sore could result in Timor which would have unfortunate ramifications for Indonesia and its neighbours and other important neighbouring countries.¹ Sunarso said Indonesia too was concerned that such a situation did not develop, but it did not think that it would. It would act to see that it did not. There was no evidence of outside material assistance to FRETILIN. Sunarso also added that it was President Soeharto's concern for Indonesia's reputation that led him to oppose outright Indonesian military intervention in August 1975. The President's view had been changed by FRETILIN's unilateral declaration of independence. Indonesia had been able to act quickly after that declaration because it had expected the declaration to be made on the 20th September and was, therefore, prepared.

5. I outlined the Australian Government's policy, emphasising our support for the cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of Indonesian troops when law and order could be otherwise maintained, and Australia's willingness to consider participating in any United Nations or regional activity designed to assist in the peaceful solution of the Timor problem. I said that we knew the Prime Minister and the Minister did not adopt this policy for public consumption only. It was their firm private view as well. Sunarso asked what was the Australian Government's view on integration. Did it still think that integration was the best solution? He referred to the² talks in Canberra last year during which, he said, the Australian side had accepted the arguments that an independent East Timor would require large foreign assistance and would provide an opportunity for communist and great power intervention in the Indonesian archipelago. The previous Government had said it would welcome integration if it was achieved through an act of self-determination. I said that the Government had not said anything as far as I knew on the question of integration. I believed the reply to the question would be that the Government would support whatever the people of Timor themselves decided.

6. Sunarso asked whether he thought the anti-Indonesian feeling in Australia would continue when the Timor problem had been settled. I said that the hard-core anti-Indonesian groups would always be anti-Indonesian. They used any excuse to criticise Indonesia and Australia's close relations with Indonesia. Now the anti-Indonesia feeling involved many more groups than these. Many articulate Australian groups, some of which were normally sympathetic to Indonesia, did not like Indonesia's use of force. My personal opinion was that once the Timor situation was over the anti-Indonesian agitation in Australia would die down. I said that our relations remained good, despite the Timor issue. This was because both governments wanted good relations. The Indonesian Government had not reciprocated action by private groups in

¹ Peacock had made this comment in conversation with President Soeharto and General Panggabean in Jakarta on 20 January.

² Less than half a line has been expunged here.

Australia and the Australian Government had not sought to embarrass the Indonesian Government as it might well have done.

7. In answer to a question Sunarso said that the people in the areas now controlled by the PGET in East Timor seemed to accept the PGET, just as they had accepted the Portuguese and FRETILIN when they were in control. They appeared to be apathetic towards the type of Government they had.

8. Sunarso asked whether there was any fear in Australia that the arguments Indonesia had used over Timor could be extended to Papua New Guinea. I said that outside the government there had been expressions of this fear but as far as I knew, within the government circles, the view was not accepted. He said that there was no question of Indonesia taking action against Papua New Guinea.

9. In answer to a question about the recent dissolution of parties in East Timor,³ Sunarso said that the intention was to bring the party set-up in East Timor into accord with the party set-up in Indonesia. It would cause difficulties when East Timor was integrated if UDT and APODETI remained. (He said the other parties, KOTA and Trabalista, did not matter, as they were not important.)

10. Referring to previous advice from Sunarso that there would be an act of self-determination in East Timor in March I asked whether this timing had been changed. He said not. But he was not aware, he said, of the details of how the act would be conducted.

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421 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 10 February 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

Timor

Attached for your information is a record of conversation with Colonel Sunarso, Foreign Liaison Officer for BAKIN.¹

2. You will note that Sunarso still claims that an act of self-determination is planned to take place in March 1976. This timing is more specific and earlier than Mr Malik indicated to the Minister during their recent discussions in Jakarta.

3. Sunarso was, however, reluctant to discuss the possible nature of such an act. Either he genuinely does not know, which would suggest that there has been no preparation yet and that March is a totally unreal date for the act; or he knows but does not want to tell us probably because the Indonesians think the form they have in mind would not appeal to us. As you know the PGET argues that the declaration of integration by various centres in East Timor after they came under control of the pro-Indonesian forces constituted an act of self-determination.

³ An *Antara* report dated 3 February stated that the PGET had dissolved all political parties in East Timor as of 1 February.

¹ Presumably Document 420.

4. We have not had indications from other Indonesian sources which would suggest that preparations are in hand for a March act of self-determination. But our sources, including BAKIN, now estimate that the pro-Indonesian forces will have completed their main operations against FRETILIN by the end of February. Thus, if the military activities go according to plan, it would be possible for the Indonesians to arrange a perfunctory act of self-determination in March, possibly consisting of declarations of integration by the various districts.
5. The dissolution of the parties in East Timor would seem to have two main objects. First, to bring the political system in East Timor into line with that in Indonesia, or at least to a stage allowing for the easy introduction of the Indonesian system of functional groups. In the reorganisation of political life in East Timor the Indonesians have in mind the general elections in 1977. Presumably if the integration of East Timor is completed by then East Timor will participate in these elections.
6. Secondly, the Indonesians seek to limit the possibilities for the East Timorese to adopt policies not in accord with Indonesian thinking. The Indonesians are well aware that many of the UDT leaders were anti-Indonesia before 11 August 1975. While these leaders gave Mr Winspeare and his party the impression that their conversion to the pro-Indonesia line was genuine the Indonesians expect some problems from them later.

A. R. TAYLOR
Counsellor

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422 REPORT BY MILLER

Canberra, 10 February 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

The Winspeare Mission on Timor

The following are some impressions of the situation in Timor obtained from members of the United Nations mission in the course of conversations over the last week at Darwin.¹

Schlitter-Silva, a Brazilian who works for Tang in the U.N. Secretariat in New York, said on 2 February that the mission had really seen very little in Timor. Their progresses in each of the centres they visited had been very tightly programmed, for example from the airport to the Governor's House, to the Government Guest House and back to the airport. Security had been overwhelming and youthful, armed and occasionally scary. While in some places the mission had been greeted by some quite hostile placards saying, for example 'talk little and go quickly', these had been in English or Indonesian and the hostile signs had contrasted with friendly faces. Schlitter-Silva doubted how much and how widely the purpose of the mission's visit, or even what the mission was, had been understood.

Schlitter-Silva said that the signs of physical damage in Dili and Baucau were less than the mission had expected. There were signs of bullet marks on buildings in Dili but no signs that there had been use of heavy weapons. Baucau did not even appear to have been fought over.

¹ Miller was DFA liaison officer for the Winspeare mission.

Schlitter-Silva thought that the Timorese people were extremely naïve politically. The conflict between UDT, Fretilin etc. had been in many ways a family quarrel. There were *very* few people of any political sophistication in the pro-Indonesian areas of Timor which they had visited, and it seemed to the mission that very few could have had any idea of what kind of situation they were getting themselves into. On some personalities, Schlitter-Silva thought that Governor Araujo from Apodeti was hopeless, although his son was better. On the other hand UDT Vice-Governor Lopez da Cruz impressed as a shrewd politician, and ex-Fretilin Minister Gonsalves, who was Belgian educated, and Mario Carascalao 'the bourgeois equivalent of Horta', were also impressive.

At a later discussion Jensen, Winspeare's Chef de Cabinet, gave similar assessments and went on to dispute some of Horta's characterisations of personalities and the situation in Dili. Horta, for example, had said that Mario Carascalao had been under house arrest but Jensen and I think Winspeare had apparently gone with him to the dentist. Jensen said he felt that they had had a quite informal and genuine discussion with Lopez da Cruz who had presented his, and his party's position in terms of having initially wanted independence but, after having been abandoned by Portugal, having come to the conclusion that there was no realistic alternative to integration with Indonesia; they were now working to make the best of that.

Horta, on the other hand, told me on 6 February that Mario Carascalao had told him in New York that those taking part in the PGET were not doing so freely. He dismissed Gonsalves as 'only a technician', who had not been a Minister of the Fretilin Government in the political sense.

Horta repeated to me exactly the political program which he had outlined to Winspeare and I reported in telegram O.CE862.² I asked him his reaction to the idea of a possible coalition, saying that given the hostility between Indonesia and Fretilin it did not seem realistic to envisage Indonesia agreeing to a referendum in which one alternative was a Timor under the sole political control of Fretilin. Horta simply repeated that since both UDT and Apodeti had by now opted for Indonesia the choice had to be between Indonesia and Fretilin, although he agreed that after Fretilin had won such a referendum individuals with political affiliations with the other parties who were prepared to cooperate with Fretilin could be given opportunities to do so.

Noting that I did not think it would be possible for Indonesia to grant a special degree of autonomy for East Timor within Indonesia, given their concern to preserve the Unitary State and the fact that special cases could be made out for many areas of the Republic, I said that it seemed to me that Indonesia could nevertheless by administrative action grant a degree of *de facto* autonomy to East Timor. For example, it could ensure that senior Central Government appointments in Timor were all held by indigenous Timorese. Horta showed no interest in such a prospect.

On 7 February in the plane Winspeare made some frank and sardonic, and thus very sensitive, remarks about Indonesia's leaders and his experiences with them. He said that it had become clear in the course of the mission's stay in Indonesia that they were being pursued by Ali Murtopo's people, who were evidently under instructions to bribe or compromise them in a crude and inappropriate fashion. Apparently they had had the greatest difficulty in being allowed to pay their hotel bills, or any other bills, during their stay in Bali, and even in meeting their own airfares. 'Just by chance' Malik's itinerary was altered by a day to meet a preference expressed by Winspeare to a Mrs Yaya (?), who was supposed to be only a hotel proprietor and manager in charge of looking after the group's arrangements in Bali; Winspeare was repeatedly pressed to accept gifts of Indonesian paintings, the price of one of which in Jakarta was \$A6,000.

² Document 415.

Winspeare was as amused by all this as anything else, but he said that he knew that similar hospitality had been extended in Bali to most of, if not all, the personalities prominent in the PGET; he said he knew the hotel where they had stayed. Winspeare spoke of Murtopo as 'the power' in Indonesia.

Winspeare spoke a little about his discussions with Suharto whom he described as 'a little General', and 'a man with the mentality of an accountant'. Suharto had said to Winspeare that he was being urged to accept the incorporation of Oecussi at least, and probably the rest of East Timor as well, simply on the basis of an administrative act by the Indonesian Government at the request of the present authorities in Oecussi and Dili. He had said, however, that Indonesia's anti-colonial principles and past required that an act of choice be held, but 'how to arrange it to ensure the required result?' Winspeare's reply had apparently been 'don't ask me'.

Winspeare described Malik as relatively powerless but easy to talk to on a realistic basis, and 'an accomplished liar'. Winspeare had warned Malik not to forget that Winspeare was 'here to tell you to withdraw', and not to take too lightly the part of the Security Council resolution calling for an Indonesian withdrawal. Anwar Sani had apparently asked Winspeare whether the Italian regiments in Spain during the Spanish Civil War had not been volunteers. Winspeare had replied that they had been called volunteers but they were still regiments. Winspeare said that he had eventually obtained Malik's agreement in writing to refer to Indonesia having extended 'military assistance' to the PGET.

Winspeare said that in a way he now knew too much about the Timor issue to report on it to the Security Council. His present intention, however, was to try to write the report in Geneva with Jensen after returning from Lisbon and to send it, rather than take it personally, to New York to the Secretary-General. Winspeare appears to be thinking in terms of a relatively brief report describing what he had done, what he had seen of the situation and what he had been told about it by the various principal parties.

Winspeare said that when in the past he had submitted similar reports after missions for the Secretary-General, they had simply been transmitted without change to the Security Council. However, he did not know whether the present Secretary-General would wish to follow this procedure. Winspeare said that one important fact about the Timor issue from the U.N. point of view is that Waldheim comes up for re-election as Secretary-General at the end of this year, and for this he will need to be acceptable to all the permanent members of the Security Council. Winspeare said that before he left New York he had been told by Tang that as far as China was concerned it disagreed with every clause of the Security Council's resolution,³ and that Winspeare's mission would have value only insofar as he told the Indonesians to 'scram'. Schlitter-Silva, who works for Tang reflected concern about how China might decide to treat Winspeare's report when he said that while from near at hand Timor did not really appear to be an international issue, 'it could look different in the Security Council'.

Quite apart from Mello Gouveia's claimed knowledge previously reported (telegram O.CH317200),⁴ Winspeare said that Horta appeared confident of getting support in future from China. To me Horta said that if the Indonesians did not withdraw Fretilin would be justified in seeking assistance from 'friendly countries', and gave the impression of being optimistic about receiving it. In reply to my question whether he was talking about people or things, he said 'people and things'.

A number of the mission members at different times talked about the possibility of China extending support to Fretilin, and replied to remarks to the effect that this would seem to have

³ See Document 390.

⁴ 6 February. The Portuguese Consul-General in Sydney had reported a claim by Horta, based on information from Rogerio Lobato in Peking, that China would assist Fretilin with arms.

one obviously undesirable result for China—namely of being likely to strengthen Russia's influence with Indonesia—by referring to the 'different Chinese sense of time', and their alleged characteristic of taking a longer view than Westerners. More concretely Winspeare thought China might well regard it as a good issue on which to do its 'Third World' act. Schlitter-Silva indicated that while he agreed that the Chinese attitude was the main problem internationally, his own assessment, based partly on the attitudes of 'Chinese in the U.N. Secretariat', was that in regard to Timor and Fretilin China was 'playing the game', quite enjoying and perhaps even being amused by it, but leaving itself a way out while it waited to see what happened. But members of the mission did not seem to rule out the possibility that this 'stirring' by China could extend as far as some material assistance to Fretilin, a ship-load of munitions, for instance.

Finally, a brief characterisation of the attitudes of the two 'political' members of the mission other than Winspeare might be of interest:—

(a) *JENSEN*

Jensen is a Dane who acquired Malaysian citizenship. He served in the Sarawak administration during confrontation, and some of his friends were killed by Indonesian action. He is, therefore, not disposed to sympathise with Indonesia, but he thinks they have more in their favour in regard to Timor than they have in regard to West Irian (which he described simply as an instance of Sukarno expansionism). He essentially blames Portugal for what happened, and for abandoning its responsibilities.

(b) *SCHLITTER-SILVA*

Schlitter-Silva was naturally sympathetic to the Portuguese, whose company he clearly enjoyed. He tended to emphasise the political naivety of the Timorese as the main reason for what happened. He will not be present in Geneva when Winspeare and Jensen prepare the mission's report.

W. G. T. MILLER

Assistant Secretary
Executive Secretariat

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

423 LETTER FROM WOOLCOTT TO MILLER

Jakarta, 10 February 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

Thank you for your letter of 11 December 1975.¹ I must apologise for not replying sooner. Much has happened since then but I would like to comment on several of the points in your letter and the papers attached to it. My cable O.JA3981,² leaked by some disloyal officer or misguided idealist, touched directly or indirectly on most of the points.

First, I note that you agree that we should seek to limit the harm to our relations with Indonesia which its action in Timor will cause. I note also your comments on the undesirability of institutionalising the clash between our relations with Indonesia and our commitment to self-determination. I fear, however, this is the direction our policy is taking now.

¹ Document 372.

² Document 393.

Turning to your submission of 12 September 1975,³ frankly I am surprised that you would seriously contemplate at that time that Indonesia could have been persuaded to accept an independent Timor under Fretilin, or any other party for that matter. We have been reporting for a long time that Indonesia would not accept an independent East Timor. My despatch No 1/75⁴ also made this clear. (See also for example OJA7340⁵ of 31 January 1976 and OJA7445⁶ of 5 February 1976.) A firm decision by the Indonesian Government to incorporate East Timor was taken in late 1974. (That is why it comes as a surprise to read in your submission: 'After the Indonesians have made their decisions, whatever they are . . .')

There was no way, in my opinion, that Australia could have changed that decision, especially by 1975. This view of Indonesia's decision is shared by virtually all my colleagues here.

By the way, you say in your submission that the 'Indonesians have, shrewdly, compromised us by making sure that we know their plans for covert intervention in some detail'. This is hardly fair to the Embassy. Certainly there was an element of this (and we were alert to it all along). But for a great deal of the information we had to work hard to get it. In some respects the Embassy may have done this aspect of its job—establishing confidence in the right places and acquiring political intelligence—too well.

I was also surprised at the degree of influence you seem to assume in your submission that Australia has with the Indonesians on this matter. The Indonesians were keen to get our sympathy for their objectives, but there was never a serious chance that our opposition to their policy would change those objectives. They were after all dealing with their long-term national interests. I do not know what 'concessions, guarantees and safeguards' Indonesia could have obtained from a Fretilin-dominated independent East Timor, especially in the longer run and when they looked at Angola. Given the attitude of the Fretilin leaders ('independence or death' for example) I doubt whether they would have amounted to much in any case. Fretilin's dominance in East Timor (para 11 of your submission) was, as we always reported, likely to be temporary and transient. With its UDI of course it virtually signed its own death warrant.

Moreover, the Indonesians feared that an independent East Timor could become 'the Cuba of the South Seas'. These fears may to us seem unreasonable but they are deeply held by Indonesia and are basic to Indonesian policy. They saw intervention now as less costly and as distracting them less from more important tasks than having continually to prepare against the likelihood, as they saw it, that East Timor would come to threaten Indonesia's security.

If an integrated East Timor were to prove a 'festering sore' then Indonesia's calculation on costs would be wrong. But they do not believe the situation will develop in that way. Evidence available to me at present does not suggest that they will be unable to prevent such a situation developing.

Finally, I find Ross Cottrill's point, that if an independent East Timor turned sour as far as Indonesia was concerned then Indonesia could do something about it, glib and untenable.⁷ Surely Indonesia would face many more international problems by intervening militarily in an independent country, than it would in intervening in a colonial territory experiencing a civil war at the request of some of the parties and over which the colonial power refused, or was unable, to exercise its responsibility?

³ See Attachment to Document 233.

⁴ Document 137.

⁵ The date should read '1975'. As Cablegram JA7340 contained information that is not consistent with the theme of this document it is possible that Woolcott meant to refer to Cablegram JA7344 of 31 January 1975 (see note 3 to Document 73).

⁶ The date should read '1975'. See note 2 to Document 75.

⁷ Presumably a reference to Cottrill's paper of September 1975 (see note 4 to Document 233).

I have not attempted to answer you on each point. There are others but I think I have covered the main areas.

What we need is a coherent policy based on our own assessment of our longer term national interests in the region. Opposition to the use of force and support for an act of self-determination are perfectly natural and correct attitudes. But moral attitudes are not enough. Nor are essentially reactive responses for domestic political reasons to newspaper editorials. We need a policy too. For example, do we—Australia, not Indonesia—want to see an independent East Timor? Do we want to place ourselves, with Mozambique, China and North Vietnam, in the vanguard of Indonesia's international critics when the former is unimportant and ill-informed on the issue and the latter two are themselves primarily making gestures to the third world?

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424 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TJAN AND TAYLOR

Jakarta, 11 February 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

Visit to Indonesia by Mr Fraser

[matter omitted]

2. Tjan repeated what he had said recently, that he thought Mr Fraser would be very welcome in Indonesia at a convenient time for him and the President. There had been rumours that Mr Fraser planned to visit Singapore and possibly other ASEAN countries before visiting Indonesia. Tjan said that in terms of Australia's relations with Indonesia, this would be a mistake and would not be understood in Indonesia. The informal visit by Mr Fraser to Singapore after Tun Razak's funeral has caused no problems, except in so far as it led to suspicions that Singaporean and Australian leaders were discussing the situation in Indonesia in a misleading way. I said that my understanding was that Mr Fraser was considering a visit to Indonesia in July, possibly in conjunction with a visit to China and Japan. I had seen no suggestion that he would visit other ASEAN countries before visiting Indonesia.

3. Tjan returned to the point about our alleged discussions with Singapore and said that in his discussions with Mr Peacock in Jakarta he had tried to get across the point that if we wanted to find out what was happening in Indonesia we should ask the Indonesians. He or members of his group were in a position to know what was going on and were authorised to keep Australia and several other countries informed. When they were not in a position to know, they would tell us and we could look elsewhere for other centrally placed groups. At present they were in the best position to know what was happening.

Timor

4. In answer to a question about Indonesia's thinking on the possible nature of an act of self-determination in East Timor, Tjan said that not much thought had been given to this matter. Indonesia was waiting to see what Winspeare said in his report. If his proposals were not too expensive, then Indonesia would adopt them.

5. As to the situation on the ground in Timor, only Ermera of the major towns remained in Fretilin control and then only because the pro-Indonesian forces had not done anything about it. If Winspeare wanted to visit, then the pro-Indonesian forces would take it.

6. I gave Tjan a copy of Mr Peacock's statement of 8 February.¹ He asked why Mr Peacock was so keen that Australia participate in another debate with the Security Council, and I went through our policy with Tjan, noting that both the Prime Minister and the Minister were fully committed to it.

[matter omitted]

Visit to Dili

8. I mentioned that we had heard that Malik might be flying some Ambassadors from Jakarta to Dili. Was this report correct? Tjan said he had not heard of it, but it would make sense in terms of Indonesia's policy. In any case he doubted whether it could happen before the end of February because of Malik's commitments with ASEAN meetings.

Internal Situation

9. I told Tjan that I had heard rumours about a letter from five generals to the President seeking greater action against corruption. Tjan said he did not know of such a letter or who would have signed it. He went through a list of generals, commenting on the likelihood of their taking part in such an action.

[matter omitted]

10. I referred to another theory that the President had isolated himself from his advisers since *Malari* and thus was not fully aware, or in control, of what was going on in the country. Tjan agreed that Soeharto had raised himself above his closest advisers since *Malari*. That was his political style. Before *Malari* politics had been dominated by a battle for the number one adviser position. Such a situation did not exist now. Tjan did not think that the President was out of touch with what was going on.

11. I asked who the President's main advisers were. Tjan said, on intelligence matters, Yoga ('not because he was head of BAKIN, but because of his personal relationship with the President'); on economic matters, Widjojo; on business matters, Lim;² on military matters, Panggabean and Moerdani; on international affairs and politics in general, Ali Murtopo; and on personal and religious matters, Sudjono Humardani.

12. Tjan commented that in the political in-fighting Ali was still the most successful.

13. Asked about the President's health, Tjan said that Soeharto was now working at about 80% capacity. There was now less chance that he would change his decision to seek a further term as President than there had been in January.

14. Tjan confirmed that Ibnu Sutowo was finished. Ibnu had quite serious asthma. On the day before he left for the United States he had ceased to breathe for two minutes.

15. Wirjoso would probably succeed Ibnu as President-Director of Pertamina. He was now acting in the position and had taken over virtually all the responsibilities of the position. Tjan said it did not matter that he was not a general as he was acceptable to the generals. He was an expert in his field. The only question was whether he would be a good manager.

16. I asked whether Tjan thought Moerdani would become Minister for Defence after Panggabean retired. Tjan said that Moerdani could become Minister for Defence at some time,

¹ Peacock had said that he 'deeply regretted' that Winspeare Guicciardi had not been able to proceed to Fretilin areas of East Timor noting that he had terminated the mission following advice from Fretilin that they were 'unable to identify a secure venue in East Timor for a meeting'. Peacock added that it would be up to the Security Council to take up the matter again and decide, in the light of Winspeare's report, what further steps might be taken.

² Presumably Lim Bian Kie.

but not yet. The Army was very conscious of its hierarchy and for Moerdani to become Minister soon would offend too many senior people. Tjan's view was that Moerdani, when he finished in Timor, would return to an Army post for a while before coming back to HANKAM and to a senior position. Service at relatively senior level was very important for political power in Indonesia. Lack of such service was one of Ali Murtopo's drawbacks. He had worked with Soeharto on political/intelligence matters for a long time and missed out on a good army post.

17. Tjan confirmed that his expectation that Ali's standing in the army would improve during the next 12 months depended upon Moerdani. Moerdani was now in a position to promote officers. Those whom he promoted would of course be supporters of Moerdani and pro-Ali Murtopo. He was in a relatively good position in the army because he was considered by his contemporaries as an outstanding officer. There were, therefore, a large number of middle-ranking officers who would support him if senior officers tried to prevent his progress.

18. I mentioned that KOPKAMTIB seemed to be more in the news recently than usual. Tjan related this development to efforts being made to give the Indonesian regime a better image. For instance there had been the release of detainees and more would follow this year. Buyung Nasution had recently commented on the question of detainees. This had been good because it opened up the question again within Indonesia. The anti-smuggling and anti-corruption campaign also fitted into the picture of a more liberal and clean regime. Pang Lai Kim added that the first reaction to the anti-smuggling had been a reduction of the flow of merchandise to factories. Smuggling had been one way of getting relatively cheap goods to factories and with the introduction of this campaign, smugglers had lost confidence, at least for the time being. It was too early to say whether the anti-smuggling campaign would succeed.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/2/1, xii]

425 LETTER FROM RENOUF TO HARRY

Canberra, 12 February 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

I thought I should elaborate on my telegram O.CH320004.¹

We would not wish to minimise the difficulties facing Winspeare and the Secretary-General in Timor. The harsh reality is that Indonesia seems firmly committed to the incorporation of the territory and that it is unlikely to be deterred whatever the Security Council might say or do.²

¹ 12 February. It advised Harry to seek permission to participate in the forthcoming Security Council debate on East Timor but that the Australian Government would await the report of Winspeare Guicciardi and the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General before coming to its own conclusions about the future role of the UN in East Timor.

² Cablegram UN5018 (10 February) stated that Winspeare's report on East Timor was likely to be completed by the end of February and that the issue would probably be considered by the Security Council in early March. It advised that the members of the Security Council were likely to look to Australia for 'practicable suggestions for UN action with regard to an act of determination' and sought guidance on what position the Australian Mission to the UN should take over the 'modalities' of an act of self-determination in East Timor.

Winspeare clearly recognises this, while the Secretary-General came close to acknowledging it at the Canberra Press Club luncheon.³ However, the Secretary-General and Winspeare are, or should be, well versed in coping in the United Nations with this sort of impasse, and it is unlikely that Australia could help them through the political minefields that lie ahead. In principle, the Government hopes for a withdrawal of Indonesian force (as soon as order can be maintained by some other means) to be followed by an act of self-determination in which there is maximum United Nations participation. In reality, it is recognised that Indonesia is most unlikely to withdraw and that United Nations supervision of the act of self-determination—as distinct from observation—will not be permitted by Indonesia or the provisional government in Dili. In such circumstances the Government feels that the best approach for the moment is to adopt a low profile in New York.

Indeed, even in regard to self-determination (which you have identified as likely to occupy a central place in the Security Council debate) we shall need to be careful in what we say. Our policy supports a genuine act of self-determination.

We should have far greater domestic difficulties than most other governments in associating ourselves (for example as part of a UN observer team) with an act which fell short of proper democratic standards and which in effect merely formalised a *fait accompli* achieved by force of arms.

While it may be true—and natural—that some members of the Security Council will look to Australia for practical suggestions, the Timor issue is a far more delicate exercise for us than for most, and perhaps all, of the Security Council members. We cannot afford to get out in front in New York and we would not wish to encourage the notion either in the Secretariat or amongst Security Council members that Australia can produce some *deus ex machina*.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, x]

CABINET DECISIONS ON TIMOR

The Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Cabinet met on 9 February and considered two papers: the paper considered by the Defence Committee on 4 February (Document 417) and a paper dated 5 February prepared specifically for Cabinet by the Department of Foreign Affairs. Since the latter is a 'cabinet record', as defined by the Cabinet handbook, it is precluded from publication as a document in this volume although its contents may be summarised. The Foreign Affairs paper prepared for Cabinet set out three options: (a) to continue the existing policy of publicly and privately criticising Indonesia's use of force, pressing for an Indonesian withdrawal, asking for a genuine act of self-determination and the resumption of humanitarian aid and admitting a willingness to consider a contribution to an international presence; (b) 'the Whitlam or "realpolitik" option' of recognising the overriding importance of the relationship with Indonesia and accepting incorporation; (c) strengthening the existing policy by taking 'anti-Indonesian' steps such as cutting off aid or withdrawing the Australian Ambassador from Jakarta. The recommendation was to continue with option (a) on the grounds

³ The UN Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, spoke at the National Press Club in Canberra on 9 February. Waldheim observed that East Timor 'is one of the problems we have in the UN that only after every other effort has failed the matter is then brought to the UN. Sometimes it is already too late. It looks like consulting a doctor when the patient is almost dying then complaining that the doctor was unable to keep him alive'.

that it maintained a position of principle (opposition to the use of force and in favour of self-determination) with only the possibility of slight damage to Australian–Indonesian relations. Cabinet decided to continue the Government's policy and to restate the Government's position with the United Nations Secretary-General. Cabinet also agreed not to take a decision with respect to possible Australian involvement in the eventual process of self-determination for the people of East Timor.

A minute from Joseph to Feakes dated 12 February 1976 has also been excluded from the publication on the advice of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as revealing the contents of Cabinet discussions. In this minute, Joseph reported a telephone conversation with Griffith who, on instructions from Menadue, related considerations behind the Cabinet's decision. The general approach of Cabinet was to favour a 'minimum as possible' approach. Joseph noted about the decision: 'The sting in the tail for us is that the FAD has asked the Minister to prepare a draft statement setting out the Government's policy on Timor'. Joseph added that Griffith said that the statement was also being considered 'as the vehicle whereby the Government might begin its "bucketing" of Fretilin'.

426 CABLEGRAM TO LISBON

Canberra, 13 February 1976

O.CH320504 SECRET ROUTINE

Timor

*Ref O.LB723*¹

We can understand that Timor has been a very difficult problem for the Portuguese with their procession of governments and foreign ministers throughout most of 1975. But what we find hard to understand is why, when the Portuguese think of an initiative, it is almost invariably unrealistic where it is not simply unhelpful. The idea for a conference of the Timorese factions, under United Nations auspices, is both unhelpful and unrealistic. The idea might have proved a good one when it was first being mooted in early December (LB615),² but since then FRETILIN'S military position has [c]rumbled and the PGET has been able to extend its control to virtually all the main towns. FRETILIN resistance is likely to have collapsed into isolated, uncoordinated, and possibly not very effective, guerilla operations. In this situation, it is hard to see the Indonesians or the PGET's agreeing to anything which might serve to breathe new life into FRETILIN.

¹ (12 February). It reported a conversation between Cooper and Crespo, the Portuguese Minister for Cooperation. Crespo considered that Winspeare Guicciardi's mission had ascertained the degree to which the Provisional Government of East Timor was controlled by the Indonesian military and the cultural and economic differences between the peoples of East Timor and West Timor. Consequently, in Crespo's view, Winspeare would be aware that the case for the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia 'had not yet been established'. Crespo added that Indonesia would have been further advanced towards its objective of integrating Portuguese Timor had it not intervened militarily but instead encouraged round-table talks. He considered that the only solution to the problem of East Timor was a conference under UN auspices of the Timorese political factions, with the PGET included as one faction, to 'express their views about the modalities of self-determination'.

² Document 368.

2. It is more than likely, of course, that the Portuguese recognise all this, but that they are determined to keep the Timor issue alive in the UN as a means of embarrassing the Indonesians. We wonder, however, whether the objective is to get the Indonesians to withdraw or rather to maintain pressure on Indonesia to release the 23 Portuguese prisoners. It is possible to see an arrangement emerging whereby Portugal moderates its attitude in the United Nations, while Indonesia induces the PGET to give up the prisoners? It would seem that the release of the prisoners would at least go some way towards reducing tensions between Indonesia and Portugal.

3. We would be grateful for your comments as well as Jakarta's.³

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

427 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 16 February 1976

O.LB725 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

Portuguese Timor

*Ref O.CH320504*¹

Crespo's proposal for a conference under UN auspices may seem unrealistic at this stage, but it reflects the Portuguese view that the PGET is essentially a group of Indonesian stooges and that, if the Indonesian presence were withdrawn, the Timorese would, if given a real choice at this point of time, opt for independence rather than integration. The Portuguese are well aware that neither of these conditions is likely to be fulfilled—as Crespo observed 'the withdrawal of a few "volunteers" will not change anything'. But the Portuguese will be satisfied if it can be shown that the UN's objectives in Timor—i.e. self-determination—have been frustrated by Indonesia in the interests of *realpolitik*. Having put Indonesia in the dock, the Portuguese are now concerned to secure a verdict of guilty. They are certainly not looking for ways and means of letting Indonesia off the hook.

2. It follows therefore that the Portuguese would be most unlikely to accept a deal with Indonesia over their prisoners. The prisoners issue is clearly an important element in Portuguese thinking, but their antipathy to Indonesia is too deep seated for them to condone Indonesian policy in Timor just to recover some prisoners. Whilst some key Portuguese officials (e.g. Santos and Cruz) have all along been pretty cynical about Indonesian intentions, Foreign Minister Antunes was outraged by Indonesia's military

³ Cablegram JA4830 (14 February) reported that according to Tjan there was a difference of opinion within the Indonesian Government about the Portuguese prisoners. One view was that they should be released only after the East Timor issue had been solved. Another was that they should be released as soon as possible. Sunarso was reported to have indicated that the soldiers were being held as 'bargaining counters to ensure that the Portuguese did nothing "rash" in the area. They would not be released until the two Portuguese corvettes were withdrawn from the region'. Cablegram JA4856 (16 February) reported that the Indonesian Foreign Ministry appeared to consider the Portuguese prisoners 'as some form of insurance against the possibility that the Portuguese (through their corvettes) take anti-Indonesian/PGET action in East Timor'.

¹ Document 426.

intervention. As we reported at the time, Antunes returned from the Rome talks convinced of Malik's good faith, that Indonesia genuinely wanted a political settlement, and that Indonesia could and would 'deliver' UDT and APODETI for round table talks. When all these hopes proved illusory, culminating in Indonesian military intervention, the Portuguese (and Antunes in particular) felt that they had been duped and humiliated by Indonesia. They are thus in no mood to be cooperative or helpful in seeking a solution designed to accommodate Indonesian interests. If the UN is prepared to condone or whitewash Indonesia's actions in Timor so be it, but Portugal will not assist in the process.

3. It is probably not sufficiently understood that Timor represents a national humiliation for the Portuguese. Unlike the former African territories, where the prospects for peaceful and orderly decolonisation were never very bright, Timor was the one Territory where, given time and freedom from outside interference, a genuine act of self-determination under Portuguese auspices seemed possible. In frustrating these hopes the Portuguese see Indonesia as the villain who created APODETI, connived in the UDT coup, and subsequently carried out a systematic campaign in Timor culminating in direct intervention, one of the main effects of which was to highlight Portugal's impotence even to maintain a presence in her own Territory. Against this background one can at least understand the bitterness reflected in Portuguese official statements on Timor. The fact that Portugal finally took the problem to the UN was a further admission of Portugal's inability to cope with Indonesian pressure.

4. Despite Portuguese attitude towards Indonesia, I should place on record that in my numerous talks with Portuguese Ministers and officials, they have always shown a lively appreciation of the difficulties which the Timor problem poses for Australia, and of the importance for us of maintaining good relations with Indonesia. While they would obviously have liked us to have adopted a more partisan and pro-Portuguese position, they have at least understood and respected the reasons why Australia does not wish to become directly involved in the Timor problem.

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

428 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 20 February 1976

O.JA4973 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

East Timor

A reliable contact has told us that a permanent Indonesian military organisation is being set up in East Timor. It will be along parallel lines to the military establishments in every province of Indonesia.

2. *Comment:* While the Indonesian combat units in East Timor presently engaged in mopping-up operations against Fretilin will be withdrawn in due course, our assessment is that there

will not be a complete withdrawal of Indonesian forces even after Fretilin has been completely defeated and law and order restored. In other words, there will always be an Indonesian military presence in East Timor as there is in all Indonesian provinces.

3. Our contact also told us that with the completion of the military operation in the South (immediately prior to Winspeare's attempt to visit Fretilin-held areas using a Portuguese corvette) the military tactic was again to go slow and apply pressure on Fretilin to surrender (for example, by cutting off sources of supply) rather than to use conventional offensive means. One consequence of the United Nations' Mission's request to visit Fretilin-held areas was that towns and areas had to be taken much more quickly than originally planned and that consequently conventional warfare had been employed.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xx]

429 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 24 February 1976

CONFIDENTIAL

Timor

Among the items listed for consideration in the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee on 26 February is a statement of the Government's policy on Timor. The agenda for that meeting is very heavy indeed and we suggest that you might seek to have the Timor item taken first. The other items all relate to Papua New Guinea.

2. At its earlier meeting on 9 February the Committee had agreed that 'the Minister for Foreign Affairs should prepare for consideration by the Committee, in consultation with the Minister for Defence and the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, a draft statement setting out the Government's policy and including as appropriate a reference to the nature of FRETILIN and the nature of the support it is receiving.'

3. We have now prepared the attached draft for your consideration. It includes a relevant section on FRETILIN—pages 6 and 7. We have sought not to be too heavy-handed. But some doubts are cast on FRETILIN's claims to represent the whole of the East Timorese population.

4. The draft has been passed to the Departments of Defence and Prime Minister and Cabinet. PM & C have suggested that the descriptive section at the beginning of the statement might include some account of developments before August, the objective being to show the legitimacy of UDT's claim to be a genuine political force alongside FRETILIN. We could add such a section if necessary. But to do so would add to the length of the statement. On balance, we believe it better to leave it out.

5. The Department of Defence has not yet commented on the text. However, we felt that we could not delay submitting it to you. We may need to consider Defence comments after receiving your own reactions. As the content of the text does not touch on the responsibilities of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, we have not consulted that Department.

6. If it is decided to make the statement—presumably in the House of Representatives—there could be advantages in doing so sooner rather than later. We have in mind in particular

that there could be tactical advantages in setting out the Government's own policy in advance of the report of the United Nations Special Representative. That report, when issued, could give rise to awkward policy choices and the Government may wish to await the outcome of the Security Council debate before coming to its own conclusions.¹

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iv]

430 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 5 March 1976

SECRET

Timor: Death of Journalists: Australian Journalists Association

It was reported in the press on 3 March that the Australian Journalists Association is writing to you (and to the Prime Minister and Mr Whitlam) calling for an 'immediate public probe into all aspects of the alleged massacre of the five television newsmen in East Timor last October'. The AJA is reported to have condemned the Department's enquiry and information on the deaths as 'inadequate, incomplete and incompetent' and to have charged that 'the official statement from pro-Indonesian parties has been accepted and obvious discrepancies ignored'. The Victorian Secretary of the AJA is quoted as especially drawing attention to the inconsistency between the report that the five men were incinerated and the fact that their personal papers including passports showed no sign of burning. The AJA statement, like Mr J. Dunn's recent paper on Timor,¹ comes at a time when the campaign for an independent East Timor is flagging.

Background papers

2. We attach to this submission copies of your press release of 13 November 1975² and of the Department's letter of 14 November 1975 sent to Mr S. Crosland, Federal Secretary of the AJA, who had called on behalf of the AJA for a 'full enquiry at highest possible level to ascertain full facts'.³ A copy of the Department's paper on steps taken in October–November⁴ is also attached.

¹ The draft submission to the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Cabinet was submitted to Peacock with a draft statement for approval by Cabinet. The draft statement deplored the course of events in East Timor since the UDT's 'show of force' but insisted that there was nothing that the Australian Government should now do. It also included a section refuting Fretilin's claim to be the representative voice of East Timor. Peacock made the following annotations: 'I believe we should add the section requested and refer to aborted Macao talks etc. despite length of document' (dated 26 February), and 'No paper until after Winspeare report' (dated 2 March). On 2 March Renouf wrote to Feakes: 'The Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Cabinet today decided not to consider the paper upon this subject. It was so decided because of the need seen not "to stir the pot". The Committee decided that the Minister should hold the paper in reserve'. [On file NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xlviv.]

² *The Timor Affair—From Civil War to Invasion by Indonesia*, 27 February 1976.

³ See note 3 to Document 337.

⁴ The letter to Crosland stated, *inter alia*: 'It is an absolute rule that the International Court of Justice does not have jurisdiction unless the defendant has consented. There is no standing acceptance of the Court's jurisdiction by Indonesia and a thorough examination has not led to our finding any other effective basis on which the Court's jurisdiction could be invoked'.

⁵ 'Chronology of Australian Government Efforts to Locate Five Australian T.V. Journalists Missing in East Timor', DFA, 13 November 1975.

Background

3. The Government has said that it has received 'what appears to be authoritative evidence that the five men were killed during an attack on the town of Balibo by UDT, APODETI and KOTA forces on 16 October', and that 'in the light of this information . . . (it) had concluded that there was no hope that any of the newsmen might have survived'.

4. The authoritative evidence referred to was handed to the Australian Ambassador in Jakarta by General Yoga, head of BAKIN, on 12 November 1975. It amounted to a letter from the Raja of Atsabe⁵ and documents, photographic equipment and some personal effects 'received from the UDT-APODETI-KOTA forces', and also the remains of four of the men as found in Balibo and of the fifth man as found by an APODETI patrol outside Balibo on 26-27 October. Earlier an Embassy official had been passed photograph copies of notebooks belonging to the newsmen.

5. Consideration was given to whether the remains should be returned to Australia for forensic examination. But the next-of-kin did not seek the return of the remains: their advice was that the remains should be buried in Indonesia. It was felt that we should respect the wishes of the next-of-kin, in the knowledge, however, that, by not insisting that the remains be returned here for forensic examination, there could be some criticism that we were simply helping in an Indonesian cover up.

6. The remains were buried in Jakarta on 5 December.

What did really happen?

7. We are arranging for you to be shown separately a note prepared at the Department's request by the Joint Intelligence Organisation on 30 October, 1975, which drew together the significant information available about the fate of the newsmen.⁶

8. It will be noted that the account of events given by FRETILIN and by the Portuguese newsmen differ from the Indonesian version, but also conflict with one another.

9. One conclusion that could be drawn from the evidence available could be that the journalists were mistakenly identified as combatants and were killed in the final stages of the assault on Balibo, and that immediate action was taken to destroy the evidence. But the events as known would also be consistent with the reconstruction that, first, one journalist was shot during the assault, and then the remainder were shot to eliminate witnesses, and the bodies removed and burnt. Death by mortar in the house where the burnt bodies were found, as stated by UDT and the Indonesians, seems a less likely explanation, but cannot be ruled out. Photographs published in the Indonesian and Australian press of the house in which the bodies were allegedly found showed some evidence of a fire. *The important point is that in all cases we are talking about suppositions only. On the basis of the evidence available we are unable to come to positive conclusions as to the circumstances and manner of the death of the newsmen. But our information leaves no doubt that the journalists are dead. It seems certain that they were killed by Indonesian or pro-Indonesian forces.*

The role of the Department

10. The AJA is very severe in its criticism of the role of the Department.

11. It is true that we have been unable to establish with certainty the circumstances and manner in which the five newsmen died. But this has not been for the want of trying.

⁵ See note 2 to Document 335.

⁶ No record of or other reference to this note could be found. It is possible that Peacock was briefed separately by JIO on the matter. As this appears to be the only reference to it in DFA files, it is likely that it did not add significantly to the information which DFA had at the time.

12. We knew⁷ that at least four of the newsmen had probably been killed during the attack by Indonesian and pro-Indonesian forces on Balibo on 16 October.⁷ Immediately, that is on 17 October, we asked the Embassy in Jakarta to institute urgent enquiries about the newsmen; at the same time we asked the ICRC in Darwin to do likewise; and at the direction of Senator Willesee a departmental officer accompanied an ICRC flight into Dili to enquire about the missing newsmen. On 18 October our Ambassador in Jakarta made representations to Malik about the newsmen. The subsequent record shows that representations to the Indonesians were renewed virtually every day and at numerous and various levels. Virtually each day our Embassy was promised something positive; but each day the Embassy was disappointed.

13. We had hoped to get an officer to the border areas and possibly to Balibo to institute on-the-spot enquiries. An officer from the Embassy did in fact get as far as Kupang, in Indonesian Timor, but he was virtually quarantined there and not permitted to proceed to the border. A second, and more senior, officer was then sent to Kupang, but again without any effective result. The possibility of trying to reach Balibo through Dili was not seriously considered. It would have involved crossing the lines of fire and placing the officer concerned in a very hazardous position. The then Government would not have authorised such a venture and the Department would not have recommended it.

14. On 10 November press reports from Dili cited an account by three FRETILIN militiamen who claimed to have witnessed the fighting in Balibo. According to their account, the five newsmen were captured by Indonesian forces and lined up along the wall of a house. According to the militiamen, as they were crawling away, they heard the newsmen screaming, a burst of automatic fire, and then silence.

15. On 11 November we asked the International Red Cross whether they could arrange for their representatives in Dili to interview the militiamen concerned. The ICRC was initially reluctant, maintaining that what we proposed would compromise their neutrality. On 14 November, the ICRC agreed to conduct a confidential interview and instruct their Dili representatives accordingly. On 26 November we asked the ICRC representative in Darwin (Pasquier) whether he had yet been able to contact the militiamen. The representative replied that the ICRC had not been able to locate the men concerned and had been told that they had returned to the border area; Pasquier had asked the FRETILIN authorities in Dili to assist him in locating the militiamen. He indicated to us that he hoped to be able to submit a report to us by 10 December. In the event the ICRC team was evacuated in early December without having been able to interview the militiamen.

16. Meanwhile, in Jakarta, General Yoga had confirmed on 12 November that the journalists had indeed been killed (para 4 above). Personal effects and remains of the journalists were handed over to our Ambassador the same day. General Yoga suggested that other personal effects had presumably been burnt or stolen.

17. The Indonesians throughout maintained that they had had nothing to do with the deaths of the journalists. Our Ambassador in Jakarta many times addressed pointed questions to the Indonesians but was unable to elicit satisfactory answers. As far as the Indonesians were concerned, with the delivery of the remains and personal effects to the Embassy on 12 November, the incident was closed.

18. The chronology prepared by the Department of the efforts made to discover the fate of the journalists tells its own story. In addition Mr Whitlam spoke on 5 November to the Indonesian Ambassador in Canberra about the journalists. He subsequently followed this up

⁷ One line has been expunged here.

with a letter to President Suharto dated 7 November.⁸ The fact of this high-level message has never been made public, but there would seem no reason why, perhaps with the author's permission, the AJA might not be told of it.

19. The AJA has asked why, if the five newsmen were incinerated, their personal effects, including passports, were not also burnt. This question was among those the Embassy in Jakarta raised with the Indonesians. The reply was that the items had apparently been in a container blown clear of the house by the mortar explosions. While an unlikely answer, the Indonesians stuck to it.

Martins

20. We had a report from our mission in Geneva in early January⁹ that the KOTA personality, Martins, appeared to have defected from the Indonesian side, and among other things, was willing to provide information (including evidence in the form of bones which he claimed were in his possession) on 'what really happened at Balibo'—he having been in the area at the time. Martins left Geneva immediately after calling on our mission and his present whereabouts is unknown. There was a report late last month that he was in Britain and that he intended to call on our High Commission. But to date he has not done so.

21. The information we have about Martins suggests that he is mentally unstable. While London and Geneva have been authorized to receive him should he call again, we have been disinclined to have them seek him out.

The new AJA approach

22. It would be reasonable to assume that the AJA is pursuing this matter mainly because many of its members believe that Indonesia should accept full responsibility for what happened at Balibo: the objective is to have the Indonesians publicly condemned. The Association, of course, has a responsibility to show itself to be willing to act on behalf of its members, who have been or may be placed in situations of danger. The proposal for a public enquiry is presumably designed at least in part to force the hand of the Government to admit to Indonesian involvement in the events leading to the deaths of the journalists.

23. We have not previously acknowledged officially Indonesian involvement in the cross-border operations which took place at that time. (Senator Willesee's comments on 30 October¹⁰ were somewhat qualified.) The AJA no doubt regards this as a nonsense. But it would be a major departure for the Government to go beyond what has previously been said about the extent of Indonesian involvement in these early weeks. (And should we wish to be raking over the coals at this late stage?) If Ministers, nonetheless, were to want to acknowledge officially Indonesian involvement in the early cross-border operations, we think that they should first take advice from the JIO.

24. Perhaps all that should be said to the AJA is that while there is no doubt that the UDT/APODETI/KOTA forces approached the Balibo area from bases inside Indonesian Timor, and that the UDT/APODETI/KOTA soldiers and civilians who had retreated into Indonesian Timor during September were looked after by the Indonesian Government, the Government nevertheless has to accept the reports on events in Balibo as received from UDT/APODETI/KOTA. The Government can neither confirm nor deny reports that Indonesian troops were involved across the border, including Balibo, at the time.

⁸ See Document 330.

⁹ Cablegram GE15978 (6 January).

¹⁰ Willesee stated: 'The Government has viewed with concern widespread reports that Indonesia is involved in military intervention in Portuguese Timor'. See Document 308 and note 4 to Document 310.

What more can we do?

25. We can, of course, ask the ICRC to renew its enquiries at such time as it is allowed to resume its operations. Our record is good here. We have been active in pressing for the return of the ICRC to Timor and we can inform the AJA that we shall continue to do so.

26. As for a new Government enquiry, we frankly do not know what more can be done. We could perhaps approach the Indonesian Government again to seek their assistance in facilitating a visit by an officer or an Australian enquiry team to Balibo. We could similarly ask for their assistance in arranging interviews with persons who may have been in Balibo at the time of the deaths of the journalists. Interviews with the Raja of Atsabe and the UDT leader, Lopez [da] Cruz, could be suggested.

27. But there is no question that the Indonesian reaction would be sharply negative. The matter for them is a closed book. Nevertheless, it is for consideration whether we should court the rebuff by proposing to the Indonesians that, with the fighting in the Balibo area now apparently at an end, an Australian enquiry team be permitted to proceed to the area for on-the-spot investigations.

28. A further possibility is that we could seek to bring the remains of the journalists back to Australia for forensic examination, if all the next-of-kin would now agree (see para 5 above). But we do not see quite what that would achieve except to keep the issue in the newspapers in a way which aggravates anti-Indonesian feeling.

29. It is not easy to think of other possibilities. It is obviously unrealistic to think that Australia can simply brush aside Indonesian and PGET opposition by unilaterally sending an Australian enquiry team to Balibo.

Recommendation

30. It may be possible to respond by a further letter to the new representations by the AJA when they are received. We would recommend, however, that a better approach on this occasion would be for the Department to invite the President of the AJA to call in to discuss the matter. This would enable us to explore the AJA's own ideas and to explain in detail the action already taken by the Government.

31. It is recommended that you agree to this course of action.¹¹

G. B. FEAKES

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, v]

¹¹ A further submission from J. R. Rowland, Acting Secretary, DFA, received in Peacock's office on 30 March, noted that Peacock had instructed the Department not to discuss the matter with the AJA but that instead the Embassy in Jakarta should reopen the matter with the Indonesian Government. The submission attached a draft letter to Crosland subsequently signed by Peacock. The letter defended DFA against charges made by the AJA that it had been 'remiss either in its attempts to uncover the facts, or in failing to act with urgency or compassion'. It listed the efforts made by Australian governments to ascertain the fate of the journalists and conflicting accounts about their deaths from the Rajah of Atsabe and several other eyewitnesses. One of the eyewitness reports came from Rex Sydell, an Australian planter who had been held prisoner by Fretilin for several months from September 1975, and who had promised to produce affidavits and other witnesses. The letter added that in view of the conflicting accounts 'the Government has not felt able to announce definitive conclusions about the precise manner or circumstances' of the deaths, but 'the Government has not closed the book on the matter': it would ask the International Red Cross to renew inquiries when it was able to return to Timor and it was hoped to send an Australian official to Balibo. Cablegram CH329235 (8 March) instructed the Embassy in Jakarta to reopen with the Indonesian Government the case of the five journalists and in particular to seek Indonesian assistance 'in facilitating a visit by an officer of the Embassy to the Balibo area and in arranging interviews with persons who may have been at Balibo at the time of the deaths of the journalists'.

431 LETTER FROM WOOLCOTT TO RENOUF

[Jakarta], 10 March 1976

SECRET PERSONAL

Thank you for your quarterly letter of the 9 February which I received on my return from some much-needed leave in Bali although it was punctuated by the ASEAN Summit.

I thought it was an excellent letter; frank, helpful and informative for all Heads of Missions in the field especially in the insights it gives on the transition from the policies of the former government to those of the present government and the difficulties we all face as a result of financial restraint.

I am glad the government places the importance it does on our relations with ASEAN and the ASEAN countries and that it will be giving priority to these relationships. We do need to watch this, however, as there is a danger of a contradiction developing between this objective and the development of our relations with Indonesia.

You will have seen my telegram JA5203¹ reporting a long and frank discussion with Benny Moerdani. In fact I toned down some of the things he said as I do not want to irritate the Minister. On the other hand I am obliged to report the thrust of his remarks, especially as he is not the only one putting this line over. We cannot expect Indonesia—which is the paramount influence in ASEAN—to help us forge links with ASEAN while we continue to be active in the vanguard of Indonesia's international critics on a matter which it sees as being of great national importance to it and of importance to the ASEAN region as a whole.

I think that the Minister has reached, or is very close to, the limits of having his cake and eating it with Indonesia; in other words of criticising Indonesia publicly while maintaining that we still attach the greatest importance to good relations with Indonesia and maintaining that little or no damage is being done to this relationship. Indonesia has intervened militarily in East Timor and has lied about it. But the situation and the events leading up to it are much more complex than that.

But while the active moral stand the government is taking will not alter the outcome of the Timor situation, it is now eroding the fragile and unnatural relationship which has been patiently built up with Indonesia over the last decade.

After the Minister's statement² in the House and his interviews with Juddery and Hastings³ his reception in April could be fairly cool. For example, we hear on the grapevine that the

¹ 4 March. Moerdani questioned why the Australian Government, having registered its disapproval of Indonesian actions in East Timor, was taking 'such an active part in making things more difficult for Indonesia'. He warned that the Australian Government 'could not expect to maintain good relations with Indonesia and ASEAN while continuing to act against Indonesia's interests'.

² In a statement in the House of Representatives on 4 March, Peacock reiterated the Australian Government's belief that there should be a cessation of hostilities in East Timor, a resumption of international humanitarian aid, preferably through the return to East Timor of the ICRC, a withdrawal of Indonesian forces and a genuine act of self-determination in the territory. He regretted the inability of Winspeare Guicciardi to visit Fretilin-held areas of East Timor but looked forward to the resumed Security Council debate on his report.

³ In an interview with Bruce Juddery, Peacock was asked whether the difference on Timor policy between the Fraser Government and the Whitlam Government was only 'cosmetic'. He answered: 'The description is not only unfair, it is inaccurate. We have voted in the UN condemning the invasion of East Timor, calling for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops, calling for the cessation of hostilities, calling for an act of self-determination and calling for the resumption of humanitarian aid'. [*Canberra Times*, 1 March.] Questioned by Peter Hastings about whether Australia's Timor policy might prove embarrassing to relations with ASEAN states, Peacock replied: '... I don't see the difference we have with Indonesia at the moment as creating differences between us and the ASEAN states or between ASEAN states. As a matter of principle and propriety, our Timor policy has been correct'. [*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 March.]

President may not receive the Minister. We shall do our best to check this out very discreetly and, if necessary, change it; but we could be in for a difficult time.

At all levels the Indonesians have recently been showing increasing irritation, not only at our attitude to Timor, but to what seems to them to be the Minister's compulsion to repeat our policy in terms which they believe shows a lack of understanding of Indonesia's national interests and which they think has the effect of further stimulating—through responding to it—anti-Indonesian feeling in the Australian community. Meanwhile, it will not produce any change in Indonesian policy. They also find it difficult to understand why a government with such a large majority cannot act positively to blunt hostilities to Indonesia in Australia rather than just respond to it.

We have also been told on good authority that the President was displeased that the Minister produced the ideas of the Prime Minister's possible visit to Bali and of a force in East Timor without any prior soundings or warning. The press too is fairly hostile after the seven minute press conference in January. (But we should be able to rectify this without much difficulty.)

In addition to all this I cannot escape the feeling that we may also be painting ourselves into a corner through continuing to be active in the United Nations, when most others now seem to want to see the issue defused and in putting so much emphasis on a genuine act of self-determination, when we know that there will not be an act of self-determination which most Australians could accept as genuine. The fact is that most of the international community is now maintaining a discreet silence on East Timor because it accepts integration into Indonesia as [a] *fait accompli*.

I think it would be prudent, in these circumstances, if the Minister were to move away from this phrase and talk more about the need for the people of East Timor to decide their own future. There will be an act of self-determination of some sort and the Indonesians will try to ensure that it is as acceptable as possible. But their standards will be different from ours: and we need to recognise the obvious problems in conducting an act of self-determination in a place like East Timor which had only the most rudimentary political experience before going through the experience of civil war. Only a year ago we and Portugal were saying it would be five to eight years before a proper act of self-determination could be considered.

I think the government is correct in giving priority to our interests in the ASEAN area over interests in Indo China. This represents a change of emphasis in relation to the former government's policies but, I think, a sensible one in the present situation. But this, too, has its implications for our policy towards Indonesia. As I noted in my recent despatch 3/76 on the ASEAN Summit, the future stability of the ASEAN region now lies, to a greater degree than ever before, in the hands of the non-communist governments of South East Asia although much will depend on North Vietnam's actual policy in the years ahead. And in these circumstances Australia has an increased interest in a stable group of nations between itself and China and Indo China.

[*matter omitted*]

432 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 16 March 1976

O.JA5415 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

East Timor—Self-Determination and Integration

When I saw General Moerdani about the journalists over the weekend (our JA5414¹) he used the phrase 'after integration' on several occasions.

2. I asked him whether, in using this phrase, he envisaged the early integration of East Timor with Indonesia. He clearly did and I asked the question merely to elicit his views on the subject.

3. Moerdani said integration was inevitable. There was no alternative to it and it would take place this year.

4. I said that if Indonesia did not withdraw its forces and if an act of self-determination was conducted with Indonesian forces still in East Timor this would cause criticism of Indonesia. In fact, if it were to become simply an act of confirmation of the integration of the territory into Indonesia this would not be acceptable to many members of the United Nations. General Moerdani said if Indonesia withdrew its forces there would only be a 'return to bloodletting and chaos.' Did we seriously want this? It might be 'tough for Sani for a while' but Indonesia would 'ride out' any criticisms which arose in New York. I said this situation could create further difficulties for Australia and tensions in our relations with Indonesia, given the Government's public commitment to a withdrawal of Indonesian forces and to a genuine act of self-determination. Moerdani said it would be regrettable if we drifted even further apart than we had because of Timor. Indonesia had looked to Australia as [a] neighbour and a friend for understanding. It had been disappointed. But Indonesia would have the support or the acquiescence of other countries in the region. That point made however, Moerdani said that he had recently participated in a high level discussion about 'the act of self-determination which would lead to integration' and it had been decided that as internationally acceptable an act as possible should be conducted.

5. I asked Moerdani whether he could give me any details of the type of act of self-determination planned and of the timetable for it. Moerdani said Indonesia attached importance to dates. The plan was that the proclamation of integration should be linked with the National Day celebrations on the 17 August. A Bill amending the constitution to include East Timor would be passed by the DPR on the 15 August so that the President could refer to the integration of East Timor by popular consent in his traditional Address to the Nation in Parliament on the 16 August.

6. The process which would lead up to this act of self-determination would be as follows:—

- (i) The 13 districts of East Timor would send elected representatives (probably between 40 and 50) to a meeting in Dili to determine whether East Timor should be independent or become a part of Indonesia. These representatives would include Fretilin (that is ex-Fretilin) supporters.

¹ 16 March. Moerdani stated that he considered it 'improper' of the Australian Government to direct questions about the journalists killed in Balibo to the Indonesian Government which 'maintained that it was not involved in this matter which was properly the concern of the political parties in East Timor at that time and of Portugal'. Woolcott replied that it was appropriate for the Australian Government to seek an Indonesian response to allegations made by Martins against the Indonesian Government and indicated that he would follow up the matters with Yoga.

- (ii) If it chose the latter, the meeting in Dili would send representatives to Jakarta to convey to the DPR and the Government of Indonesia its decision in favour of integration.
- (iii) The PGET would send invitations to the Committee of Twenty-Four to observe the meeting in Dili and perhaps the selection of representatives to attend that meeting.
- (iv) The DPR and the Government of Indonesia would send a team to East Timor to check with people (probably only those in the main population centres) whether they really wanted integration.
- (v) The Committee of Twenty-Four would also be invited to attend any debate in the DPR on the PGET's request for integration and any DPR and Indonesian Government's representative's consultations with the people in East Timor.
- (vi) The DPR would discuss the findings of its team and if they favoured integration pass the Bill amending the constitution and declaring East Timor a part of Indonesia.
- (vii) The Government of Indonesia would accept the integration of East Timor, presumably in the President's speech to the Nation on 16 August.

7. Moerdani who gave me this information confidentially said he hoped Australia would be able to accept this process. Given the present situation in Timor and its lack of political institutions and infrastructure he said this was the best Indonesia and the PGET could do to accommodate international pressure.

8. Incidentally this act of self-determination was drafted by Tjan who has also gone through it with us. Tjan indicated that the process could begin in April. He said that a PGET delegation was assembling in Jakarta to consider going to New York to propose the act of self-determination. In doing so, of course, they would refer only to point (i) in paragraph 6 above. According to Moerdani the delegation is likely to include Rajah of Atsabe, Thomas Gonsalves and Mario Carrascalao.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxi]

433 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN KADRI AND JOSEPH

Canberra, 17 March 1976

SECRET

East Timor

Mr Kadri said that he was calling, under instructions, to discuss the forthcoming Security Council debate on East Timor. Indonesia expected that in the debate attention would focus on the following issues:

- (i) self-determination
- (ii) withdrawal of Indonesian volunteers
- (iii) report of the special representative
- (iv) the 23 Portuguese prisoners
- (v) relations between Indonesia and East Timor

2. *Mr Kadri* said it had always been Indonesia's intention to have an act of self-determination. Even though the PGET claimed that there was no need for such an act Indonesia's view remained

that there should be a formal legal basis for integration. The PGET had now accepted this position. They were thinking of a process of self-determination which would involve polling the views of 'peoples' representatives'. The PGET would have no objection to UN representatives observing the act of self-determination. However the implementation of such an act could not be carried out immediately; it would need time.

3. The Indonesian volunteers were in East Timor at the invitation of the PGET and would be withdrawn when the PGET so requested. Such a request would only be made when the situation in East Timor was secure. There was some indication that the Provisional Government was now 'thinking about' a withdrawal of the volunteers. But meanwhile Indonesia could not accept the wording of the General Assembly resolution¹ that they be withdrawn forthwith.

4. As to the mission of Mr Winspeare Guicciardi, *Mr Kadri* said that it should be remembered that Indonesia was successful in convincing the PGET to allow the special representative to visit East Timor. Far from obstructing the mission, Indonesia had assisted it. On the issue of the 23 prisoners, Portugal had now brought the matter before the Human Rights Committee in Geneva. The release of the prisoners was a matter for the PGET. It was apparent, however, that the Portuguese were concerned about the 23 prisoners, but not the 40,000 refugees. *Mr Kadri* noted that the Indonesian Government had made efforts, particularly before the Rome talks, to secure the release of the prisoners. On the relationship between Indonesia and East Timor, *Mr Kadri* said this would depend on the people of East Timor.

5. *Mr Joseph* thanked Mr Kadri for this exposition. He said that Australia welcomed Indonesia's commitment to self-determination. As to the 'volunteers', the Indonesian Embassy would be aware that we regarded these 'volunteers' as members of the Indonesian regular forces. Australian policy was to call for their withdrawal.

6. *Mr Joseph* noted that the Indonesian Foreign Ministry had recently called in our Ambassador to discuss the Security Council debate.² Our Ambassador had seen Mr Idris, Head of the International Organisations Division, who had repeated some of the points made by Mr Kadri. But Mr Idris had also shown some unhappiness about Mr Peacock's statement³ of 4 March which he appeared to fear might foreshadow a tough Australian position during the forthcoming Security Council debate.

7. *Mr Joseph* said that we wished the Indonesian Embassy to know that we did not regard the Minister's 4 March statement as breaking new policy ground. The four elements of Australian policy mentioned in that statement—cessation of hostilities, resumption of international humanitarian aid, withdrawal of Indonesian forces and a genuine act of self-determination—were objectives consistently held by the Australian Government since its election in December. The four points had been repeated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs during his visit to Jakarta.⁴ Mr Peacock had also referred to the four points publicly in the statement he issued in Jakarta at the conclusion of his visit. Australian opposition to the use of force had been a consistent thread in Australian policy with both the Labor and the Liberal/National Country Parties['] governments. Mr Joseph referred in this regard to Mr Whitlam's message to President Suharto of March 1975.⁵

¹ See Document 373.

² Cablegram JA5439 (16 March) reported that the Indonesian Foreign Ministry had pressed Woolcott to advise the Australian Government to 'adopt as soft and as helpful a position as possible in the Security Council' in relation to Indonesia and East Timor.

³ See note 2 to Document 431.

⁴ See Document 404. See also Record of Conversation between Peacock and Panggabean (20 January 1976), and between Peacock and Soeharto (20 January 1976). [On file NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xix.]

⁵ This date should read February 1975. See Document 98.

8. *Mr Joseph* said that the Australian position of non-use of force and withdrawal of Indonesian forces may well need to be repeated during the Security Council debate. It was necessary to make this point since it had appeared from the discussions in Jakarta with Mr Woolcott that the Indonesian Foreign Ministry was hoping Australia would modify the policy outlined by the Minister on 4 March. On the other hand it was unlikely that Australia would be in the forefront of Indonesia's critics in the Security Council.

9. Our approach was more likely to concentrate on Winspeare's recommendation that 'it might be possible to build on the slender common assumption that the people of East Timor should be consulted on the future status of the territory'.⁶ We had heard that the Secretary-General might propose that Winspeare continue his contacts with interested parties. In the Security Council, Australia was likely to offer support for any proposal to extend the mandate of the special representative.

10. Australia would need to repeat its support in the Security Council for self-determination. But our mind was open in regard to the modalities for an act of self-determination. We were unlikely to wish to advance any formula ourselves. We should prefer a consensus to be developed among the Timorese parties about how an act of self-determination might be carried out.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxi]

434 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 19 March 1976

O.JA5499 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

East Timor: Self-Determination and Integration

*Ref O.JA5415*¹

In explaining the proposed act of self-determination outlined to us by Moerdani and himself, Tjan said that, to enable East Timor to be adequately governed, it was necessary to provide a proper authority as soon as possible. Indonesia could not provide the assistance required by East Timor at present because it had no proper standing there.

2. Tjan indicated that there were differences of opinion within the Indonesian Government on the need for an act of self-determination. He said East Timor was now *de facto* part of Indonesia. Some people in HANKAM argued that Indonesia should present the world with a *fait accompli* by announcing the integration of East Timor without any act of self-determination.

3. The result of the sort of act of self-determination Indonesia plans would be integration. It would not be the genuine act of self-determination we would like to see. But, as we have reported consistently, Indonesia will not settle for anything less than integration.

4. All Indonesian troops would not repeat not be withdrawn from East Timor before such an act although some would be withdrawn at the request of the PGET. Indonesia argues that

⁶ See the last paragraph of the report dated 29 February of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General the text of which is reproduced in Heike Krieger, *East Timor and the International Community: Basic Documents*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 87–93.

¹ Document 432.

law and order would break down if the troops were withdrawn. It also argues that a United Nations force would not be acceptable, even if it were practical in United Nations terms.

5. We do not know what the reaction in the United Nations would be to such a proposal but we assume that the continuing presence of Indonesian forces even if it is maintained that they are volunteers would cause problems; although probably less problems in reality than their premature withdrawal would create in East Timor.

6. United Nations observation of the process of self-determination is, we consider, as much United Nations involvement as Indonesia would accept. United Nations supervision of the act is not a starter.

7. We consider that if demands about the nature of an act of self-determination which Indonesia considers impracticable were made there is a possibility that those in the Indonesian Government advocating a *fait accompli* approach to integration could yet prevail although we doubt this. Another possibility in those circumstances could be for Indonesia and the PGET to seek to have an act of self-determination which was observed by ASEAN states.

8. Australian interests as we see them here are now best served through a solution to the Timor problem which is recognised internationally and leaves as few as possible opportunities for the problem to be kept alive.

9. Given that integration is inevitable it follows that the integration should be achieved in a manner which is recognised by other countries. We appreciate that our recent strong support for a genuine act of self-determination would create difficulties for us if the Indonesians proceed as we think they will.

10. But, as we see it here, we shall be faced with a choice of recognising East Timor's integration into Indonesia or, by not doing so, of encouraging continued FRETILIN resistance to integration and possibly even the establishment of a Government in exile. The latter could have serious implications for our longer term relations with Indonesia, especially if it sought to promote anti-Indonesian activities as, for example, the RMS does in the Netherlands. It could be a destabilising factor in the South East Asian region.

11. In preparation for that choice we would suggest that the Government should consider starting to place less emphasis on the need for a 'genuine' act of self-determination. Without abandoning the principle, the Government could, perhaps, acknowledge the difficulties of conducting a proper act of self-determination in a politically very backward and undeveloped society which recently experienced a civil war. Also we would recommend that we do not take a leading role in criticising, in the United Nations, a PGET proposal for an act of self-determination along the lines set out in our reference telegram.

12. In our discussions with Tjan we have, of course, reiterated the Government's policy of support for a proper act of self-determination.

13. Grateful advice on any specific points you would like us to make to well-placed Indonesians on this matter.

435 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 22 March 1976

O.JA5571 RESTRICTED PRIORITY

East Timor: Journalists

I refer to paragraphs 3, 4 and 11 of JA5414.¹

2. I have now had a fairly frosty answer from General Yoga to my letter² seeking, on instructions, to reopen the Balibo affair although he does say he will do his best to seek the agreement of the PGET to a visit to Balibo by an officer from this Embassy.

3. The operative paragraph of Yoga's letter which is in English is as follows:

Begins

'I regret very much to learn from you that the case of those journalists' deaths as has been re-raised by Mr Martins has created doubts from your side. In this respect, and regardless of your evaluation on the credibility of our explanations given before, no account has also been taken by your side on explanations which are also given on the part of an Australian national, Mr Rex Syddell on the same matter. Nonetheless, in keeping my pledge to cooperate with you, I will do my best to seek agreement of the PGET to a visit to Balibo by an officer from your Embassy'.

Ends

4. Yoga is an influential figure in the making of Indonesian policy. I was on good terms personally with him before my posting to Indonesia and was able to build on the relationship after my arrival. One unfortunate aspect of the Balibo affair is that Yoga to whom I have applied a lot of pressure on it is now less readily accessible and less friendly. I shall, however, do my best to mend the fences so that we can maintain contact on other issues not related to Timor on which he has in the past been cooperative and helpful.

5. I shall also seek to discuss personally with him his rather negative response to my carefully and politely worded enquiry about the journalists which did incidentally take account of what Syddell had said. It does seem however that there will be no response from the Indonesian side to Martins' allegations and possibly not to questions put by Mrs Dryden to the Minister.³ I shall take up the latter again. As you will see from paragraph 4 of our reference telegram Moerdani warned me that Yoga might be unresponsive and difficult on this matter.

¹ See note 1 to Document 432.

² Note No. 292 (15 March) from the Australian Embassy, Jakarta, to the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs. The Note advised that Martins claimed the five journalists from Australia who died in Balibo in October 1975 were killed and their bodies burnt by Indonesian troops allegedly because they had seen the journalists 'taking photographs of Indonesian helicopters and other war equipment'. The Note added that this differed from the UDT/Apodeti/KOTA account of the deaths and from an account by Rex Syddell, an Australian citizen living in East Timor, who claimed publicly to have evidence that Fretilin killed the journalists. It sought assistance from Indonesian authorities in facilitating a visit by an officer of the Australian Embassy to East Timor to arrange interviews with people who might have been in Balibo at the time of the deaths.

³ On 1 March the Minister received a letter from Mrs Dryden, mother of Greg Shackleton, in which she asked questions about the circumstances under which her son had travelled to Timor, events surrounding his death and investigations into those events. Peacock instructed that further inquiries be made into all the questions raised by Mrs Dryden and that she be kept informed.

6. Also from Yoga's letter and the *Antara* report in our JA5515⁴ the Indonesians probably intend to continue to make use of Syddell's story and to try to lay the blame on FRETILIN (a scenario which in any case cannot be entirely ruled out).

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, ii]

436 MEMORANDUM TO CANBERRA

[Jakarta,] 25 March 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

East Timor

Attached is a record of some of the main points covered in a talk with Tjan on 16 March.

2. Your attention is invited in particular to Tjan's comments on the problems flowing from the command structure for the East Timor operation and on the President's health.

3. Dr Sinaga, Special Assistant to the Minister for Defence, in a recent conversation with us, confirmed that the command problems existed. Tjan has, of course, referred to them before.

4. There are basically two criticisms of the Government's Timor policy attributed in local diplomatic gossip to 'sections of the Army'. One is that the large scale military operation should have been undertaken in late August last year. The other is that the military operations in December and since have not been conducted as well as they might have been.

5. Those generals, including Moerdani, who in August were recommending strongly a quick action probably still believe that course of action would have been preferable to the one subsequently adopted. But they accepted loyally the President's decision against their recommendation. We have no evidence to suggest that, in so far as this opinion (i.e. in favour of a military strike in August) is still expressed, it is so in any more than an academic manner.

6. In our view the second main criticism arises from the problem of the command structure. Not only has the operation been run by a relatively junior General in HANKAM (Moerdani) it has had (because of the Government's public policy) to be conducted in a more [covert] way than would be normal for an operation of its size. For both reasons some senior Army Generals have not been party to decision making on the operation. Naturally unhappy at this situation some of them have apparently seized on difficulties experienced in East Timor, especially in initial assault on Dili on 7 December, to criticise the way the military operation has been organised. But, as far as we know this criticism has not been levelled at the Government's policy to integrate Timor by force (albeit presented publicly in other ways). Despite Tjan's comments we consider the command problem remains. (See attached copy of the Military Attache's memorandum of 25 March to the Department of Defence.)

7. Tjan's comments on the President's health were interesting.¹ We have not, however, seen a reference to his throat problems before.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxi]

⁴ 19 March. It communicated the text of an *Antara* report, date-lined Kupang, 16 March, stating: 'An ex-Fretilin commandant of the city of Same who would not reveal his name said that his troops had killed at least ten Portuguese soldiers who refused to obey a command, and five Australian TV newsmen, because they did not want to leave the place where they were staying in Balibo'.

¹ One and a half lines have been expunged here.

437 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 31 March 1976

O.LB796 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Timor

Following from Minister for External Co-operation, Vitor Crespo, on 31 March.

2. Crespo thought the Winspeare report¹ was 'realistic', although it was regrettable that he did not have more to say about the actual situation on the ground.

3. Portugal realised that with every passing day their capacity to influence the situation was becoming progressively less. Portugal had no further economic interests in Timor. Such links as remained were historical and cultural. But they did have an obligation to the Timorese to do what they could to maintain their right to self-determination. For this reason, Portugal would not compromise on the two principles of an Indonesian withdrawal and an internationally acceptable act of self-determination. The modalities proposed by the PGET (in effect the Indonesians) were clearly unacceptable.² It was not that Portugal was opposed to integration—what it did oppose was a stage-managed act of self-determination by Indonesia.

4. Asked what he thought of the idea that each village should send a representative to a consultative assembly (O.UN5312³) Crespo said any consultation under PGET auspices was unacceptable to Portugal (and he thought to the UN also). What was needed was an interim administration (not necessarily under Portuguese authority) which would be answerable to the United Nations. (Crespo was not very clear on this point but he seems to envisage the Committee of 24 as playing a role in this.)

5. Crespo said that he had had recent reports suggesting that FRETILIN was by no means finished as a political and military force. (He did not disclose his source.) I said it was difficult to imagine how FRETILIN could maintain any sort of political organisation without communications, and still less a military force without external supplies. On the latter point Crespo believes that FRETILIN has managed to retain control of the very considerable quantities of small arms and ammunition left behind by the Portuguese. He also thought that FRETILIN, whilst they could not abandon the goal of independence, were now prepared to consider some accommodation with the other parties all of whom seemed to want a measure of economic and cultural autonomy from Indonesia. He recognised however that in present circumstances political autonomy was simply not on.

¹ See note 6 to Document 433.

² Cablegram JA5400 (15 March) communicated the text of a letter from the PGET to Winspeare Guicciardi stating that: (1) the People and the Provisional Government of East Timor had decided for the complete integration with the Republic of Indonesia and thus had already exercised their right to self-determination; (2) the PGET had decided to constitute a Provisional People's Representative Council representing all the people of East Timor to ratify the decision to integrate with Indonesia; (3) the PGET would invite representatives of the United Nations as observers during the entire process; (4) the PGET was not prepared to 'accept the so-called leaders of Fretilin agitating outside East Timor as valid representatives even of part of the people of East Timor'; (5) the political parties in East Timor had decided on 29 January 1976 to dissolve themselves and unite in a national front; (6) the PGET wished to invite Winspeare to make another visit to East Timor to discuss further the implementation of its decision in view of a solution of the question of East Timor.

³ 30 March. It reported that the Indonesian Mission to the United Nations had indicated that the consultative body which would affirm East Timor's integration into Indonesia was to consist of a representative from each of East Timor's approximately 500 villages.

6. Portugal was not greatly concerned whether China was president or not during the forthcoming debate in the Security Council. But they would be firmly opposed to a delay until May (para. 3 of O.UN5312⁴). Portugal wanted the debate to take place as soon as possible.

7. Crespo did not think that China's interest in the Timor question was as great as some of their public statements might suggest. (Crespo has been Portugal's contact man on establishing relations with Peking on which I am reporting by separate telegram.)

COOPER

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxi]

438 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 2 April 1976

CONFIDENTIAL

East Timor—Security Council Debate

The timing of the Security Council's resumed debate on Timor is still not clear, but it has been tentatively scheduled to begin on 14 April, that is at the time when you will be in Jakarta. Since Messrs Rowland and Joseph will be leaving for the Officials' Talks next week you may wish now to finalise the main outline of the Australian statement.

2. The Australian Mission in New York had already prepared a text to which you gave your broad approval while in New York.¹ The attached draft² accordingly draws heavily on the New York text. We have, however, attempted a simpler presentation. We have also taken into

⁴ Paragraph 3 reported that the UN Secretariat had provisionally rescheduled the debate on East Timor for 14 April. It added that the President of the Security Council, Lai Ya-li from China, had indicated that he would prefer that East Timor not be debated until his presidency concluded in May.

¹ Cablegram UN5196 (18 March) reported discussions with Peacock and Renouf in New York of a first draft of a statement on East Timor for possible use in the Security Council debate. Peacock had expressed broad approval of the draft but indicated a wish to consider the statement again before it was delivered. The draft statement recalled that the Australian Government had recommended sending to East Timor a representative of the UN Secretary-General to consult with the parties concerned and to recommend further action. It went on to suggest that, in view of the Special Representative's inability to visit territory claimed to be under Fretilin control, 'there would seem to be some requirement for a further fact-finding mission to the territory under the auspices of the UN'. In order for there to be a 'genuine act of self-determination' in the territory, the people of East Timor needed to be aware of the 'alternatives from which they are to make their choice', and, in order for an act of self-determination to be valid, Indonesian armed forces ought to withdraw from, and some form of UN presence should be established in, East Timor.

² This was a draft of the statement by Harry in the Security Council, published as Document 443.

account subsequent telegrams from New York³ and Jakarta,⁴ and your own notations on one of these telegrams.

UN Assistance or Presence

3. We have slightly altered the relevant passage to read 'some form of UN participation' rather than 'presence'. We should be disinclined to give support to the PGET proposal to invite a mission from the Committee of Twenty-Four to observe the process of self-determination. The Committee itself is likely to have difficulties with this proposal and in any event we think that we should be cautious about language which might lead to pressure on Australia to accept membership of such a UN mission. The Government may well feel in this regard that it should not become directly associated with what is likely to be, in greater or less degree, a pre-arranged act of self-determination.

Self-Determination

4. We have compressed somewhat the passage on self-determination, notably in deleting a passage to the effect that 'centuries of colonial rule have done little to advance the literacy and educational standards of the territory'.

Consultations between the parties

5. We believe that the note on which the Australian statement should conclude should be the need for the Security Council to extend Winspeare's mandate in order that he may continue consultations with the various parties. Such an approach would be consistent with the Secretary-General's own recommendation that 'as the parties concerned have expressed their readiness to continue consultations with my special representative, I suggest that these consultations should be continued for the time being . . .'

6. In fact some contact has already taken place between the Secretary-General, the Indonesians, the Portuguese and FRETILIN and the PGET on the modalities for such consultations. The initial idea was that Winspeare might convene a round table conference in which all four parties principal would participate. Indonesia, however, has said it could not take part because it does not consider itself directly concerned. Indonesia also expressed opposition to Portugal playing an active part. The present idea therefore is that Winspeare should meet individually in Geneva with each of the Timorese political parties, with Indonesia in 'close proximity'.

³ Cablegram UN5208 (18 March) proposed that the statement in the Security Council include a reference to the Australian Government's co-operation with the Winspeare mission. Cablegram UN5272 (25 March) communicated a number of ways in which the draft might be redrafted in the light of conversations between the Australian Mission and Sani, reported in Cablegram UN5258 (24 March). One was for the statement to take account of the withdrawals from East Timor that had already begun and the distinction between military and civilian Indonesian 'volunteers' in East Timor. Another suggestion was to encourage a popular role in, and UN observation of, the selection of an Advisory Council of East Timor to ratify integration.

⁴ Cablegram JA5650 (25 March) suggested that the draft statement should take account of developments in East Timor since the Security Council last discussed it, including that: (1) Fretilin had been virtually defeated; (2) the PGET was 'developing administrative control, albeit based on Indonesia's military presence, over all but isolated areas of East Timor and those few locations where remaining Fretilin forces have been regrouped'; (3) the status of the administration Fretilin had within East Timor was now unknown; (4) except for isolated actions, hostilities in East Timor appeared to have virtually ceased. In Woolcott's view, two aspects of present Australian and UN policy were mutually contradictory. These were the call for a cessation of hostilities, and the call for a withdrawal of Indonesian forces. He argued that the Australian statement in the Security Council should not place the Australian Government in the position of not being able to recognise Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor and should lay the foundation for recognising the results of the PGET's proposed act of self-determination.

7. We take it that you do not disagree that the Australian statement should support such contacts and consultations. We understand that this will also be the British and Japanese approach.

Withdrawal of Indonesian forces

8. The chief problem is that of the withdrawal of Indonesian forces and whether (in addition to earlier references in paragraphs 8 and 9) the section in square brackets should remain.⁵ Some token withdrawals might take place—and according to the Indonesians have taken place—but withdrawals will not be on a scale as would satisfy the language of the square brackets section. The Australian statement must of course include a clear reference to Government policy on withdrawal of forces and paragraphs 8 and 9 have been drafted accordingly. But we should be hesitant about going as far as saying that withdrawal of Indonesian forces is an indispensable precondition for a satisfactory act of self-determination. Some months from now, the Government may feel it will wish to come out in support of such a position, but there seems no immediate need to move to language of this sort.

9. If we were to do so, FRETILIN could regard it as support for itself in the Security Council against Indonesia. It could also place us out of step with our friends in the Security Council—the United States, United Kingdom, Japan and France. It could not fail to aggravate the difficulties we are having with the Indonesians and which have led them to make representations to Woolcott in Jakarta asking us to ease up on them in the Security Council. These representations have come formally from the Indonesian Foreign Ministry and informally from General Moerdani. Woolcott has also reported that concern and disquiet about Australian policy has been expressed by others in the government in Jakarta, and that this concern is known to be shared by President Suharto.

10. Another consideration is that the Indonesians are probably correct in arguing that withdrawal of Indonesian forces would, if implemented, lead to renewed factional fighting and further bloodshed. There seems no inclination on the part of the Secretary-General or in the Security Council to send in a UN peacekeeping force which might replace the Indonesians, and it seems equally clear that the ASEAN countries are not thinking in terms of one. A force would only be practical if the Indonesians were to accept and cooperate with it, and there is no sign of this. To advocate a force nevertheless would of course be possible, but would seem unrealistic, in addition of course to attracting Indonesian displeasure.

11. But the main point is that were we to use the language in the square brackets in the Security Council we should have effectively reduced our room for manoeuvre and before there is a need to do so.⁶

12. The statement as currently drafted has been agreed with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. (It will be recalled that the Prime Minister requested that his Department be consulted on the text in your meeting with him on 30 March.) Like us, PM & C regard the paragraph in square brackets as the chief problem. They would wish to see it deleted, and believe that they would need to consult the Prime Minister were it to remain.

⁵ This paragraph read: 'For an act of self-determination to be valid the people of the territory must, moreover, have the freedom to choose their future without coercion or pressure or apprehension. Before there is an act of self-determination in East Timor there ought, therefore, to be a withdrawal of Indonesian armed forces in order to create the proper climate in which the people of the territory can make their choice'. The paragraph was not included in the statement made by Harry in the Security Council (Document 443).

⁶ A comment in what appears to be Peacock's handwriting, next to paragraph 11, reads: 'not to use it has the same effect'.

13. *I recommend* that you approve the draft statement without the paragraph in the square brackets. The draft will of course need to be subject to last minute amendments to take account of developments either in Timor or Jakarta or in New York.⁷

ALAN RENOUF

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iv]

439 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 8 April 1976

O.JA5918 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

East Timor

Tjan has told us that the PGET will invite members of the Security Council, the Committee of Twenty-Four, Winspeare and most probably Ambassadors in Jakarta from 'ASEAN plus' countries (at least) to observe the planned meeting in Dili (stage one of the procedure outlined in JA5415¹).

2. The same group would also be invited to observe the debate in the Parliament in Jakarta and the Indonesian mission to East Timor to verify the wishes of the people (stages two and four of the procedure). These invitations would not be issued until the appropriate time.

3. If the invitations were not accepted Tjan said, Indonesia would be able to say to its critics that an opportunity had been given to the international community to observe the act of self-determination.

4. Asked whether international observation of the selection of district representatives to the Dili meeting would be sought, Tjan said that process was almost complete. There had been some slippage in the proposed timetable but it was still intended to complete the process by 17 August.

5. Tjan gave two reasons for the apparent haste. First, there was a desperate need for money in East Timor. Until East Timor became properly a part of Indonesia it was very difficult to provide funds through the Indonesian budget for expenditure there. Secondly, when East Timor was integrated Indonesia could answer any international criticism of what happened in East Timor by claiming it was an internal matter.

6. Asked about Indonesia's reaction if some countries (and the United Nations) did not accept the integration, Tjan said that these countries recognised Indonesia and East Timor would be part of Indonesia. In time this question would not be a problem.

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

⁷ The final statement (Document 443) contained two important changes to the draft. First, the last four sentences in paragraph 9 were added, and second, paragraph 13 in the draft was omitted. Paragraph 13 had stated that a consensus between the Timorese parties, especially for the principle of self-determination, should be built upon and could be assisted by the Security Council. The paragraph also called for a further visit by the Special Representative to Timor.

¹ Document 432.

440 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 8 April 1976

O.JA5920 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Minister's Visit to Indonesia*Ref O.JA3981¹*

With the Minister's visit only a few days away² the following updated assessment of the present state of Australian/Indonesian relations and some comments on the visit itself may be helpful.

2. We believe the Minister's forthcoming visit could be more difficult than his last. In January the Indonesians were primarily interested in a first-hand account of the new Australian Government's policy towards Indonesia and Timor.³ They were reassured by the Minister's reiteration of the importance the Government places on relations with Indonesia—but they were concerned about the direction of Australia's policy on Timor as outlined by the Minister. The Minister's visit will also closely follow successful visits by the ROK and Mongolian Foreign Ministers and a very successful visit by Mr Talboys during which Timor was not highlighted.

3. Since about last October a detectable coolness towards Australia has progressively developed as well as a general loss of momentum in our relations which, for reasons of Javanese courtesy and hopes for an early change, was not manifested during the Minister's brief visit in January. But since January Indonesian concern about our Timor policy has grown.

4. There are a number of ingredients in the present relative coolness all of which we have reported. To summarise, the main ones are:

- (A) Indonesia's disappointed expectations following the Prime Minister's November message⁴ to the President and the change of Government,
- (B) the belief, firmly if wrongly held, that Australia—a friend and neighbour—more than other countries of importance to Indonesia is stimulating internationally difficulties for Indonesia on a matter which it sees as vital to its national interest but as being no more than an issue of importance to Australia,
- (C) the lack of prior official level soundings about the proposed post ASEAN Summit visit by the Prime Minister to Indonesia, the host country, in advance of its discussion with other government leaders,
- (D) the repeated Australian public stress on the need for withdrawal of Indonesian forces from East Timor,
- (E) our earlier idea (impractical in their eyes) of a United Nations peace-keeping force.⁵ Coupled with what the Indonesians believe was an attempt by us at 'collusion' with Singapore on this matter,
- (F) the ready access to Australia accorded FRETILIN spokesmen and their use of Australia as a platform for anti-Indonesian propaganda,
- (G) the Minister's 4 March statement⁶ during the Address in Reply debate which was regarded here as 'abrupt', as overlooking the changes in the situation in Timor since

¹ Document 393.

² Peacock visited Jakarta from 13 to 15 April.

³ See Document 404.

⁴ See Document 343.

⁵ See Documents 362 and 410.

⁶ See note 2 to Document 431.

December, and as more critical than our Security Council statement⁷ in December, and most recently, our reopening of the Balibo affair.

5. We believe Indonesia assumes that we give a higher priority to our relations with Indonesia in our overall policies than to the Timor problem. There are signs that some senior Indonesians now wonder how we equate our desire for good relations with what they see as our 'anti-Indonesian' Timor policy. They may seek to make this point, perhaps indirectly in Javanese fashion, to the Minister.

6. While Indonesia did not expect Australia to fail to condemn breaches of accepted norms of international conduct, it had assumed that we did not want to see an unstable, independent East Timor. It had therefore hoped we would show more understanding of Indonesia's concerns, especially on a national security issue, and it was disappointed that we became one of its most prominent and persistent critics.

7. I would expect the Indonesians to press the Minister harder on Timor than they did in January. (Alternatively, however, they may decide not to do so, to accept the present differences and to leave our policies to drift along present lines until the situation in East Timor has moved further in their favour and until the Prime Minister's visit.) Underlying their attitude, if they do press the Minister harder, would be the belief that the Minister would not want to threaten a more serious deterioration in the Australian/Indonesian relations by exposing the nature of Indonesia's involvement in East Timor or by adopting a more critical position than at present.

8. The Indonesians may emphasise the difficulties of conducting an act of self-determination in a very backward and underdeveloped society like Timor and may explore the Minister's thinking on a 'genuine' act of self-determination. They will probably in formal discussions maintain the fiction that the Indonesian forces in East Timor are all 'volunteers'. They will also stress that they have been invited there by the PGET. The Indonesians may argue that if the 'volunteers' were withdrawn, law and order in East Timor would break down again.

9. The Minister's comments on these and other Timor matters will be noted carefully. Despite the franker strictures of some influential figures like Yoga (our JA5849⁸ refers), the Indonesians are now seeking as much international recognition for integration as possible although they will not be deterred if they don't get it. Aside from debate in the United Nations, Indonesia sees Australia as one of the very few countries still publicly criticising Indonesia on Timor. Indications the Minister gives as to what Indonesian course of action might be acceptable to the Australian Government would be welcomed.

10. But there are no signs that the Indonesians would be prepared to consider any more than token withdrawals of troops or a form of self-determination that would leave any doubt about its result. Thus I would not expect the Minister to find much flexibility beyond tokenism in Indonesian policy on these matters.

11. Genuine frankness is unlikely on the Indonesian side in the discussions on Timor. If only because they see us at present as acting against their interests and see no advantage and some

⁷ Document 382.

⁸ 5 April. It reported a long discussion between Woolcott and Yoga. Questioned by Woolcott about how the local representatives in East Timor would be chosen, Yoga answered that nothing could or would be changed by the United Nations: 'The people of East Timor would integrate with Indonesia. Yoga added "I do not give a damn what the United Nations says". Indonesia was not going to be lectured about self-determination by African countries which themselves did not practise it'. Yoga commented moreover that the principle of 'one man one vote' was not practical in East Timor and that 'as long as the majority of tribal chiefs and the emerging political leaders in East Timor were united, "no one—in the United Nations, in Australia or anywhere else—could stop them becoming what they wanted to become". They had decided integration with Indonesia was in their best interests'.

possible dangers in taking us fully into their confidence. I suspect that neither the President nor Ministers will go much beyond the official line on 'volunteers' and their support for an act of self-determination. While the Singaporeans for example—especially Lee and Goh—may not be as frank as Australian Ministers, they do come relatively directly to the point. They are much closer to us in the spectrum of frankness than the Indonesians (or the Malaysians), but it is not as easy, at the best of times, for Ministers to have genuinely 'frank' discussions here as it is in Singapore. The gap between Australian openness and frankness and Javanese courtcraft and courtesy is, except on the surface, wide. This difficulty is exacerbated in times of policy disagreements on an important issue.

12. As to the general approach to the visit we would recommend that, while Timor will clearly be a major topic, the Minister's discussions should place more emphasis on other aspects of our relations with Indonesia. In terms of the atmosphere of the various talks the Minister will have, it would be preferable for him to allow the Indonesians to raise the Timor issue as Mr Talboys did.

13. Developments in ASEAN and Australia's relations with ASEAN are obvious topics for discussion. It may be useful to explore Indonesian thinking on how economic cooperation among ASEAN countries might develop and on the role third countries might play. To date the agreed joint ASEAN projects we are seeking to assist have not been very successful. There may be an advantage in another meeting with the five ASEAN national Secretary-Generals and the Secretary-General (Designate) to review existing proposals and discuss new possibilities. (The last such meeting was held in Canberra in 1974.)

14. The Minister may be asked about Australia's attitude to ZOPFAN.⁹ We believe his views on the role of the great powers in the region would be welcomed. Our assessment of current developments in China and Thailand, especially China, would be of special interest.

15. Despite the present relative coolness in our relations there remains a reservoir of goodwill towards Australia which can be activated. There are several areas in which the Minister may be able to demonstrate that, despite Timor, Australia still genuinely seeks close relations with Indonesia and acknowledges Indonesia's major position in ASEAN and in South East Asian affairs. These could be especially important if the Minister wishes to repeat things on Timor which are unpalatable to the Indonesians.

16. It would be helpful, for instance, if the Minister could give some indication, even if only in private, about the size of our next three year aid programme and the second Defence Cooperation Programme. It would also be helpful if the cultural centre project and a cultural exchange programme¹⁰ could be reactivated. Following Harry's discussions with Indonesian Justice Minister Mochtar in New York a commitment in principle to an extradition treat[y] with Indonesia may be possible. Our annual review (memorandum No 477 sent by safehand bag on 31 March) includes proposals for several other initiatives which might also be considered.

17. Finally we would suggest that the Government has this year repeatedly made its principled stand clear on both the use of force by Indonesia and on the need for an act of self-determination. While this has had no real effect on Indonesian policy (although it has on the public presentation of that policy), it is placing at risk the fragile structure of the Australian/Indonesian relationship which has been consolidated by patient diplomacy and a variety of carefully planned initiatives throughout the last decade.

18. It is a matter of judgement and timing for Government decision but our feeling in Jakarta is that we have made our point. We cannot ourselves alter the course of events, unless we

⁹ For an explanation of the Zone of Peace, Friendship and Neutrality see note 3 to Document 9.

¹⁰ On 10 October Fraser concluded his visit to Indonesia with a communiqué that included reference to cultural issues and announced plans to increase the activities of the Australian Cultural Centre in Jakarta.

abandon the policy of good relations with Indonesia (and accept all that that would imply in regard to ASEAN, relations with the United States, etc) and intervene in Timor ourselves, and that it would now be timely to start to shift the focus of our relations away from Timor and begin to arrest the drift which has taken place in our relations over the last six months. Sooner or later the Government will have to come to grips with the inevitability of Timor's incorporation into Indonesia.

19. We are cabling this because the way the Minister's programme is shaping up there will be little chance to talk to him before he sees Malik on Tuesday evening and the President on Wednesday morning.

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A1838, 696/2/2/1, xii]

441 BRIEF FOR PEACOCK

Canberra, April 1976

CONFIDENTIAL

EXTRACT

Australian-Indonesian Relations and Possible Areas of Future Dissension

In recent years, Australia has had very good relations with Indonesia. President Suharto personally attaches a great deal of importance to the relationship. He continues to want to treat Australia as an honorary member of a sort of South East Asia club, an approach he has not adopted towards any other non-Asian country.

2. But good relations with Indonesia cannot be taken for granted. Years of patient work and understanding of Indonesian attitudes have gone into their building and equal effort will be required to maintain the relationship. Indeed, the next few years may prove more difficult for us than the last few.

3. In the first place it is to be expected that as our relations mature and pass beyond the mere search for mutual goodwill, issues and problems of substance will arise. Areas which could give rise to such problems include trade and investment, civil aviation, resources policies, extradition and so forth. We should expect, however, that these problems could be handled in a way which did not diminish the interest of both countries in maintaining a wider cooperative relationship.

4. Difficulties springing from our ethnic, cultural, social and linguistic differences, may prove harder to handle. The problem here is one of Australian attitudes. Indonesia, by and large, and despite Australian political vulnerabilities, has notably abstained from criticism of Australia. But over thirty years Australia has often criticised Indonesia.

5. There is a tendency among Australians to force their opinions on the Indonesians, to lecture them on the conduct of their domestic affairs, and to seek somehow to be the conscience of Asia. There is even the somewhat forced argument that the Indonesian regime is an aberration from the Asian norm and is an obstacle not only to good relations between Indonesia and

Australia, but to good relations between Australia and Asia in general. There is a strong belief especially in parliamentary, student and amnesty groups in Australia that the Suharto Government's image is tarnished—a feeling likely to increase as the Soekarno period recedes further into history and as the early promise of Suharto is eroded by corruption, nepotism and a failure to achieve a more equitable distribution of the fruits of economic growth. All this is compounded by opposition, in some political circles, to continuing the defence cooperation program and by pressures in some groups to cut civil aid.

6. Timor has added a significant new element of strain.

7. Naturally enough critical attitudes are resented by the Indonesian Government. There is an uneasiness that the Australian Government might be forced to drop its policies of cooperation and understanding. Our previous Ambassador in Jakarta used to say that President Suharto and those around him regarded Australia as unique among countries of Western origin in the degree of understanding that we showed for the complex social and political problems of Indonesia and the region. This Indonesian perception of our attitudes has been of great value to Australia.

8. It may perhaps be argued that all that is at stake is our relations with the Suharto Government, and that it is not so much this relationship which should count, but rather that with a future, more democratic Indonesian leadership. But our assessment is that Suharto is still very much in control and that, barring accidents, is likely to remain so at least through to the early 80's. Should he die or otherwise be incapacitated we should expect that the character of the regime will remain much as is, with the Armed Forces continuing to wield effective power. Meanwhile, we expect that President Suharto would be very sensitive to any sign of Australia backing away either from him personally or his regime.

9. The risks of over-identifying with the present regime are to be recognised. But it should not be beyond the scope of our foreign policy to maintain links with a sufficiently wide cross-section of influential opinion in Indonesia to ensure that we could weather any sudden change in the nature of the Indonesian leadership.

10. We have grown accustomed in recent years to a low profile Indonesia, whose attentions have been focussed on its own domestic problems and whose external and regional initiatives have invariably reflected moderate and even self-effacing policies. But these Indonesian attitudes are perhaps to be regarded as an aberration from more radical, nationalistic policies. Indonesian impatience with Western 'softness', the new flexibility afforded to Indonesia by its expanded oil revenues, and its heightened concern for internal and regional security in the wake of events in Indo-China, could now be nudging Indonesia in the direction of more assertive foreign policies. Indeed we may already be seeing something of this in Timor. The implications for Australia could be considerable mainly because public opinion will be highly sensitive to any reversion to the earlier assertiveness of Indonesian foreign policies.

Potential areas of friction

11. Several areas can be immediately identified as possible threats to our relations with Indonesia. They are Timor, PNG and detainees. Another could arise from differences of view regarding the wider problems of the region: in particular Indonesia's perception of its strategic situation appears to be influencing it to retain its nuclear option; there is also the possibility that events in the region could induce Indonesia to embark on a major rearmament program. Finally, of course, friction in our relations with Indonesia could arise from the obvious disparities in wealth between the two countries.

Timor

12. The future of East Timor is clearly being determined in a manner which will continue to attract unfavourable criticism in Australia. There are no signs that Indonesia has dropped its policy objective of absorbing East Timor. Indonesia will not withdraw its forces. We could still find ourselves in a situation where we are the only, or the main, country in the region protesting about what Indonesia, and indeed most of its other ASEAN neighbours, would see as Indonesia's legitimate national interest. The Indonesians might choose to sit out the period of the cooling of the relationship but there is still a possibility that we are in for a period of mutual recriminations during which extreme Indonesian nationalist feeling could be allowed to display itself against Australia.

[*matter omitted*]¹

Conclusion

26. Contrary to much of our rhetoric, the Australian perception of the nature of Indonesian society is by no means a sympathetic one. It is rather characterised by an abiding uncertainty, even uneasiness, about our large and restless neighbour. And this breaks through to the surface at recurrent intervals—most recently over Timor—and extends across the range of the domestic political spectrum. There is thus a continuing possibility of adverse political reaction in Australia to particular events in Indonesia. This can have the effect of impelling us in directions in relations with Indonesia which are not necessarily in the best long term national interest and which ignore the fact that the price of a hostile or unstable Indonesia for Australia could be very high indeed.

27. To be fair to ourselves it should be said that in the last ten years Australian friendship has been of value to the Indonesian regime. For example, our efforts to secure liberal terms for the re-scheduling of Indonesia's past debts and to increase IGGI² understanding of Indonesia's needs; Indonesia's position as the largest recipient of Australian aid after PNG; and the program of defence cooperation. Australia has also developed a pattern of close political consultation with Indonesia.

28. In the process Australia has been seen, domestically and internationally, to be a good and close friend of Indonesia. This indeed is the impression that governments have sought to convey. Domestic opponents of the relationship have seen successive governments' policies as being policies of uncritical support. The Indonesian Government, for its part, is quite aware of the nuances both of Australian public opinion and of Australian policies towards Indonesia. Its sensitiveness, feigned and real, in relation to unfavourable Australian critical comment has inhibited frank discussion. At the same time the Indonesians have avoided hostile over-reactions. They have thus played their part in keeping the relationship on the rails and in keeping us alert to the pitfalls that could easily loom.

[NAA: A2539, B76/70]

¹ Omitted paragraphs refer to Papua New Guinea.

² Intergovernmental Group on Indonesia.

442 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN PEACOCK AND PANGGABEAN Jakarta, 14 April 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

Timor

Following opening pleasantries *the Minister* referred to the importance Australia placed on its relations with Indonesia. He referred to the increase in Australia's economic assistance to Indonesia in the next three year aid programme. He foreshadowed advice on the Second Defence Cooperation Programme from the Australian Defence Minister in the next few weeks.

2. *Panggabean*¹ said that that was good news, but he wanted to talk about Timor.

3. *Panggabean* said he was sorry to have to say that he did not understand why Australia did not give assistance to Indonesia in solving the Timor problem. Indonesia supported the idea of self-determination. APODETI was formed by a spontaneous action of the people. It was not formed by Indonesia. APODETI, UDT (which initially favoured union with Portugal), TRABALISTA and KOTA joined together without Indonesia influencing them.

4. *Panggabean* noted that FRETILIN had not attended the Macau Meeting because it had not wanted to accept UDT as representing the majority of the people. Portugal accepted FRETILIN's position and took no action. Then followed the FRETILIN/UDT clash, FRETILIN's counter offensive on 18 August 1975 and their Unilateral Declaration of Independence. Indonesia took no action until the end of September.

5. *Panggabean* claimed that up to that time Australia had done nothing but assist FRETILIN. It never blamed FRETILIN and never helped the other parties. As the situation developed Indonesia could not remain passive. He wondered whether the threat to Indonesia was 'from the north or the south'. Australia was now the base for FRETILIN; its headquarters were moving there. He referred to the activities of Messrs. Scott and Fry and to the petition to the United Nations by 55 MPs.² Indonesia had never harmed Australia. There was more talk about Timor in Australia than there was in Indonesia. Perhaps all this was because Australia was a democracy, but what about the Minister's 4 March statement?

6. *The Minister* explained that with the democratic system in Australia, the Government was unable to direct public opinion or the attitudes of various groups. His party had not been in Government at the time of the events *Panggabean* referred to. The Minister pointed out that he had considered the FRETILIN boycott of the Macau meeting as disastrous and had said so publicly. He had never supported FRETILIN, nor had the Labor Government. He had publicly deplored the civil war and FRETILIN's Unilateral Declaration of Independence. At no stage had the Australian Government supported or recognised any party to the dispute. *Panggabean* said he found this difficult to understand.

7. *The Minister* explained that Mr Scott and Mr Fry did not represent the Government's views. Mr Scott was a constant critic of the Government. Mr Fry was a member of the

¹ Although the conversation was primarily between *Panggabean* and *Peacock* the following people were also present: Surono, Hasnan Habib, Moerdani, Adenan, Woolcott, Rowland, Taylor, Capt. M. A. McK. Clarke, Col. D. Drabsch, Col. J. Paat, and an Indonesian civilian recorder.

² Cablegram CH341361 (8 April) reported that Senator Arthur Gietzelt (ALP, NSW) had informed the Senate on 7 April that a petition had been sent that day to the Security Council by a parliamentary group known as the 'friends of Timor'. The petition had been signed by fifty-five members from all the Australian political parties. It called for the withdrawal of Indonesian forces from East Timor, the establishment of a United Nations presence in the Territory, a 'free and proper' act of self-determination, and the resumption of humanitarian aid.

Opposition. Mr Peacock said he would not tolerate the cessation of aid to Indonesia or the breaking of diplomatic relations as some critics demanded. Australia's relations with Indonesia were far more important than their difference over Timor.

8. *The Minister* said that, after 7 December, Australia had two other options in relations with Indonesia. First, to ignore mounting domestic pressure and say nothing about the Indonesian troops in East Timor. This approach would have ignored one of the lessons of Vietnam, namely, the need to have public support for foreign policies. The Government's aim was to have close relations with Indonesia. Arousing anti Indonesian feeling would not help. The second option would have been to adopt the idealistic approach and break relations with Indonesia. Mr Peacock repeated that Australia's relationship with Indonesia was far more important than the Timor issue, and referred to the 24% increase in aid as an illustration of this point. Australia had selected the most difficult diplomatic course in relation to Timor. It could not endorse the use of military force in another country or the use of coercion in an act of self-determination.

9. *The Minister* stated the four elements in Australia's Timor policy. These were a cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of Indonesian forces, the restoration of international humanitarian aid through the IRC, working through the Indonesian Red Cross, and a genuine act of self-determination. He welcomed indications that Indonesia was starting to meet these criteria.

10. There had been differences between the two countries before. We must not get Timor out of proportion. It should not be allowed to cripple our overall relationship. The increased aid was tangible evidence of the importance Australia placed on the relationship. *The Minister* said he could have waited until the domestic situation in Australia was more favourable before announcing the increase. He would live with the criticism, however.

11. *Panggabean* said 'I understand. But you undermine us'. *Mr Peacock* disagreed. *Panggabean* said Indonesia had never interfered in Australian matters, why should Australia meddle in those of Indonesia? Yet 'everything (sic) in Australia is against us'. The 'simple people' of Indonesia did not understand why friends did not help one another. Indonesia was a developing country and needed Australia, but Australia also needed Indonesia.

12. *Panggabean* asked what Australia wanted Indonesia to do, 'but don't make the situation more difficult'. Indonesian 'warriors' were in East Timor at the request of the PGET. Order and peace had to be restored before there could be an act of self-determination. He accused the Portuguese of distributing weapons to FRETILIN and continuing to pay the troops even when they fought with FRETILIN. What would have happened if Indonesia had done nothing?

13. *The Minister* reiterated the difference of principle between the two Governments. Australia's position was that there should be no outside interference. But events had overtaken that. Now it was important that the Timorese should determine their own future.

14. *Panggabean* agreed. He said 'leave it to the people'. Indonesia could not force them. Anyway such action would be against the Constitution. Until 28 November 1975 the President had been against Indonesian involvement in East Timor. *Panggabean* referred to Indonesia's colonial experience and said he could understand Timorese bitterness. 'We are not colonialists'.

15. *The Minister* disagreed that Australia was 'undermining' Indonesia's policy. *Panggabean* replied that it must be 'our simple thinking'.

16. *The Minister* said that Australia would welcome a PGET visit to Australia. If the Indonesians thought that a one-sided view was being put before the people in Australia, why not allow PGET representatives to come? Certainly though they would have to expect some demonstrations or difficulties if they did. He referred to elements in Australian society (leftist unions and some students) who would react strongly against attempts to limit FRETILIN

activities or restrict their movement, in and out of the country. The recent Moratorium had been a 'flop and a fizzle'. It had proved right to allow FRETILIN spokesmen to enter Australia for it. If they had been refused entry this would have become a far greater public issue. Activities by FRETILIN members, by radicals and by others such as the 55 MPs who signed the petition would create more media interest if attempts were made to suppress or restrict them. The Government was walking a tight-rope in Australian society. But rather than undermining Indonesia, it had averted greater public criticism of Indonesia. The Cabinet had had nothing to do with the Parliamentarians' petition.

17. *Panggabean* asked 'why didn't you tell us this earlier?' He hoped that those parties critical of Indonesia would not increase in number.

18. *The Minister* said it didn't pay to dwell on the past. He did not want to exacerbate differences but the press was a problem. For instance he might be asked difficult questions at his Press Conference that afternoon, the answers to which could be headlines. He would have to say that there were differences between the two countries, but he would stress the total picture and not concentrate on Timor. He said that he welcomed the frank exchange with *Panggabean* on these differences.

19. *Panggabean* said that Australia was the best friend of Indonesia, even better than the USA. Such a free and frank discussion was not possible with anyone else, for example, the English or the French. 'We must talk frankly to enable adjustments to be made'. *Mr Peacock* said that this would probably be the last time Australia and Indonesia would have to talk like this for a while. *Panggabean* repeated his request that Australia should not make the situation more difficult than it was. *Panggabean* commented 'we need each other. Let us know what you think we should do—we will adjust'.

20. *Mr Peacock* said that it would help the Australian Government greatly if the ICRC returned to Timor. It could work with the Indonesian Red Cross. Australia did not necessarily want it to be associated with the Australian Red Cross, or to be based in Darwin. It could even go to Kupang.

21. *Panggabean* stressed the need for stability in the region. He feared it would be upset if links between the OPM, RMS and FRETILIN were developed. Already there were signs of contacts between them.

22. In response to a question about the situation on the ground in East Timor, *Panggabean* said that Timor was now controlled by pro-Indonesian factions; FRETILIN forces [were] of small brigade size (3–4 battalions); the maximum size FRETILIN force yet met was one company; these forces were spread over 13 districts and, therefore, there was only about one company in each district; there was 'no more' central control of FRETILIN; the FRETILIN surrender rate was high and still rising; and in the very near future FRETILIN would lose its 'strategic potential'.

23. As to equipment held by FRETILIN, *Moerdani* explained that there had been two to three small sized brigades before UDT action in August. These brigades had spread out after August and he did not know how many of the soldiers were left. There were also militia, but there was no way of knowing exactly how many. Oecussi had been used by Indonesia as a yard stick to estimate FRETILIN strengths. There, a company of 180 well-trained soldiers had a total of 850 weapons of which about 650 were in the arsenal. Oecussi was the third largest garrison after Dili and Balibo. On the basis of this information *Moerdani* estimated there had been 9,000/10,000 weapons available to FRETILIN. Of these, Indonesian volunteers had captured 6,400 to 6,500 which left about 3,500 to 4,000, some of which may have been

buried or thrown away. Initially, FRETILIN had had 3.84 tons of ammunition, but there was no way of telling how much was left. It would probably be sufficient for years of guerilla warfare. Some ammunition came in an unidentified ship about the time the *Macdili* went to Dili on 24 August (but not on board the *Macdili*). The cargo most likely included .30 and .50 machine guns. At least three had not been captured yet. (The ship was of 300 to 400 tons and could have been the one Syddell referred [to]. He added that he did not want to get sidetracked discussing the credibility of Syddell.)

24. *Moerdani* said that on 3 March, the last big FRETILIN garrison had ceased fighting. FRETILIN remnants might take 4 to 6 months to reorganise as a military unit. Meanwhile they had the capacity to harass and shoot up small villages, but this should not be taken seriously by Australia. Pro-Indonesian forces could have taken out FRETILIN remnants by napalm (not with chemicals which they did not have) but restraint was preferred. By May/June, at the end of the rainy season, the remnants would have to come out of the hills to get food and water. The villages only produced enough for themselves and *Moerdani* hoped that an active anti-FRETILIN attitude would develop in the villages.

25. *The Minister* asked if the hard-core FRETILIN remnants could be won over by the PGET peacefully.

26. *Moerdani* noted that it was already being done, but there were problems. It was hard to communicate with them. The Indonesians, whom they trusted more than their fellow Timorese who fought them in the civil war, could not speak the language. The remnants did not believe they would be properly treated. Also less than 150,000 people in East Timor were used to travelling outside their own area. Most did not want to move. *Panggabean* added that the overall level of intelligence in the territory was very low. *Moerdani* said that in the area FRETILIN still controlled there were about 120,000 people. They were afraid. FRETILIN had built flimsy barracks to house people who had left their villages and told them that the Indonesians would kill them if they met them.

27. *Moerdani* said it would make his task in the field easier if the international community would 'get off Indonesia's back' so integration could be accomplished quickly. The PGET had suggested that one, two or three representatives from each of the district councils should meet in Dili to decide East Timor's future. Indonesia would support the PGET as much as possible. The method of selecting these representatives would probably not meet with international approval. It was important that the means of selection was understood in Australia—'the only white country nearby'. How could anyone expect an intelligent vote in a backward society like East Timor? *Moerdani* asked.

28. *The Minister* asked whether some form of electoral choice could be arranged in the more sophisticated centres, such as Dili and Baucau. Australia did not wish to prescribe a particular form of act of self-determination, but it must carry conviction internationally. *Moerdani* said that Baucau was too small for some form of election, but it might be possible in Dili. There was a problem, however, in that in some places the people might even elect an Indonesian—he would not, of course, seek election, but the people would not understand that.

29. A system of one-man-one-vote was impossible, *Panggabean* argued. *Mr Peacock* said he understood the problem. He referred to the variety of methods of conducting acts of self-determination throughout the world.

30. Turning to the question of the five journalists from Australia killed in East Timor *the Minister* asked about the security of Balibo. The issue of the journalists was still important in Australia. He would like a member of the Embassy to go to Balibo and talk with officials of

the PGET there and others who might be able to throw light on how the journalists died. *Moerdani* said Balibo was secure. He had invited the Ambassador to go with him. *Panggabean* invited Mr Peacock to go to East Timor. Panggabean asked if Australia would accept an act of self-determination which was not based on one-man-one-vote.

31. *Mr Peacock* said he would be under pressure not to. But [that] efforts could be made to explain the nature of the Timorese society. It would be helpful if an elective process were adopted somewhere. Australia was looking for the Timorese to determine their own future uncoerced. *The Ambassador* referred to the importance to the PGET of ensuring its legitimacy.

32. *The Minister* repeated the 'cardinal principles' of Australia's position. These were that the Timorese determine their own future (he noted that Indonesia agreed with this position); and that the overwhelming majority of Timorese be involved. How this should be done was not for Australia to say.

33. *Pangabbean* asked if the Australian United Nations delegation could be asked to include in its Security Council statement that 'one-man-one-vote' was not feasible in Timor. *The Minister* did not comment on this. He said Australia would be looking for consultations between the parties to the dispute.

34. *Pangabbean* concluded by saying 'we rely on your support. No other country can give us support. It is also for Australia's benefit. If we can't rely on Australia—who?'

35. In a lighthearted exchange as the Minister left *Panggabean* said that he was glad Indonesia was not a democracy like Australia.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xlv]

443 STATEMENT BY HARRY TO SECURITY COUNCIL

New York, 14 April 1976

I appreciate this opportunity to address the Security Council once again on the subject of East Timor.¹ We wish to assure you, Mr President, of my delegation's desire to co-operate fully with you in the Council's efforts to find a solution to the question which is at present before us.

I likewise welcome the reports of the Secretary-General and of Mr Winspeare-Guicciardi and I wish, on behalf of my Government, to congratulate Mr Winspeare on the task which he has performed under the terms of Council Resolution 383. His report, now before the Council, is a significant addition to our knowledge of the situation in East Timor.

The Secretary-General and his special representative were both in Australia at the beginning of February. As a result they will both have gained an appreciation of the intense

¹ The membership of the Security Council in 1976 was as follows: Benin, China, France, Guyana, Italy, Japan, Libya, Pakistan, Panama, Romania, Sweden, Tanzania, the USSR, the United Kingdom, and the United States. At its 1908th meeting, on 12 April 1976, the Security Council decided to invite the representatives of Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Portugal in accordance with Rule 37 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure to participate, without vote, in the discussion of the item entitled 'The situation in Timor: Report of the Secretary-General in pursuance of Security Council resolution 384 (1975) (S12011)'. At the same meeting, the Council also decided, at the request of the representative of Indonesia, to extend invitations to Guilherme Maria Gonçalves, Mario Carrascalão and João Pedro Soares; at the request of the representative of Guinea Bissau, to extend an invitation to José Ramos Horta; and at the invitation of the representative of Mozambique, to extend an invitation to Ken Fry.

Australian public interest in the Timor question. Indeed the events as they have unfolded in East Timor since the middle of last year have caused deep public distress in Australia. My Government feels keenly the need for peace in the territory, and progress and prosperity for its people.

The special representative has expended much effort in his endeavours over a period of some weeks to determine the views of the parties and to promote the conditions necessary for the parties to discuss differences among themselves. His task was not always easy, but he clearly went to great lengths, and in the face of considerable difficulties, to establish comprehensive contacts with the various parties and governments as required under the terms of his mandate.

The Indonesian Government assisted with his visit to Dili from where the special representative travelled to areas of Timor administered by the Provisional Government of East Timor. While in Dili Mr Winspeare was able to have discussions with members of all parties which have decided to join the PGET.

In response to his request the Australian Government was pleased to welcome Mr Winspeare in Darwin from where he attempted to arrange a visit to Fretilin-held areas. But while he was able to meet Fretilin representatives at several points in the course of his mission, including Darwin, he was unable to reach Fretilin-held areas in Timor.

This was a matter of regret to my Government which had agreed to provide the special representative with facilities to assist him to establish contact with the Fretilin forces in Timor.

But we do not regard his mission as being necessarily finished. The special representative has been able to clarify the positions of the parties on the ground with respect to the future of East Timor. Clearly there remain great differences between them as to how the situation in the territory should develop, and as to how the people of the territory should express their views.

The special representative, however, senses that despite these differences there is some common desire for further consultations and the Secretary-General has proposed that time should be allowed for the special representative to continue these consultations. Mr Winspeare has also spoken of the situation in the territory as continuing to evolve. This would suggest that there is still a requirement for information on developments there. A further visit to Timor by the special representative could help in this regard. We note from Mr Winspeare's report that the Provisional Government of East Timor has invited the special representative to make a further visit to East Timor and we welcome their assurances that he would be able to visit areas to which he had not been able to travel on his earlier visit to the territory.

The Australian position on the Timor conflict has been clearly stated. It accords with the resolutions adopted in December by the General Assembly and by the Security Council. We support the main thrust of both resolutions, notably their call for a withdrawal of outside forces and a process by which the people of East Timor can determine their own future.

We were glad to read in the official statement issued by the Indonesian Government in Jakarta on 20 March that the PGET had notified Indonesia that it would shortly be repatriating some of the Indonesian forces from the territory. It appears, moreover, that some may already have returned to Indonesia. Australia welcomes these developments and we look forward to further moves in this direction in line with our policy of seeking the withdrawal of all outside forces.

In my last statement to the Council on East Timor I emphasised that the Australian Government and people were most conscious that a stable settlement in East Timor can rest only on the free choice by the people concerned. It remains the firm policy of the Australian Government that the people of the territory should exercise freely and effectively their right of

self-determination. And, if their decision is to have any validity, it must be made in the full knowledge of the alternatives from which they are to make their choice.

My Government does not, however, presume to lay down any precise formula or modalities for self-determination. We should prefer to respond to the wishes of the Timorese people themselves as to the best means by which they might genuinely exercise their right of self-determination.

We note from the special representative's report that the parties principally concerned are also agreed on the need for United Nations involvement in self-determination in the territory. While we recognise that the question of United Nations assistance in this area would need to be subject to separate consideration and examination, we nevertheless believe that some form of United Nations participation would be appropriate, desirable, and in the best interest of the parties concerned.

We have noted the remarks of the representatives of the PGET and their proposals for self-determination in the territory. At first sight these proposals would appear to bear some relation to an earlier program of de-colonisation announced by the Government of Portugal. While we believe that these proposals are interesting and deserve further study, there would be a need to ensure that the election of a People's Assembly, or Parliament, was conducted in such a manner as would allow the people of East Timor freely to express their views.

The Australian Government continues to regard as important an early resumption of international humanitarian aid to the territory. The conflict has brought hardship and suffering to much of the population. We appreciate the work of the Indonesian Red Cross, but this is a task in which others, including of course the ICRC, would be glad to participate. Australia has already provided humanitarian assistance not only within East Timor itself but also to the Timorese who last year took refuge in Indonesian Timor. Australia remains ready to contribute again to humanitarian aid for East Timor.

Mr President, our wish is to see an end to the suffering in Timor and to encourage all moves designed to resolve the conflict in Timor. It appears that although the situation in the territory has evolved since the Council last considered the question, some fighting may be continuing there. We believe that the best course for the Council at this stage would be to extend the mandate of the special representative to allow him to make a second visit to the territory to assess the situation afresh and to ascertain the prospects for consultations among the parties. Out of his renewed efforts, we would also hope to get a clearer picture of the means by which the people of the territory may freely and effectively express their choice about their future.²

[NAA: A1838, 3038/9/1, ii]

² At the 1914th meeting on 22 April, the Security Council adopted resolution 389 by 12 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions (Japan and the United States of America). The resolution (1) called upon all States to respect the territorial integrity of East Timor; (2) called upon the Government of Indonesia 'to withdraw without further delay all its forces from the Territory'; (3) requested the Secretary-General 'to have his Special Representative continue the assignment entrusted to him under paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 384 (1975) and pursue consultations with the parties concerned'; (4) further requested the Secretary-General 'to follow the implementation of the present resolution' and to submit a report to the Security Council as soon as possible; (5) called upon 'all States and other parties concerned to cooperate fully with the United Nations to achieve a peaceful solution to the existing situation and to facilitate the decolonization of the Territory'.

444 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 15 April 1976

O.JA6059 SECRET

Visit to Indonesia*For Prime Minister from Peacock*

I believe my visit here has gone well.

2. The President received me warmly and we had a discussion lasting just on an hour which I am reporting by separate cable. I handed your letter¹ to him and it is clear that he is looking forward to your visit.

3. I believe I have succeeded in maintaining our stand on principle in respect of Timor without doing unacceptable damage to our longer term relations. In fact all of those with whom I had talks agreed that the Timor issue needs to be seen in proper perspective and that it should not be allowed to affect our wide ranging and good relations in other areas.

4. There is no sign of any change in Indonesian policy and it is clear that they are proceeding, with the apparent support of the PGET, towards the formal integration of East Timor into Indonesia in August. We were told that it is planned that representatives of the thirteen districts in East Timor will assemble in Dili in May to seek formally Indonesian agreement to integration.

5. The Ministers made a coordinated attempt to secure, if not our tacit support for their concerns in Timor, then at least our sympathetic understanding for their position. This point was made politely by the President and more directly by Minister of Defence, Panggabean. It was also made by Malik and Communications Minister Salim.

6. Salim also said that both Governments should act more forcefully to give effect to rhetoric about good relations. He spoke particularly about possible damage to trade and shipping between the two countries which, he said, continuing union bans on, and discrimination against, Indonesian shipping could cause.

7. The Indonesians are worried about the growth of hostility in certain sections of the Australian community towards Indonesia. They maintain that this is not in the long term interest of either country. I agreed with this and did my best to explain to them the facts of life in a democratic society.

8. My talks with Defence Minister Panggabean were, as I said, forthright. He maintained that Indonesia's actions were in conformity with the wishes of the majority of the East Timorese as well as in those of the region itself. He maintained that Indonesia's motives for intervention related to national security and not in any desire for territorial expansion. I put our own position on Indonesian military involvement in East Timor and the problems this has created in Australia with equal force. It was, I believe, a forthright and useful exchange. I believe that while General Panggabean was pressing for changes of attitude on our part, he nevertheless accepts the importance to Indonesia of good relations with Australia and our view that we should not permit the Timor issue to affect adversely our wide ranging bilateral relationship in other areas.

[matter omitted]

15. I also had useful private talks outside of the official programme with Ali Murtopo and General Yoga.

¹ The letter indicated that, due to Parliamentary and other commitments, Fraser would be unable to visit Indonesia until later in 1976.

16. Generally I believe the visit has been successful and worthwhile. The announcement on aid and my calls on the 'technocrat' Ministers were useful in helping to move the present rather e[x]cessive forces² of our relations with Indonesia on Timor to the much wider nature of this important relationship.

17. You may like to see my full records of conversation with Malik, Panggabean, Widjojo, Salim and Mochtar and these will be available to you after Easter.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/10/1, iv]

445 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN ARAUJO AND TAYLOR

Jakarta, 2 May 1976

CONFIDENTIAL

I thanked Mr Araujo for his assistance in our visit to Balibo on 29 April and my visit to Dili and Baucau.

Journalists

2. I explained that our visit to East Timor was to conduct a full enquiry into the fate of the five journalists from Australia who we presumed had died in Balibo on 16 October 1975. As a result of our visit to Balibo there were several important questions on which information was lacking. They related to the Liurai of Atsabe's letter¹ to the Government of Indonesia of 3 November 1975. I said I had discussed this matter in detail with Mr Lopes da Cruz and had given him a note about them. I asked for Mr Araujo's continued support for our enquiry, particularly for a second visit to Balibo with the Liurai of Atsabe or someone who knew about the information he had put in his letter.

3. Mr Araujo said that he had been held by Fretilin when Balibo was attacked and therefore did not know anything about the journalists['] deaths. He asked several questions about the incident.

4. Mr Araujo clearly wanted to give me the impression that he knew nothing about the deaths. He argued that the journalists had come to East Timor when Fretilin had control. Fretilin was, therefore, responsible.

5. Nevertheless, Mr Araujo said that he agreed we should complete our enquiry and that we could visit Balibo again if transport could be arranged. Mr Lopes da Cruz would continue to look after this matter and he and the Liurai of Atsabe would accompany us to Balibo when it could be arranged after the Liurai's return from his overseas visit. I thanked Mr Araujo for this agreement.

Visit to other Areas

6. I asked Mr Araujo whether I could visit a secure place in East Timor which had not been visited by Winspeare Guicciardi, explaining that there was a widespread opposition in Australia to the veil of secrecy drawn over the situation in East Timor. A visit to a place not seen by Winspeare would enable me to see another part of the situation. Mr Araujo said that I could go where I wanted provided that transport could be arranged.

² The word 'forces' should presumably read 'focus'.

¹ See note 2 to Document 335.

Act of Self-Determination

7. Asked for his plans about an act of self determination, Mr Araujo said East Timor would be integrated into Indonesia in accordance with the wishes of the people. I questioned him briefly on the details, whether there would be a choice and so on. Mr Lopes da Cruz answered in familiar terms: that is by referring to the choice of district representation to attend a 'parliament' at Dili in mid-May to confirm the November declaration of integration² after which a delegation would carry the demand to Jakarta. Representatives on the Committee of 24, Winspeare Guicciardi and Ambassadors in Jakarta would probably be invited to attend the meeting in Dili.

ICRC

8. Noting that the Indonesian Red Cross appeared to be doing a fine job I said that the Australian Government strongly supported the return of the ICRC to East Timor. What was the PGET's policy on the ICRC? Mr Araujo said that the PGET agreed that the ICRC could return to East Timor if the Indonesian Government also agreed. I said this attitude by the PGET was very welcome.

9. In answer to a question Mr Araujo repeated his agreement. Afterwards I checked with Lopes da Cruz and he said that what Mr Araujo had said was correct. General Moerdani also confirmed it, but added that transport was a problem. Dili and Baucau were alright, but elsewhere transport was difficult.

General

10. The discussion was quite short (about twenty minutes) because my program was then two hours behind schedule and Mr Araujo, who had been ill, was tired. My impression was that while Mr Araujo's agreement was sought on major policies he was not well informed on the details. Mr Lopes da Cruz seemed the hardest working and best informed member of the PGET. (Incidentally, Mr Araujo had shaved his beard and dyed his white hair black since we met him in Jakarta. He looked years younger.)

11. This discussion took place in the Governor's office in the Administration building. The room was furnished as it had been when the Portuguese Governor was there. But it was dusty and appeared not to be used much.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxii]

² See Document 349.

446 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 13 May 1976

SECRET

Timor: Self-Determination Process

The submission¹ sent to you ten days ago on this matter (attached) was returned without annotation on the recommendation that Woolcott should not accept an Indonesian invitation to attend a ceremony in Dili at which representatives from the thirteen districts of East Timor will declare themselves on the future of the territory (i.e., they will endorse the stand of the PGET in favour of integration with Indonesia). After that, it is intended that a delegation from the Indonesian Government and Parliament should go to East Timor at the end of June to 'verify' that the East Timorese really do want integration.

Latest Information

2. The previous submission was put to you because we wished to be prepared for what at the time appeared to be an imminent invitation. It now seems, however, that the Dili meeting of district representatives is likely to be held on 29/30 May. Tjan told our Embassy in Jakarta on 11 May that invitations to attend the meeting would be sent soon to selected journalists, 'ASEAN plus' Embassies in Jakarta, including Australia, and the Committee of Twenty Four. 'Extra efforts' would be made to encourage Winspeare to attend.
3. On 7 May Malik told Mr Woolcott that his preference would be to invite observers not to the Dili meeting, which would be 'too early', but rather to accompany the delegation from the Indonesian Government and Parliament at the end of June.² Tjan's later remarks, however, suggest that the original idea of an invitation to observe the Dili meeting may still apply.
4. In either case we shall soon be confronted with an invitation to observe part of the political process, presented as self-determination, on which the Indonesians and PGET are already embarked.
5. As to U.N. attitudes, Winspeare had told the Indonesians in New York that he could not attend unless there were 'at least an apparent free choice': a gathering which merely endorsed integration with Indonesia would not do. The Vice-Chairman of the Committee of Twenty Four has just told our Mission there that he felt sure that the Committee would not endorse any purported act of self-determination that did not conform to recognised principles; our impression from the Chairman of the Committee is that he would be most unlikely to recommend acceptance of any invitation to visit Timor so long as Indonesian troops remain there. It appears nevertheless that a formal invitation from the PGET to the Committee of Twenty Four is imminent.

¹ The submission from Joseph to Peacock described the preparations for the forthcoming meeting of the East Timorese Representative Council in Dili and noted that Australia's decision on attendance could affect the decisions of other countries. The submission put forward two views: the DFA view that the Australian Government should 'discourage the whole notion of any Australian attendance or identification with a process which is bound to fall short of acceptable standards of self determination', and a contrary argument that 'we will have to face up to the reality of integration some time and that there could be advantages in laying the groundwork now'. The submission sought confirmation that Woolcott should not attend.

² Cablegram JA6497 (7 May). According to Woolcott's report, Malik said that 'United Nations, media and foreign representatives would want to see more than Dili and to have a chance to test opinion. He therefore felt it would be better if they are invited to accompany the Indonesian delegation from the DPR when it went to East Timor to make its own enquiry in response to East Timor's request for integration'.

Arguments for Acceptance

6. There is an argument that, as we shall have to face up to the reality of integration some time, there could be advantages in laying the groundwork now. Another consideration is that ASEAN representatives, and perhaps some other regional representatives, will accept Indonesia's invitation: do we wish to be the odd man out? A decision not to participate would be a rebuff to the Indonesians: it would imply a refusal in advance to accept that the 'act of self-determination' could be genuine. Moreover, the Indonesians are likely after the event to say that as Australia had been given the opportunity to observe the 'act', we have no basis for criticism of it.

7. There is also an argument that we should be prepared to approach all questions relating to Timor with a straight bat, taking everything as it comes: that is, that we should not avoid accepting the invitation (though making it clear that acceptance implies no recognition of Indonesian/PGET claims, present or future), nor should we avoid comment—adversely or favourably, but, in any event, honestly—on the process as observed.

8. If we were to be represented, it would not necessarily follow that our Ambassador in Jakarta must be the Australian representative. Tjan has told us that 'embassies' rather than 'ambassadors' will be invited. (This seems to reflect an Indonesian view that chances of acceptance would be greater if they cast their net wider.) We could therefore send another officer (the Counsellor or First Secretary) from Jakarta as an observer, showing by this down-grading that we intended no political endorsement of the act; or we could presumably stretch the invitation further to provide representation from, say, our Mission in New York, or by someone not necessarily currently attached to the Government: Sir Laurence McIntyre comes to mind. There could be some advantage in this, in that while he would be attending as a Government representative, he is one step removed from the Government, and in his former capacity as Australia's representative at the United Nations established a reputation, widely accepted in Australia, for probity and integrity. In short, the choice of Sir Laurence could be useful in a situation where the Department and our Embassy in Jakarta have been the target for public and political criticism for alleged bias towards Indonesia. Were the Government to accept the Indonesian invitation, and were, of course, the proposal to be acceptable to Sir Laurence himself, I should be inclined to nominate him for consideration for the task.

Arguments against Acceptance

9. The main argument against Australian participation is that it could be held to imply official connivance or acquiescence in a process which will entail no real or even apparent choice between alternatives, and is therefore bound to fall short of acceptable standards. We assume that it was for this reason that the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Cabinet was cautious about any Australian association with the eventual 'act of self-determination' when it considered the East Timor situation on 9 February.³ The Government could, of course, accept the Indonesian invitation and then denounce the 'act' as inadequate. But, apart from the immediate problems with the Indonesians which this would cause, it would complicate eventual acceptance of incorporation if we assume this is to be likely—at least without some accompanying statement of reservation or withholding of recognition, as in the case of the Baltic states.⁴ The advantages now would seem to lie in avoiding an 'eyewitness' commentary at this time on the acceptability of the process. By declining the Indonesian invitation, the Government would have less immediate need to define its views—even though the refusal itself would imply disapproval.

³ See Editorial Note: Cabinet Decisions on Timor, pp. 711–12.

⁴ Until 30 June 1974, the Australian Government had declined to recognise the validity of the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the USSR.

10. Domestically, it is likely to be a matter of damned if we do and damned if we don't.
- (a) If the Government agrees to send a representative, it could be criticised for conniving in a spurious act of self-determination. Moreover, it would be most awkward to attend if both Winspeare and the Committee of Twenty Four had refused to do so.
 - (b) If the Government does not send a representative, it would be open to the charge of phar[is]saism and washing its hands of the problem, and to the criticism that it had declined the opportunity to bring pressure to bear for a more acceptable process, or at least to expose the hollowness of the proceedings followed. The fact that selected journalists are likely to be invited to East Timor to witness these processes will not help. We can expect considerable publicity in Australia about the matter, no doubt most of it hostile.

Position of other Governments

11. We have not sought the views of other governments on acceptance of the Indonesian invitation. One difficulty about doing so in advance of developing our own position is that other governments may expect Australia to give some form of lead. The fact of any Australian enquiries and representations on the matter would become known to the Indonesians, perhaps in the form that we are trying to lobby against attendance. We think it fair in any event to assume that most of the ASEAN countries will accept the Indonesian invitation. The Japanese and New Zealand decision is likely to hinge to some extent on our own. The Committee of Twenty Four is unlikely to send a delegation to East Timor as long as Indonesian troops remain, while Winspeare seems anything but anxious to be drawn into rubber stamping a process of ascertainment which he knows will be faulted by important members of the United Nations Security Council.

Conclusions and Recommendations

12. If the Committee of Twenty Four were attending, we might consider being represented also, whether by Sir Laurence McIntyre, or at a lower level, by an officer from the Jakarta Embassy or from Canberra, who could make a factual report on what he saw and limit his public comment accordingly. But, especially in the light of the attitude of the Committee and Winspeare, the Department's view is that our best approach is to discourage the whole notion of Australian attendance at or identification with the 'process of self-determination'. We also believe that the sooner this position is conveyed to the Indonesians the better; our objective should be to try to forestall an invitation.

13. *It is recommended* that we inform Tjan and others who have canvassed the idea of Australian observation of the 'process of self-determination' that such an invitation would not be welcome.⁵

ALAN RENOUF

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iv]

⁵ A handwritten note attached to the submission reads: 'The Minister saw this submission on 15/5 and decided that he would await the outcome of Woolcott's meeting with Moerdani'.

447 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 14 May 1976

O.JA6631 CONFIDENTIAL AUSTEO PRIORITY

East Timor: Self-Determination and Integration

We have been able to put together the following scenario from several reliable sources here for the invitation of various representatives to visit East Timor. As of today, 14 May, the present intention is to have the Dili meeting (of representatives of the 13 districts) on 31 May.

2. The list of countries to be invited is understood to comprise the following: Four ASEAN, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Japan, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Mexico, Brazil, Nigeria, Yugoslavia, Italy, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Iran, USA, USSR, France, Britain and UNDP.

3. Invitations would be addressed to ambassadors in Jakarta *and* their staff. Indonesia expects that representation will be mostly at head of mission and deputy level.

4. The present plan is for the representatives to leave Jakarta at three a.m. on Monday 31 May. Some East Timor districts (perhaps 4 to 6) will be visited before the party goes on to Dili. Representatives will be able to meet district leaders and make a tour of inspection. (The actual election of the district representatives for the Dili meeting will have taken place before this visit.) Return to Jakarta will be 7 o'clock that evening.

5. At Dili, embassy representatives and other guests will be able to observe the meeting of the 50 to 60 district representatives, which will decide whether to seek independence or join Indonesia.

6. We understand Indonesians still hope that Winspeare Guicciardi and a delegation of the Committee of 24 might also attend.¹

7. Invitations would also be extended to media representatives. The tentative list was as follows: ABC, AFP, AP, Japanese agency (2), China (Taiwan agency), West Germany, Reuters (McIntyre), TASS, UPI, Newsweek, Far Eastern Economic Review, *Hamish McDonald*,² *Denis Warner*.³

8. The Government will need to decide shortly how we should respond to this invitation.

9. I suppose the princip[al] argument against acceptance of the invitation would be that it could be claimed that the Government was endorsing an Indonesian *fait accompli* and a bogus ascertainment of the wishes of the people. For some, there could also be protocol problems about the standing of the PGET to invite, and for the Indonesian Government to facilitate, a visit to East Timor by heads of mission.

10. On the other hand there would seem to be a number of other arguments which you would need to take into account in reaching a decision.

11. As far as Australia is concerned it would generate some ill-feeling here and in Dili, especially after the recent pressures we have put on the Indonesians in respect of the visit of the Embassy's three man team to East Timor, if we were now to decline this invitation.

12. In the long term we are going to need to live with an integrated East Timor and our agreement to send a representative (but not the Ambassador) at this stage could in the future prove useful when we come to grasp this nettle.

¹ Cablegram GE18094 (14 May) reported that Winspeare Guicciardi considered that he could not attend the meeting of the East Timorese Representative Council in Dili 'unless requirements of the Security Council had been complied with in all respects'.

² Australian journalist, *Sydney Morning Herald*.

³ Australian journalist, *Melbourne Herald*.

13. We have noticed that there has also been criticism in Australia that the Government does not repeat not know what is going on in East Timor and that a 'curtain of silence' has been drawn around the Territory. In this context it could be argued that it would be unwise to reject any opportunity provided to ascertain at first-hand what is happening in the Territory. Even if it were to be concluded that the visit would be carefully stage-managed—which it will be—countries could not justifiably be critical of the situation or even the act of self-determination if they had declined an invitation to make the visit.

14. It would seem inconsistent to have pressed for Taylor, Rutter and Johnson to visit Balibo and then for Taylor to visit other areas of East Timor and then to reject an invitation to examine the situation in some other parts of East Timor. The fact that Taylor has recently returned from East Timor is not, repeat not, in my view, a reason why we should not repeat not accept an invitation which would enable Taylor to return, or somebody else to go. Taylor's visit was primarily concerned with the journalists. This visit would have a different purpose and could also cover centres other than the three visited by Taylor.

15. The reaction of ASEAN governments will be of interest. The decisions will be taken in capitals of course but from discussions here it would seem that they will accept invitation.

16. As far as I know from preliminary discussion, the United States Ambassador intends to recommend to Washington that he not repeat not accept the invitation, but nominate his Deputy Chief of Mission to go in his place. The reason for this, he said, was that his presence could stir up the Timor issue in Congress, in which it is at present quiescent, especially on the issue of the use of United States military equipment. The Soviet Ambassador is completing his posting in Indonesia and is leaving Jakarta next week, so he will be able to decline on these grounds (in any case TASS is being invited). The New Zealand Ambassador says he is recommending acceptance of the invitation and that he should make the visit himself if ASEAN heads of mission do so. I do not repeat not yet know how Japan intends to react, but believe that the Ambassador here intends to recommend that his Deputy go.

17. It is of course for Government decision in Canberra, but my recommendation from this end would be that we should accept the invitation to participate in the visit. If you do not repeat not want head of mission to go I could decline (even this will cause some disappointment, especially following the Minister's visit and if other ASEAN plus heads of mission go) and Dan would make the visit.

18. I expect to see Moerdani on Monday and will report further after that. Malik is still overseas.⁴

WOOLCOTT

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

⁴ In the record of a conversation dated 14 May, Rowland noted that he had informed Peacock that an invitation to the Australian Government to observe the meeting of the East Timorese Representative Council in Dili was likely to be received by Woolcott at a meeting with Moerdani on 16 May, and 'in the circumstances it now seemed too late to head off an invitation as had been proposed in the Department's submission sent to the Minister two days earlier' (see Document 446). Peacock agreed it would be difficult for the Australian Government to reject an invitation if others attended but 'we should need to make clear to the Indonesians that our attendance did not imply acceptance (or otherwise) of the outcome of the Dili meeting'. Cablegram CH354853 (15 May) advised the Embassy in Jakarta that the DFA would await a further report following Woolcott's call on Moerdani and that Woolcott should receive the invitation without commitment.

448 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 14 May 1976

O.UN5679 SECRET ROUTINE

East Timor

We appreciate your inclination against acceptance of an invitation to Australia to observe the 'process of self-determination'.¹ However it might make it easier for Australia to decline if a possible UN observation were under consideration.

2. We feel that we should not rely too much on the Special Representative's observing the process of self-determination in East Timor. As his appointment was requested by the Security Council, Winspeare sees his responsibility in Timor as principally to examine the military situation on the ground. Even if he were able to get to East Timor in time to observe any selection/election of popular representatives in the Territory, it remains to be seen whether he would deal with this aspect in a substantial way in his report. You will be aware that China and Tanzania, among others, believe that the Special Representative should play a limited role in East Timor, and not involve himself in questions relating to self-determination. We would not be surprised if Winspeare, to avoid the question altogether, decided to make his visit to East Timor after the Dili meeting is concluded.

3. Australian activity to determine whether there were any elements of the Indonesian/PGET position on self-determination which could be taken up and examined by the Committee of 24 would also seem to coincide with Australian support for a genuine act of self-determination in the Territory. Of course time is short and the longer the Indonesians delay in presenting an invitation to the Committee the less likely it is that there will be points on which the Committee could respond positively to the Indonesians.

4. However, the Indonesians may already have set the invitation in train. A Committee of 24 rebuff to the Indonesians based on an assumption that the proposed act of self-determination is not worth observing would presumably be regarded by Indonesia as an unfriendly act. But failure by Australia to support a mission of the Committee of 24 might not be understood in Australia. This suggests the need to explore urgently the possibility of even persuading the Indonesians to defer the invitation until they can arrange with the PGET the kind of act of self-determination which the Committee of 24 could appropriately observe.

5. We assume that Australia is unlikely to be considered as a possible participant in a visiting mission, should one eventuate, but could certainly make this clear in advance.

HARRY

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxii]

¹ Cablegram UN5672 (12 May) reported that Salim had commented that it would be possible for the Committee of 24 to accept an invitation to observe the Dili meeting in East Timor 'if it was guaranteed access to the different parts of the territory and contact with the people and with political parties'. Cablegram CH354187 (13 May) informed the Australian Mission to the United Nations that DFA was inclined against accepting an invitation to observe the meeting and 'more attracted to the notion that any United Nations observer role in Timor would be better fulfilled by a representative of the Secretary-General (i.e. Winspeare Guicciardi) than a delegation from the Committee of Twenty Four'.

449 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 21 May 1976

O.JA6766 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

East Timor*For Minister and Secretary from Woolcott**Repeated New York UN (for Harry), Geneva (for Davis), Lisbon (for Cooper)*

I had a long and frank discussion with General Moerdani last night, 20 May.

*[matter omitted]*¹*Dili Meeting*

12. Moerdani said that it had now been 'firmly decided' that 'representatives' of the ASEAN missions in Jakarta plus representatives from the PNG, New Zealand, Japanese, Australian, Sri Lankan, Indian, Iranian, Saudi Arabian and some other countries would be invited to visit Dili on 31st May. It had been decided also that the President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General, Winspeare, Salim, representatives of the Security Council, representatives of the Committee of Twenty-Four and the UNDP would also be invited. The rest of the space available would be filled up with media representatives along the lines of those listed in our O.JA6631,² including TASS.

13. Moerdani said that partly due to reservations expressed to various Indonesian officials by the American Ambassador, the Dutch Ambassador and myself, it had yesterday been decided not to ask ambassadors but 'missions' to nominate 'representatives' to attend the one-day meeting which would now be confined to Dili. Moerdani said that Malaysia and the Philippines might send ambassadors anyway, although Indonesia would *not* encourage this but Indonesia recognised the domestic problems for countries like Australia and the United States and the 'protocol problems' involved for all heads of mission. He said he hoped we would nominate Dan or Taylor, especially following the pressure I had exerted to get the Taylor mission to East Timor.

14. Moerdani confirmed that Mario Carrascalao had gone to Geneva where he would invite Winspeare on 31 May. He would go on to New York on Monday 24 to extend personally invitations to Salim and other proposed United Nations invitees.

15. I said that these arrangements—which General Moerdani described as 'firm'—differed slightly from what I had learned last week (our JA6631). It now seemed that the visit on 31 May would be only to Dili. Also the notice, especially to those outside of Jakarta, would now be very short. Moerdani said this was true. But it was not entirely accidental. Indonesia was not worried about the short notice in respect of the United Nations. Salim had told Sani that he could not visit East Timor 'while one Indonesian soldier remained' there. This was 'nonsense' and as Salim recognised an 'impossible pre-condition'. As Salim, and therefore presumably the Committee of Twenty Four, would not accept the invitation from the PGET it did not matter whether the notice was short or not (echoes of Malik (April) aphorism 'the dogs may bark but the caravan moves on'). Moerdani added that he believed Salim was aware of the

¹ Omitted paragraphs discuss the possibility of the ICRC's returning to East Timor and Indonesian irritation with the proposed visit to East Timor and possibly to Fretilin-held areas by a trade union aid ship.

² Document 447.

likely course of events and realised that the United Nations could not alter that course, even if some members did not approve of it.

16. I said that I believed it was in Indonesia's interests to have the major countries in the United Nations accept the legitimacy of any act of choice leading to the incorporation of East Timor. This could prevent problems later. Moerdani then said 'look, we have always been frank with each other. Let's stop playing games. Politicians and people at the United Nations may have to do this, but as General Panggabean and I explained to Mr Peacock, conditions in Timor just don't allow for the type of act of self-determination the Committee of Twenty Four and the Australian public might find fully acceptable. Anyway, we are making the gesture. If they do not accept then they are not well placed if they want to criticise the process later'.

17. I asked Moerdani whether this meant that Indonesia had decided to secure integration regardless of the United Nations. Moerdani said 'No' (but he meant 'Yes'.) Indonesia would continue, he said, to try to accommodate the United Nations but we and the United Nations must realise that 'the course was set'. Integration would take place in August. The PGET and the majority of the articulate persons in East Timor in fact now wanted and accepted integration. People 'outside' had failed to understand this.

18. Moerdani also said that it had now been decided that *all* heads of mission in Indonesia would be invited by Indonesia (not by the PGET thereby removing a protocol problem) to accompany the Indonesian parliamentary (DPR) fact-finding delegation to East Timor when it goes to ascertain whether the people really want integration. This will be at the end of June. He said that, on this occasion, Indonesia would 'expect' ambassadors from the ASEAN plus group to go.

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

450 REPORT BY TAYLOR

Jakarta, [21 May 1976]

SECRET AUSTEO

EXTRACTS¹

Visit to East Timor

Indonesian Presence

43. The Indonesian physical presence was unobtrusive, but clearly all pervasive. At Balibo we identified no Indonesians, at Baucau there were Indonesians in civilian dress—doctors and so on; similarly at Viqueque there were Indonesians in civilian dress, though not as many.

¹ Omitted sections include estimates of casualties of the conflict in East Timor, refugees, physical damage and the economy, East Timorese attitudes to Fretilin, Fretilin's position, the 'Indonesianisation' and the administration of East Timor, attitudes to Indonesia and Australia, the Red Cross, and prospects for East Timor. The last paragraph concludes: 'East Timor was rapidly becoming a part of Indonesia. Understandably I saw no signs of opposition to this development. East Timorese leaders support integration in the present circumstances apparently because they see it as offering a better future for East Timor than the continued civil strife they anticipate if Indonesia were not to maintain law and order and defeat Fretilin. They made it clear, however, that in the longer term they would only be content with integration if it led to improved conditions in East Timor'.

Lopes da Cruz said there were about 1,200 Indonesian 'volunteers' in East Timor. At Baucau it was said there were about 100; at Viqueque the administrator said he did not know how many there were.

44. I saw no Indonesian armed forces personnel in uniforms. Most of the 'volunteers' I saw seemed to be military personnel, however. Their bearing and attitude towards each other betrayed them. For instance a few saluted one another. At Dili the airport was administered by Indonesians. I saw what seemed to be a patrol of Indonesian soldiers dressed in white T-shirts and dark green trousers near the airport.

45. It was not surprising, of course, that no uniformed Indonesian soldiers were seen. General Moerdani explained frankly that any place I was to visit would be 'cleaned up'. When I lunched with Moerdani, Colonel Dading (the local Indonesian Commander) and Lopes da Cruz in their Dili base (the house of Moussinho, the UDT leader killed by Fretilin) Moerdani said 'you have seen the official side, this is the unofficial side'. He also mentioned that he did not want me to visit East Timor between 4 and 6 May because there was a routine change over of Indonesian troops. (In Kupang there were suggestions that this was, in fact, an increase in the number of troops.)

46. Indonesian influence was noticeable too in the regimentation of the groups mentioned above—the scouts, Red Cross volunteers (locals, not to be confused with the Indonesian 'volunteers') and so on. Indonesian 'volunteers' in charge of these groups drilled them in military fashion. (A platoon of men in traditional costume in Viqueque drilled with some precision using wooden rifles capped with Indonesian flags.) Light blue uniformed 'partisans'—ex-Apodeti and UDT soldiers—acted as guards and controlled crowds. They formed a Timorese militia force.

47. These and similar activities appear somewhat crude and heavy handed attempts to convince observers of the extent of support for integration. They also had an important propaganda role, and appeared to be enthusiastically received.

48. At Baucau there were no demonstrations in favour of integration as there were at Viqueque and Balibo (on the second visit). It was impossible given the tight organisation of my visit and the ever present Indonesians (except in Balibo), to judge whether expressions of support for integration were genuine. There was no doubt, however, that the children especially enjoyed the pageantry and novelty of the organisations set up.

[*matter omitted*]

Act of Self-Determination?

53. There was no doubt that the political process leading to integration on 17 August this year described to us in Jakarta was proceeding.

54. It was unlikely that any choice would be offered at the meeting of district representatives at Dili in the second half of May. The meeting was seen as an occasion to confirm the Balibo declaration of integration made in November last year.² International representatives including Ambassadors in Jakarta, would be invited to observe the meeting.

55. In addition to the two representatives from each district chosen by the people, 13 traditional leaders, members of the Advisory Council and about 10 members of the PGET would participate.

56. On the grounds of East Timor's political backwardness not even all the district representatives would be selected on the basis of one-man-one-vote. Viqueque's representatives were said to have been chosen by the local leaders; Baucau's were said to have been chosen by

² See Document 349.

the people (exactly how was not made clear) on 9 April. The Administrator of Maliana, who was in Balibo, had not been asked to provide representatives for the Dili meeting, but said he could arrange for them quickly. There was no question that any of these representatives would oppose integration.

57. Lopes da Cruz acknowledged the importance in terms of international opinion and the legality of integration of a choice at the Dili meeting. He agreed that a genuine act of self-determination should be seen to be held. Personally he would agree to a referendum and he expressed no doubt as to the result. But he claimed that the people wanted integration and did not want a referendum which would only stir up old—or not so old—problems. Despite the view of the United Nations the PGET had to follow the wishes of its supporters he said. Carrascalao too argued along similar lines.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, iv]

451 REPORT BY TAYLOR

[Jakarta,] 26 May 1976

EXTRACTS

Visits to Balibo April/May 1976

1. *Background to Visits*

1.1 Following agreement by the Indonesian Government and the Provisional Government in Dili to a request by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs instructed the Australian Ambassador in Jakarta to send the following Embassy officials to Timor to conduct as full an enquiry as possible into the deaths of five journalists from Australia presumed to have occurred in the village of Balibo (East Timor) on 16 October 1975:

Mr A. R. Taylor, Counsellor

Mr D. C. Rutter, Consul

Mr R. K. Johnson, Third Secretary

[*matter omitted*]¹

2. *Factors affecting the Visits*

2.1 The Australian Embassy Jakarta has no diplomatic or consular accreditation in East Timor which is formally Portuguese Territory. Portugal has no effective presence, influence in or access to the territory. The team had no authority to insist on the provision of witnesses or persons with knowledge relevant to the deaths.

2.2 Because of the political situation in East Timor the team had to use Kupang, Indonesian Timor, as its base for the enquiry. This situation also inhibited the team's access to some persons who may have been able to assist the enquiry.

2.3 The team relied on, and received, the cooperation of the authorities in East Timor and in Indonesia for access to East Timor and transport.

¹ Matter omitted throughout this document refers to arrangements, and detail which adds non-essential or repeated information.

2.4 About six months had elapsed since the battle in which the journalists were presumed to have died. It was stated to the team that many East Timorese, some of them still unidentified, had been killed since 11 August 1975. While regretting the deaths of the journalists East Timorese leaders said that the situation in East Timor had not allowed them to give the journalists' deaths special attention. Also it was pointed out that at the time of the Balibo attack Apodeti and UDT had been separate entities.

2.5 The team based its findings on information obtained during its two visits to Balibo.

3. *Outline of Program*

3.1 The team arrived in Kupang on 28 April and travelled to Balibo the next day arriving at 0950 hours. In Balibo it held discussions with Mr Lopes da Cruz, Vice Chairman of the Provisional Government of East Timor; Mr Thomas Gonsalves, Commander of the Apodeti forces at Balibo on 16 October 1975; and Mr Travares, Commander of the UDT forces at Balibo on 16 October 1975. It also examined the Chinese house/shop in which four of the journalists were said to have died (hereafter referred to as 'the Chinese house') and had a close look around the village. The team also took photographs. It left Balibo at about 1220 hours to return to Kupang.

[matter omitted]

3.3 On 9 May the team returned to Balibo at 1100 hours. Discussions were held with the Raja of Atsabe; Mr Mario Carrascalao, Chief of Protocol of the Provisional Government; Mr Thomas Gonsalves; and Mr Travares. Before leaving at 1430 hours the team further examined the Chinese house.

[matter omitted]

3.5 The team returned to Jakarta on 10 May.

[matter omitted]

4. *Presence of the Journalists at Balibo*

4.1 The team is unaware of any claim that the journalists were not in Balibo on 16 October 1975. There was no suggestion during the team's visit to East Timor that the journalists had not been in Balibo, or that they had not died there.

4.2 Mr Lopes da Cruz and Mr Thomas Gonsalves said that there was no possibility that any of the journalists had been held prisoner at any time by UDT or Apodeti forces.

[matter omitted]

6. *Balibo: The Village*

6.1 Photographs 1 to 4 (Annex C) give an idea of the size of Balibo. The town is surrounded by hills. It contains a fortress (photographs 5 and 7) and a few houses/shops (photograph 4) at the junction of roads to Batugade, Cova and Maliana (photograph 3). It is about eight kilometres inland from Batugade. The coast at Batugade is clearly visible from the fortress at Balibo (photograph 9). There is a small school which did not appear to have been used for some time. There are several house/shops, all, the team was told, previously operated by Chinese. (On one the words 'HOTEL MIMOSA' were visible on 29 April—see photograph 6.) Three of them were structurally similar to the one in which the remains of the four journalists were said to have been found. They and other buildings showed signs of burning.

[matter omitted]

8. *Balibo: The Chinese House*

8.1 The house in which about fifteen bodies were said to have been found is at the junction of the roads to Cova, Maliana and Batugade. It is built of cement and cement

bricks with a red cement floor. It has three rooms. When the team saw the house a narrow room had been partitioned off between the shop and the storage room on the side nearest the road to Batugade. (Mr Lay Kam Nhag said on 9 May that there had been no such partition in the room when he had left Balibo.) There was a small bathroom off a narrow passage at the back of the house. The wall of the passageway opposite the entrance to the bathroom was completely blackened. Photograph 23 shows that the wood of the bathroom window at the back of the house was severely charred.

[matter omitted]

- 8.8 In the team's opinion the damage to the inside of the house was consistent with the claim that there had been a fire there and that the contents of the house, including such items as the wooden roof beams had smouldered for some time.

9. *The Attack*

- 9.1 Mr Thomas Gonsalves said that the Apodeti/UDT attack on 16 October 1975 had been planned to take the Fretilin forces in Balibo by surprise: the Apodeti and UDT forces, numbering about seven hundred, and wearing blue and khaki uniforms respectively, had gone along the border and attacked from the direction of Cova, rather than from Batugade which had already been taken by the anti-Fretilin forces (see map at Annex B).
- 9.2 The attack had come from the two hills on either side of the Cova road. The Apodeti forces, under the command of Thomas Gonsalves, had attacked over the hill on the eastern side of the Cova road (photograph 26) and the UDT forces, under the command of Travares, had attacked over the hill on the western side. (This latter hill—see photograph 27—extends right along behind the school building, which is behind the Chinese house in which the fifteen bodies were said to have been found.)
- 9.3 The Apodeti/UDT forces had had weapons captured from Fretilin when Batugade had fallen. They had had sixty to eighty millimetre mortars, automatic weapons and rifles. Mr Thomas Gonsalves said they had also had bazookas, but these had not been used in the attack. The Apodeti/UDT forces had also been strengthened before the attack, according to Mr Carrascalao, by the arrival of UDT troops from Los Palos.
- 9.4 On 29 April Mr Thomas Gonsalves said that the attack had started in dawn light at about five o'clock on the morning of 16 October 1975 and had lasted possibly for about two hours. On 9 May he said that the attack had begun at five o'clock and had lasted for precisely fifty-seven minutes.
- 9.5 Mr Thomas Gonsalves explained that information had been received that the Fretilin forces defending the town were in the fortress, and thus the attack had been directed there. As the advancing forces had moved towards the fortress however, unexpected resistance had been encountered from the Chinese house on the corner as well as from the fortress. Therefore it had been necessary to direct mortar fire against the corner house. Resistance from the house had ended about twenty minutes after the start of the attack when an incendiary mortar fired over a high tree from the Apodeti position had struck the house causing it to burst into flames.
- 9.6 About thirty mortar shells (not all incendiary) had been fired by the Apodeti and UDT forces during the course of the battle, and more than one had landed in the vicinity of the house. Mr Lopes da Cruz and Mr Thomas Gonsalves said that there had been no shelling of Balibo from Indonesian ships at sea.

- 9.7 Fretilin had resisted from the fortress with fire from mortars and automatic weapons. When the combined forces had found that no more resistance was being encountered from the fortress they had moved up into the fortress.
- 9.8 Mr Thomas Gonsalves and Mr Travares said that they had neither seen, nor heard reports about, anyone escaping from the corner house, although they admitted that this might have been possible. Mr Thomas Gonsalves stated that anyone, apart from the Apodeti/UDT forces, seen moving in the town would have been shot at during the attack. It was not known whether any people in the house had been killed before the mortar shell struck. Mr Thomas Gonsalves said he had not recognised anyone in the house during the battle or seen what they had been wearing.
- 9.9 Mr Lopes da Cruz, the Raja of Atsabe and Mr Thomas Gonsalves all said that they had not known of the presence of Australian journalists in Balibo prior to the attack. Neither Mr Thomas Gonsalves nor Mr Travares knew how many Fretilin soldiers had been in Balibo, but Mr Thomas Gonsalves said the Fretilin force had been quite small.
- 9.10 Mr Thomas Gonsalves and the Raja of Atsabe said that the invading forces had directed heavy fire against the escaping Fretilin soldiers, many of whom had escaped through the bush at the back of the fortress, in the general direction of Atabae (see photographs 9–11). Mr Thomas Gonsalves said that the Fretilin forces had not fired mortars at Balibo as they retreated.
- 9.11 When the fortress had been captured the Apodeti/UDT troops had set about securing Balibo and had not given any attention to the burning house. After the battle, the seven hundred Apodeti/UDT troops had camped outside the village, in the hills, for security reasons. Mr Thomas Gonsalves said that the burnt remains of sixteen rifles, some FBP automatic weapons and one mortar had been found in the Chinese house some days after the battle.
- 9.12 No bodies had been found in the administrator's house, Mr Thomas Gonsalves said. Fretilin troops had abandoned the position, leaving behind three mortars and some Mauser rifles. None of the people to whom the team spoke knew how many people died in the battle. There had been bodies in the street and in the bush around the village. Some reports had put the deaths at between one and two hundred. They had been Fretilin soldiers.
- 9.13 About fifteen bodies had been seen in the burning Chinese house, and some of them had been recognised as European. Apart from those seen in the Chinese house and the one found in the woods (see Section 11 below), no European bodies had been among those found.
10. *Reports of Indonesian Involvement*
 - 10.1 The team asked on a number of occasions about reports in Australia that the journalists had been shot by Indonesian troops or by Indonesian volunteers. Mr Thomas Gonsalves, Mr Lopes da Cruz, the Raja of Atsabe and Mr Carrascalao all denied that any Indonesians had been involved in the attack on Balibo. Indonesian volunteers, they said, had joined Apodeti/UDT troops only after the declaration of integration on 30 November and the request for assistance by these parties and by Kota and Trabalista. Mr Carrascalao and Mr Lopes da Cruz said that before the Balibo attack many weapons had been captured from Fretilin at Batugade. Apodeti/UDT had also been strengthened by the arrival of a UDT force from Los Palos.

[*matter omitted*]

11. Identification

[*matter omitted*]

The Remains

11.20 Mr Gonsalves and Mr Lopes da Cruz said that the inside of the Chinese house had not been cleaned until the inhabitants of Balibo returned. This, Mr Travares said, had been about the end of November.

11.21 The Raja said that no remains had been collected from the house when he had visited Balibo with Mr Lopes da Cruz and Mr Jose Martins. When the Indonesian Government had asked for any remains and personal effects he had asked that the remains be collected. He had been given the remains at the time when he had learnt of the European body in the woods, the documents and the camera. The situation in Balibo at the time had been very confused and he did not know who had collected the remains. The Raja could not be certain that the remains passed to the Indonesian Government were those of the five journalists.

[*matter omitted*]

12. Conclusions

Based on its discussions and observations in Balibo on 29 April and 9 May the team concluded:

12.1 The situation at Balibo and in the border area around Balibo on 16 October 1975 and in the following weeks was confused. As the Apodeti and UDT personnel to whom the team spoke saw it this situation did not allow them to give special attention to the deaths of the journalists and subsequent requests for information.

12.2 The account given of the circumstances of the deaths of the journalists said to have been in the Chinese house, while vague on several important points, had a certain plausibility.

12.3 The account given of the collection of the remains and personal effects lacked clarity and seemed incomplete, particularly as regards identification.

12.4 There was no evidence to suggest that the five journalists were not in Balibo when it was attacked on 16 October; nor that they did not die during the battle that day.

12.5 Persons to whom the team spoke had not known that there were Australians in Balibo at the time of the attack and had assumed that all persons in the town at that time were Fretilin supporters.

12.6 There was no incontrovertible evidence about exactly how any of the five journalists died. There was no explanation as to why the fifth body was apparently found apart from the other four.

12.7 Evidence that there were the remains of five European bodies and that they were the remains of the journalists was circumstantial. It was based on:—

- (a) absence of any evidence that other Europeans were in Balibo on 16 October;
 - (b) reports that the journalists were missing and in Balibo on that day; and
 - (c) discovery of the camera, documents and other items belonging to the journalists.
- On the basis of what it was told in Balibo, the team considered it a reasonable assumption that the remains of five European bodies were found in Balibo and that they were those of the journalists.

12.8 It was not established that the remains handed to the Ambassador in Jakarta on 12 November, were, in fact, the remains of the five journalists.

12.9 Because of the absence of any substantiated evidence about exactly how the journalists died, it was not possible as a result of the visits to Balibo to comment

authoritatively on other accounts about how the journalists died. However, Mr Syddell's version² of the deaths was highly improbable.

The people to whom the team spoke in Balibo denied Indonesian involvement in the attack on Balibo on 16 October 1975.

A. R. TAYLOR

Counsellor

D. C. RUTTER

Consul

R. K. JOHNSON

Third Secretary

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iv]

452 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 26 May 1976

CONFIDENTIAL

Timor: Journalists

The purpose of this submission is to seek your agreement to a course of action for the future handling of this matter both in Australia and *vis-à-vis* Indonesia.

2. First, we have received the report of the Embassy team of their visit to East Timor.¹ The report is in two parts: the report itself and conclusions. Both telegrams are available in your office. We propose that they be tabled in the House.

3. Second, Mr Price has prepared a report of his discussions in Melbourne on 10 May with Jose Martins.² This report was submitted to you earlier this week. Mr Price is to prepare a revised version of the report which omits those sections in which he analyses Martins' character and motivation.³ In its revised form this report too could be tabled in Parliament.

4. The major point to emerge from the Price report is that Martins does not claim to be an eye-witness. He was not in Balibo at the time of the deaths of the newsmen. His account is based on what he was told by others; in particular his principal source of information was Tomas Gonsalves, the commander of the APODETI forces at Balibo.

² Syddell claimed that the journalists had been killed by Fretilin soldiers wearing Indonesian uniforms in an attempt to embarrass the Indonesian Government.

¹ Document 451.

² 'Report of a Conversation with Mr Jose Celestino Martins, Secretary of the Kota Party in East Timor, at the Offices of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Journalists' Association in Melbourne on 10 May, 1976, by G. J. Price, Assistant Secretary, Consular and Immigration Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs'. [On file NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/5, ii.] Martins alleged Indonesian involvement in the deaths of the journalists.

³ Price disagreed with some journalists who had met Martins in New York and characterised him as 'a liar mainly because they detected inconsistencies between what he was saying and what he was doing'. Price concluded: 'Despite that he recounts his story in a way that makes it sound plausible and as if he certainly believes completely in the truth of what he is saying'. Martins' motive for revealing his version of the events in Balibo to the world, Price considered, was resentment against Indonesia for not allowing the people of East Timor 'to preserve their national identity and some degree of internal government'.

5. In the event the Embassy team was able to have direct contact with Tomas Gonsalves. His account—that the newsmen were evidently caught in the crossfire and their bodies discovered after the fighting—does not support Martins' allegations. Neither do Lopes da Cruz nor the Rajah of Atsabe, both of whom, according to Martins, were privy to the Gonsalves contrary account. In other words we have a situation where the Martins account is not consistent with what others, including the stated sources of Martins' own information, have told us. While we know that much of what Gonsalves, da Cruz and the Rajah of Atsabe have had to say has in all likelihood been scripted by the Indonesians, we do not know that their account of the actual manner in which the newsmen met their deaths is not substantially correct. Nor, of course, do we know that Martins is not telling the truth (about what Gonsalves, etc, told him). All that can be said on the basis of what we know is that it is still not possible to come to firm and final conclusions as to the circumstances and manner of the deaths of the newsmen.

6. But the matter cannot be allowed to rest here. As a next step we believe it necessary to confront the Indonesian Government once again with Martins[''] allegations. We should lay before them the Price report and seek their official reaction. Martins has also identified certain Indonesian officers—Colonel Dading, said to have been the overall field commander in the area at the time, and a Major Andreas, who Martins claims led the attack on Balibo. We think that a request will need to be addressed to the Indonesian Government by the Embassy to interview both officers. Likewise in regard to a West Timorese BAKIN personnel, Louis Taolin, also named by Martins. There are, as well, a number of Indonesian journalists to whom Martins has referred and who ideally should be interviewed if we are to follow-up all leads.

7. There are of course difficulties—actual as well as potential—in all this. Both the Indonesian Government and the provisional authorities in Dili could refuse further cooperation. Indonesia may react sharply to requests to interview further Indonesian military personnel and officials. At the very least we must expect a drawn-out response in which there could be much ducking and weaving as between the Indonesians and the PGET. And at the end of the day we are unlikely to have any clearer picture of what happened.

8. The foregoing could be an argument in favour of trying to wrap-up the issue with a statement to the effect that the Government has now gone as far as possible with its investigations. But to argue this way would invite further domestic criticism and, probably, renewed demands for some form of judicial enquiry. The Government is already on public record as stating its intention to follow up all avenues of enquiry. We think that the Government has little alternative but to do so. Accordingly we believe that the approach to the Indonesians outlined in paragraph 6 above must be made. We are seeking your agreement to doing so.

9. In regard to the handling of the matter domestically we should favour the following steps:—

- (a) a statement in the House in which you might confirm that the Embassy and Price reports have been received, invite attention to the continuing conflict in evidence, and foreshadow the further approaches to the Indonesians. We also think that you might confirm the intention to table the reports in the House once they have been conveyed to the next-of-kin—a draft statement has been submitted to you separately.⁴
- (b) the department should convey the Embassy and Price reports to the next-of-kin (excluding Mr Rennie in Britain who, as you will know, has written asking not to receive further communications on this matter).

⁴ Peacock made the statement to the House of Representatives on 2 June.

- (c) tabling in Parliament, perhaps later next week, of the Embassy and Price reports along with a summary which we are preparing of all other accounts of the deaths of the newsmen.⁵

10. A separate issue has been raised by the AJA submission to the Government that Australia seek reparations from the Indonesian Government in regard to the deaths of the newsmen. The AJA submission does not rest on the authenticity or otherwise of the Martins account. The AJA argument is that Indonesian involvement in the attack on Balibo is indisputable and that, under international law, Indonesia must accept responsibility for the newsmen's deaths. The preliminary view of the Department's legal adviser is that a *prima facie* case can be established for such an approach to Indonesia. More work will need to be done on the matter and indeed it may be some time before the legal position has been completely clarified. At this point we simply note that you will probably need to come to a decision in the next month or two on whether an approach for compensation should be made to the Indonesians.

11. Meanwhile, it is recommended that you agree to the proposed course of action outlined in paragraph 9 and that you also agree to our making a further approach to the Indonesians as per paragraph 6.⁶

LANCE JOSEPH

Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia Branch

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iv]

453 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 27 May 1976

SECRET

Timor: Self Determination Process

We are still to resolve our position on attendance at the planned meeting of the Peoples Representative Council in Dili on 31 May which is to pronounce on the future of East Timor. You decided to defer consideration of the Department's earlier submission on this matter¹ (attached—Annex A) pending receipt of Woolcott's report on his discussions with General Moerdani.² That report has now been received—JA6799 (Annex B)³ paragraphs 12–18 of which are relevant.

⁵ In his statement of 2 June Peacock indicated that the reports would be made available in the Parliamentary Library once the next-of-kin had been informed.

⁶ A handwritten note from Peacock dated 27 May, reads: 'Agreed. Lance: the above is very good—I am grateful for your analysis & recommendations. Note, however, that in any statement whilst we must point to Martins' account being inconsistent with those of others we should not seek to denigrate him (you may not have intended doing so, anyway)'.

¹ Document 446.

² See note 4 to Document 447.

³ Annex B was in fact Cablegram JA6766 (Document 449).

2. We have now received an invitation from the PGET to go to Dili. As will be seen from the further telegram attached (JA6845⁴—Annex C) a pretty tight and very limited itinerary is proposed. In all the party would be in Dili for a little over 2 1/2 hours. (Although it is not completely clear, it seems that the session of the People's Representative Council is scheduled to last no more than 30 minutes.)

3. In the Department's earlier submission we had recommended that the balance of advantage lay in trying to forestall an invitation. The Department favoured making it known to the Indonesians in advance that Australia would not welcome an invitation.

4. Mr Rowland subsequently (14 May) discussed the matter with you on the telephone. He did so against a background of new information from Jakarta which suggested that the invitation list would include all embassies in Jakarta. It appeared that the United States, Japan, New Zealand, all ASEAN and perhaps most of the EEC countries would designate representatives. You agreed that, in these circumstances, and if a good number of other embassies were to send representatives, it would be difficult for Australia not to do so as well; you were inclined to favour the idea that the Minister at the Embassy, Malcolm Dan, might be designated as the Australian representative.

Others' Intentions

5. We now have a reading on the likely reactions of other potential invitees. It seems that the ASEAN countries will almost certainly all be represented, Malaysia and Philippines probably at Ambassadorial level. The Indonesians also seem confident about India, Sri Lanka, Iran and Saudi Arabia, but we have no knowledge of their intentions. Beyond this—and apart from the likelihood that there will be no UN participation, either Winspeare or the Committee of Twenty Four—there is no enthusiasm among the ranks of the other possible invitees: the Western Europeans, the United States, Canada, Japan and New Zealand and none appears to be likely to go except in the company of at least some others.

6. Of the Western invitees the United States, Japan and, possibly, New Zealand have been the least opposed to accepting (at deputy head of mission level). However, much would depend on someone taking the lead. If we were to announce our intention to attend it is probable that this would be decisive in persuading Japan, and perhaps New Zealand to attend also. Canada and the US might also be influenced by our decision. The United States position is that the Ambassador in Jakarta has discretion to send a representative if the regional countries as well as some other Western missions also do so.

Considerations

7. Moerdani has told Woolcott that he would like Dan or Taylor to attend, especially following the pressure applied to get the Taylor team to East Timor.

8. We do not have a strong view either way on attendance and believe that in the public presentation it would be possible to use a very similar formula whatever the decision. On balance, and unless a number of other Western countries as well as regional countries attend, you may feel it best that Australia decline. As a matter of tactical presentation, however, we should be inclined to delay conveying any negative response for a day or two lest the Indonesians come to see it as instrumental in affecting the decision of others.

⁴ 26 May. It communicated the text of a Note from the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs conveying an invitation from the Provisional Government of East Timor to the Ambassador 'to attend the session of the People's Representative Council of East Timor on the exercise of the right of self-determination of East Timor to be held in Dili on Monday, May 31, 1976 1230 hours (local time)'.

9. Nor need a decision not to attend the 31 May meeting be our final word on observation of the self determination process. As you know, the Indonesians also intend to undertake their own ascertainment exercise. A fact-finding delegation from the Indonesian Government and Parliament (DPR) is to proceed to East Timor at the end of June. Current Indonesian planning envisages that all heads of mission in Jakarta should be invited to accompany this mission. It may be that we shall not wish to attend on this occasion either but, especially if the United Nations has become involved by that time, attendance may be possible and indeed desirable.

10. If you decide that Australia should not be represented at the 31 May meeting we should at least inform the Indonesians that we continue to be interested in the process of self determination in East Timor and in this connection see the 31 May meeting as one step in the process. The Indonesians will be aware from our declining the invitation that we are most anxious that there be some form of UN participation in the process. While it would be unwise to promote any expectations as to Australian participation in next month's DPR fact-finding mission, we could perhaps undertake to support efforts to get the UN special representative to East Timor during June in order that he might be on hand at the time of the fact-finding mission.

Recommendation

11. Meanwhile *it is recommended* on the assumption that other Western countries do not attend, that Australia should not accept the invitation to attend the meeting in Dili on 31 May. A form of words which might be used in public presentation of the decision is attached—Annex D.⁵ Also attached—Annex E⁶—is a second form of words which might be used if the decision were to attend the meeting.⁷

A. R. PARSONS

First Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, iv]

⁵ Annex D included the statement that: 'The Government has informed the PGET that it will not be represented. The Government has no comment one way or the other on the arrangements which have been set in train to test the wishes of the Timorese people. Certainly we cannot regard the meeting as representing the final and definitive voice as to the future of the territory. We see the meeting rather as only one step in the process which hopefully will include some form of United Nations participation and observation'.

⁶ An extract from Annex E reads: 'We regret that there is no indication that there will be UN observation of the meeting on 31 May, but the Government is nevertheless prepared to agree to Australian representation so that we will be in a position to gauge the process in what is now its initial stage'.

⁷ A handwritten note from Peacock dated 27 May, reads: 'I agree—on the assumption that other Western countries do not attend. I therefore believe we should hold back on our response until as late as possible'.

454 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 28 May 1976

O.CH360998 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Timor: Dili Meeting*Ref O.JA6879*¹

After long consideration the Minister has decided that we should *not* be represented at the meeting in Dili. Please advise the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the decision, letting them know that we have informed *no* other governments.

2. The decision has been taken essentially because we know that the procedures being followed in Dili do not match up to the standards which would be generally acceptable in Australia. It would not be possible for an Australian representative at the Dili meeting to report favourably on it, certainly not on the critical question as to the manner in which the 'representatives' were chosen. It can be argued that it would be better to attend and to report frankly on both the good and the bad aspects of the meeting, but the decision is, on balance, that it would be best not to associate the Government with it directly. The 'bad' aspects will undoubtedly be the most eye-catching in Australia, and, if we had observed the meeting, the Government would be under substantial pressure to comment on what it thought of it. Apart from the immediate problems with the Indonesians which this could cause, it could also reduce our freedom of action for the future. The absence of UN observers and the unsatisfactorily short program (three hours on the ground) are additional reasons against attendance.

3. The Minister has therefore concluded that the advantages lie in avoiding attendance and 'eye witness' commentary at this time.

4. We should like you to explain to the Indonesians that the Minister has considered the invitation, and Mr Malik's appeal, very carefully. It has not been an easy decision. You should say that, in deciding against attendance, we have had to take into account the absence of UN involvement and the shortness of the proposed program. We do not believe that a participant would be able to gain sufficient information or clear enough impression to allow the Minister to present a report that would satisfy Australian public opinion.²

5. For the future, you should say that we continue to be interested in the process of self determination and in this connection see the 31 May meeting as one step in the process. Ideally we should hope that UN involvement might prove possible in the later stages. We know that this may not be easy but believe that it is most important in terms of international opinion that this avenue be pursued. As you know, our very strong preference here would be to encourage a return visit by Winspeare rather than engaging, say, the Committee of 24. Do the Indonesians see any possibility of persuading him to be present during the DPR fact-finding visit at the end of June? This could be justified in terms of his mandate to pursue consultations with the parties—the PGET clearly being one of the parties.

¹ 27 May. It reported a conversation Woolcott had with Malik on 25 May. Malik expressed the hope that Australia would attend the meeting of the Popular Assembly in Dili (usually referred to as the Dili meeting). Woolcott considered that he would not be authorised to go but that 'the invitation was a matter for Government decision in Canberra'. Malik added that Australia's reaction could influence other countries.

² A marginal comment on the Jakarta Embassy copy reads: 'The point is that Minister should let go of the sacred cow's tit & help prepare public trust'.

6. We realize that the Indonesians will not be happy with our decision, but participation of an Australian representative may well have led—through commentaries on his report and through the need for the Government itself to define its position in regard to the report—to an increase in pressures on Indonesia/Australia relations. Public opinion in Australia is likely to be sceptical about any process which appears not to involve direct elections (except, perhaps, Dili).

7. You may also wish to point out to the Indonesians that we do not wish by our negative response to influence the decision of others and that this is the reason why we have delayed replying to the invitation until the last moment and we will not be informing other governments of our decision until you have advised the Indonesians/PGET and in any event not before evening of 30 May.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxiii]

455 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 30 May 1976

O.JA6916 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

East Timor: Dili Meeting

United States Embassy has just told us that Washington has decided that if Australia and Japan send representatives to the Dili meeting the United States will do likewise.¹

2. The United States Embassy said that if Japan attended and Australia did not, they would not repeat not go.

3. The Japanese Embassy has told us Japan will attend if Australia and the United States go. The Japanese Ambassador apparently has discretion to decide what to do if only one of us sends a representative. (But since we are not going, the United States will follow suit and the Japanese will also decline.)

4. For the Indonesians, the most important countries invited to Dili are the ASEAN, Australia, United States and Japan. We are now faced with a situation where our own decision on attendance will automatically carry two of the other key countries with us. We know from our conversations with them that the Indonesians are keenly aware of this. (They will also believe that our decision will have greatly influenced PNG, among others.)

5. In your O.CH360998² you have asked us to say to the Indonesians, in speaking of the future, that we regard the Dili meeting of 31 May as one step in the process of self-determination for the East Timorese. The Indonesians are likely to reply that they agree with us and that Australia should not turn its back on this single step in the process. They will say that, in not attending, Australia is pre-judging the self-determination process and that this Australian decision, which is likely to be highly publicised, will produce even greater problems with public opinion in Australia than a first hand report of the Dili meeting by an Australian

¹ Cablegram JA6914 (29 May) reported that the US Embassy in Jakarta would probably accept an invitation to observe the Dili meeting if Australia and Japan accepted, and that the Embassy of Japan would be guided by the stance of Australia and the United States.

² Document 454.

representative. The latter would no doubt report the short comings of the self-determination process there but he may also see some positive features. The decision not to go at all would only serve to highlight the negative features. By not sending someone to the Dili meeting the Government wishes to avoid having to comment on what it thought of it. The Australian Government's public comment on the meeting will be clear in its decision not to observe it.

6. Particularly since we now know that we would be in good company with the United States, Japan and some of the ASEAN countries (the Western Europeans do not have a major interest in this issue and are largely influenced by nineteenth century rules of protocol and Portugal's membership of NATO) I would request that reconsideration be given to Australia's attendance at the Dili meeting.

7. If however the decision not to go should stand I would propose to inform the Indonesians, Americans and Japanese without further delay. There no longer seems to be any point in holding back since the Americans and Japanese have linked their decision all too closely and all too publicly with our own.³

DAN

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

456 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Wellington, 2 June 1976

O.WL5483 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Timor: Self-Determination and Integration

Ref O.WL5455¹

We are sending by today's bag full text of Ms Stokes' report. Paras 1–6 are largely background—factual. Paras 7–11 are by way of assessment. They read as follows:—

2. '7. My assessment is that the People's Representative Council of East Timor in a serious, business-like and formal way unanimously endorsed integration with Indonesia. But for the outside observer there were two serious flaws in this act of self-determination.

(A) Who were these representatives taking this decision, how had they been elected, and did they indeed represent the wishes of the people of East Timor.

(B) Only one option for future political status, that of integration was ever mentioned.

8. I was told that in Dili the district election has been on the basis of one man one vote and a journalist told me that in Bacau it had also been on that basis. Elsewhere they had been in accordance with local traditional practice of village elders making the selection. When I asked the Indonesians with us why the Popular Assembly addressed itself to only one option, that of integration, they said that the choice must be seen in the whole context of events in recent

³ Cablegram CH361089 (30 May) replied that, while Dan had made some valid points, the counter-arguments were also persuasive and must predominate. It added that the problems that Australia faced in relation to Timor were unique and not faced by Japan and the United States to the same extent.

¹ 31 May. It stated that the New Zealand Foreign Minister, B. E. Talboys, had decided that Alison Stokes, Counsellor at the New Zealand Embassy in Jakarta, would represent New Zealand at the Peoples Representative Council Meeting in Dili on 31 May. Talboys stressed that this decision did not mean that New Zealand had recognised the integration of East Timor into Indonesia. He emphasised 'the importance of a *democratic process being observed*'.

months during which the other options of links with Portugal or independence had been discarded by the East Timorese.

9. In addition, there were disappointing aspects to the day:

- (A) On the plane we were given a leaflet entitled 'East Timor' put out by the PGET which *inter alia* stated that 'The East Timor people are fully behind the Provisional Government in the preparation for full integration of East Timor into the Republic of Indonesia . . .': this prejudgement struck the wrong note.
- (B) The Assembly's proceedings were in Portuguese and only parts were translated into English. A Timorese sitting near me provided me at my request with a running commentary in English on the proceedings but this was second best to an official translation.
- (C) We did not meet any members of the PGET or the Popular Assembly. There was no press conference.
- (D) The street carnival and cheering were over-organised and lacked spontaneity.

Dili

10. From what I could see on the drives to and from the airport Dili is certainly not a war-torn city. There are bullet holes visible on buildings near the harbour but signs of outward damage are small. It gives the impression of being rather empty and many shops are closed. There were few signs of security, just the local militia ensuring that the street gatherings did not get in the way of traffic. I would guess the[re] were not more than a couple of thousand people in the streets.²

The Next Steps

11. A 50-member delegation from Dili is expected here on 5 June for about 10 days to present the Popular Assembly's petition.³ Then an Indonesian fact-finding parliamentary mission will visit East Timor to verify their wish for integration with Indonesia. It is the present Indonesian intention to invite the diplomatic corps to accompany the parliamentary delegation. This will be an Indonesian invitation, possibly from the Foreign Minister. If NZ were also to observe that step, which could involve visits to districts but would presumably at least provide opportunities for discussion with members of the Popular Assembly we could then build on the 31 May visit and try to establish to what extent the district members do represent local wishes. We could perhaps also encourage the Indonesians to report to the Committee of 24 on what is happening and to give the UN sufficient notice next time an invitation is issued. As New York has pointed out the stumbling block of the UN position on the question of the withdrawal of Indonesian troops may mean that Indonesia will not succeed in getting UN observers but it would be useful if it could be shown that it had tried.⁴

[NAA: A1838, 3038/7/1, xiv]

² Cablegram JA7077 (7 June) reported a discussion between the Australian Embassy and representatives from India, Iran, Nigeria and New Zealand, who had observed the Dili meeting. The consensus of these observers was that the meeting had been 'stage-managed'. The observers of the meeting had spent only a short time in Dili and had little opportunity to talk with members of the PGET or of the Popular Assembly.

³ Cablegram JA7191 (11 June) communicated the text of the petition drawn up on 31 May. It read: 'With God's Mercy. We on behalf of all the people of East Timor, after bearing witness to the decision of the full session of the People's Representative Council of the Territory of East Timor on 31 May in Dili, seeking to realise the desire of the people as contained in the Proclamation of Integration of East Timor on 30 November in Balibo hereby, urge the Government of the Republic of Indonesia as soon as possible to accept and ratify the integration of the people and Territory of East Timor fully into the united nation of the Republic of Indonesia without a referendum'.

⁴ A minute to Woolcott dated 1 June from Brian Peck, First Secretary, Information, Australian Embassy Jakarta, reported that Peter Munckton, an ABC journalist, had commented that very few of the observers or reporters attending the meeting spoke Portuguese and that no effort was made to 'introduce the 28 participants who sat with their backs to the observers'.

457 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TAYLOR AND TJAN

[Jakarta], 3 June 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

Timor

I gave Tjan copies of recent press items on Timor, parliamentary questions and so on. He commented that there were no real problems for Indonesia in the Minister's comments on the Dili meeting.¹ He was very interested in Mr Peacock's statement² on the journalists, but did not comment.

2. Tjan said the petitioners from the Dili meeting would arrive in Jakarta on 5 June, present the petition to President Soeharto on 7 June and meet various Ministers and the DPR leaders. In all they would be here for about one week.

3. Ambassadors (possibly the same ones invited to the Dili meeting) would be invited to accompany the Indonesian fact-finding mission to East Timor at the end of June. Press correspondents would probably also be invited. The visit would last about three days—staying in either Kupang or Dili; it was undecided. The party would be divided into groups to visit various places in East Timor. So each Ambassador would see a selection (maybe even only one) of the places the party as a whole would visit.

4. Tjan asked whether Australia would accept the invitation, which would be from the Indonesian Government. I said I did not know; would the United Nations be involved? He did not know. In view of our decision on the Dili meeting I felt personally that if the United Nations were not involved we would not attend. I stressed that we had no indication from Canberra on how we might respond. In any case his view was that Australia should be invited, even if we were going to refuse.

5. Asked whether the ICRC representatives were back from East Timor yet Tjan said he would check and let me know. He repeated what he had said on 31 May that an ICRC involvement in East Timor now would be more in terms of its involvement in disaster areas. There was no conflict in East Timor now. His point was that there was no need for an ICRC representative in East Timor. I rehearsed Australia's firm position on the return to Dili of the ICRC and made, in general terms, the points in paras 2 and 3 of CH362796.³

6. We had a long discussion about the history of the Timor issue. Tjan's main point was that Australia with good intentions had planted the idea that East Timor should be part of Indonesia and events had moved so quickly that [it] had not been possible to work out a solution with the Portuguese. I said that I did not accept that Australia had determined the general direction of Indonesian policy to the extent he had claimed. He said that what he was really claiming was that Australian interest had focussed Indonesian attention on East Timor. He acknowledged Indonesia would have had to focus attention on the territory at some time in any case.

7. Tjan said that when the Timor problem first attracted attention in Indonesia the future of Diego Garcia⁴ was an issue and the situation in Indo China looked grim. People in Indonesia

¹ Peacock, in answer to a parliamentary question of 1 June, indicated that Australia did not attend the Dili meeting because it had not been acceptable to the United Nations.

² Peacock made a ministerial statement concerning the deaths of the five journalists in the House of Representatives on 2 June 1976.

³ 2 June. It argued that the failure of the ICRC to return to East Timor would only encourage Australian groups to pursue private plans for providing aid and thus risk some form of confrontation with the Indonesian navy.

⁴ In May 1974 the British Government acceded to a United States request to upgrade US naval facilities on the small group of islands in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The upgrade was intended as a means of countering a suspected increase in the Soviet naval presence based in Somalia, but was criticised internationally for risking an escalation of Super Power tension within the region.

had argued that if there could be such interest in Diego Garcia, Timor too could become a focus of conflict.

[*matter omitted*]

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxiii]

458 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 3 June 1976

O.CH363543 SECRET ROUTINE

EXTRACT¹

Timor: Balibo

3. We leave it to you to assess the best timing for your next approach. The Indonesians are doubtless still smarting from our decision to turn down the PGET invitation to attend the Dili meeting.² We also recognise that they will react very sharply to any further enquiries about newsmen. We have to leave it to you to persuade them of the need to pursue the matter. Obviously things are going to be very difficult with the Indonesians clearly unlikely to concede that their forces were involved at Balibo. You will wish to make the point, however, that Australian press and public opinion believes that Indonesian forces were [so] involved, and that the longer the matter is strung out, the more the blame will be sheeted home to the Indonesian government in general rather than simply to the m[e]n on the spot in Balibo, whether they were Indonesian troops or not.

4. You might say that it is in this context that we are obliged to follow up Martins' references to Dading, Andreas, Taolin and the others mentioned in the Price/Martins transcript.³ In fact, what we have to ask is whether the named persons would be available and prepared to be interviewed on any knowledge they may have on the events at Balibo on 16 October.

5. As we have already said we know that the Indonesians may react very strongly to such a request but the approval⁴ must be made. Moreover, we think that at this point we must also register with them the separate approach the Government has now received from the solicitors of the Victorian branch of the Australian Journalists Association in which it is argued that all evidence (not just Martins) points to involvement of Indonesian forces and thus to a case for an approach by the Australian Government to the Indonesian Government seeking financial compensation for the families.⁵ You should say that the VJA submission is still under study in the Australian Government but that clearly we face the prospect of finding ourselves [in] a position where we may be obliged to make formal representations to Indonesia.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, v]

¹ Omitted paragraphs refer to Peacock's statement of 2 June on the missing journalists and the obligation of the Embassy in Jakarta to make further inquiries of the Indonesian Government about Martins' allegations.

² See Document 454.

³ See Document 452 and note 2 thereto.

⁴ The word 'approval' should presumably read 'approach'.

⁵ Gair and Brahe, solicitors for the Victorian Branch of the AJA, lodged the submission with DFA on 11 May 1976.

459 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 5 June 1976

O.JA7051 SECRET ROUTINE

EXTRACTS¹**Discussion with Indonesian Leaders***Personal for Secretary from Woolcott**Lisbon (for Cooper), New York (for Harry), Peking (for Fitzgerald)**Timor*

10. I have reported separately General Panggabean's firm views on Timor in our JA6883.² Mashuri said that the best solution for the East Timorese themselves would be to be 'reunited with their brothers in West Timor'. The majority of East Timorese who understood the question now wanted integration and this would come about in August. Indonesia had not repeat not sought the situation which had developed in Timor in the second part of last year, but equally could not repeat not avoid reacting to it.

11. I raised the need for some internationally acceptable arrangements for the East Timorese to express their wishes about their own future and the need for some flexibility about handling aid to East Timor. Mashuri said no more than that the best arrangements which could be made in the circumstances would be made. If people really wanted to give aid to the East Timorese why could they not repeat not give it through the Indonesian and PGET Red Cross which knew the local needs.

12. The President, who had heard but who had taken no part in the conversation on Timor simply said at this stage that Indonesia would act in the interests of and in response to the wishes of the majority of the people in East Timor.

13. The President added that Indonesia's involvement in Timor was, as he had explained to Mr Peacock in May,³ motivated not by any wish for more territory but solely by considerations of national security, of assistance to a people in a territory within the Indonesian Archipelago which had been abandoned by Portugal and of regional stability.

14. I also referred to our wish to see humanitarian aid resumed through the ICRC at this stage.

15. The President did not react directly and changed the subject. He said that Timor was less important than other issues facing him. These were development, particularly in the rural areas, the re-distribution of incomes, the 'rectification' of the economy following Pertamina's debt problems and the forthcoming general election.

[*matter omitted*]

¹ The cablegram contained the main points of a discussion between Woolcott, Soeharto, Panggabean, Malik, Sudharmono and Mashuri in Surabaya and later on the President's flight between Surabaya and Bali.

² 27 May. Panggabean had felt bound to express to Woolcott that Australia's 'public criticism' and 'lack of understanding' of Indonesia's purposes and actions in Timor 'was damaging Indonesia and this could not really be offset by help in other directions'. Panggabean considered moreover that 'the Timor situation and Indonesia's role had not been properly understood in Australia' and that this was 'very unfortunate and could have in the longer run adverse effects' on Australian-Indonesian relations.

³ In fact Soeharto spoke to Peacock along these lines during the Minister's visit to Indonesia in April. Their record of conversation was reported to Canberra in Cablegram JA6057 (15 April).

Relations with Australia

18. On the question of relations with Australia the President said that good friends needed to show understanding to each other and make allowances for each other. It was natural that two different societies would look at the same problems in different ways. But the basis of good neighbourliness was to approach differences in a spirit of mutual understanding.

19. I later asked Sudharmono (not in front of the President) to what extent he believed the differences over the East Timor issue could be kept apart and prevented from influencing adversely our total relationship. Sudharmono thought for some time and said that he could not repeat not answer this question directly. Good relations were built up over a period of time by a series of actions. In the Australian/Indonesian relationship the foundation stone was our support for Indonesian Independence in 1945. In the same way a relationship could be broken down by a series of unhelpful or unfriendly actions. Good friends stood by each other in times when one or the other faced an important problem and needed help. While Australia had been helpful to Indonesia in a number of respects, there was growing concern in 'some circles', as General Panggabean had told me, that Australia's actions on Timor were having the effect of damaging Indonesia. This was unfortunate. 'Friends should support their friends'.

20. I said this was sometimes difficult in cases where it was thought that a friend had acted in a way which was contrary to established international principles. Sudharmono said blandly that Indonesia had not repeat not acted in a manner contrary to international principles. Many members of the United Nations did not repeat not really understand the whole Timor situation. Indonesia was acting in accordance with the principles of decolonisation and in the interests of the majority of the Timorese people, as well as the countries of the region. Other countries in the region such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Japan, New Zealand and India realised this.

21. The comments reported above were made on 25th May, that is before the decision not to attend the Dili meeting was taken.

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

460 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 7 June 1976

O.JA7085 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

East Timor: The Dili Meeting and the Process of Incorporation

*Ref O.CH361089*¹

For the Secretary from Woolcott

It is too soon to give a definitive account of Indonesia's reaction to our decision not to attend the Dili meeting but we expect it would be fairly strong (but see JA7034²). Initial comments

¹ See note 3 to Document 455.

² 4 June. It reported that the Indonesian Government was disappointed by the Australian decision not to attend the Dili meeting on 31 May of the East Timorese Representative Council but that 'Indonesian concern over the decision has also been somewhat overtaken and ameliorated by the very favourable reaction here to the Prime Minister's references to relations with Indonesia and ASEAN in his statement of 1st June'.

by our main Indonesia contacts are not promising for our relations with Indonesia, particularly as regards Timor, in the coming months.

2. The Indonesians really wanted us to go to Dili, both because of our active interest in the Timor issue and because they knew other countries would be influenced by our decision. They made strong representations to us to go. They also know that our decision was the critical factor in the American and Japanese decisions. This remains so even though we stress that this was not our intention.

3. Former Ambassador Her Tasning told me on 31 May that General Moerdani was very angry about our decision (I have not seen him since my return from Kalimantan and he has not sought to see me), particularly after the pressure we had applied to get the Taylor mission to East Timor and the extent to which he had used his influence to help in this. Given Moerdani's very close relations with the President on Timor, Her Tasning said that the President too would, no doubt, be upset with Australia's decision. Tasning also said that he believed the Canberra post would now be left empty for some time (possibly until after August). (We are attempting to check this.)

4. One problem we face is that we shall now be less well-placed to seek to influence Indonesia. We must expect the Indonesians now to be less responsive than they have been towards our representations on issues relating to Timor, such as our wish to see a genuine act of self-determination, the journalists killed at Balibo, the return of the ICRC and the resumption of humanitarian aid.

5. There have been several hints (but no more than hints so far) that Indonesia may decide to limit serious discussion in future with us at government level about Timor. They may also become less tolerant of what they see as continuing assistance to Fretilin in Australia. (One example mentioned to us is the continued existence of the Fretilin Information Office.)

6. This may sound somewhat excessive as we were in good company on our decision on the Dili meeting and as the arrangements for the meeting were so poorly handled. But from the comments we have had so far I sense that the Indonesians have difficulty understanding why we chose not to attend and are angered by the decision, especially as they are aware it kept others away.

7. They ask, for example, why, if we saw the meeting as only one step in the process of self-determination³ (a process we continued to be interested in) could we not have taken the opportunity to observe it, without commitment, at first hand? We could have made it clear that we were not condoning the process. One of our regular contacts has argued that the Australian Government has now 'forfeited' its right to comment on the process. Other contacts maintain that the decision was another example of the Government being led by what they regard not as public opinion as such but as a vociferous anti-Indonesian section of public opinion, including the media.

8. Apart from Her Tasning's reference to the Canberra post and some other recent allusions to the possibility that 'labour pressure' might be applied to Australian joint ventures in Indonesia, there have been no indications that the Indonesians intend to widen the dispute with us beyond the Timor issue. But some leading Indonesians—Panggabean for instance—consider that the dispute cannot be isolated from our wider relations. Ali Murtopo, on the other hand, believes it can continue to be isolated. It is the President's attitude which would be decisive.

9. We also need to keep in our minds that, during the Minister's April visit, it was General Panggabean and Dr Salim who put to the Minister Indonesia's basic concerns about Australian policy.⁴ By prior agreement the President had placed himself above such comment and

³ See Document 453.

⁴ See Document 444

Panggabean and Salim were, we have since learned, acting under presidential instructions in saying what they said to Mr Peacock. (Malik is I am afraid not particularly relevant in all this.)

10. Our present assessment is that our total relationship with Indonesia has slipped somewhat since the Minister's visit, mainly as a result of the decision not to go to Dili and that it will deteriorate further if the Indonesians were to decide that our policy had become:—

- (a) A real obstacle to integration, to which Indonesia is totally committed regardless of our reaction and which it regards as being in its vital national interests as well as in the region's interests;
- (b) Harmful to Indonesia's relations with third countries, especially in Asia;
- (c) A means of keeping alive the issue when, as far as Indonesia is concerned, it is virtually settled.

11. It has been clear for a long time that Australia, short of direct military intervention, could not have and cannot now prevent Indonesia achieving its objective of integration, even if it was assessed to be in our national interest to do so. Integration will take place most likely in August, no matter what the international community does. Point (a) above is therefore not a real problem although Indonesian irritation will grow according to the difficulties we make for them.

12. Point (b) is more important now the international community has been asked to become more closely interested in the process of self-determination in Timor. While it was not our intention, our decision not to go to Dili determined the position of at least the United States and Japan. Whether we wish it or not others will now take considerable account of our attitude in determining their own. A further dimension has therefore been added to the Timor problem. We are now very much a party principal.⁵

13. Moreover, as Washington has stressed (dispatch no. 6/75) 'in regional policy and in relation to other relevant security issues, Australia should avoid actions that needlessly undercut American interests, such as it took in the United Nations in the past few months in relation to Korea and Timor'. This is consistent with the attitude of the United States embassy here, namely that the State Department would be very concerned by any serious deterioration in Australian/Indonesian relations.⁶

14. Point (c) above is potentially our most difficult problem. As I see it our decision on the Dili meeting makes it more difficult than before for us to come to terms with the reality of East Timor's inevitable integration into Indonesia and to put the dispute behind us.

15. As explained on your O.CH360998,⁷ the key to the decision was the state of Australian public opinion on the Timor issue. Seen from here the main elements of vocal public opinion are unlikely to be satisfied by any process of self-determination that could conceivably now occur.

16. On the assumption that sooner or later Australia is going to have to live with East Timor's integration we seem to be faced with a choice between two general approaches.

17. First, to have nothing to do with the proposed process of self-determination, but, some time after it is over, tacitly to accept its result. This approach may allow the Government to avoid commenting publicly on the validity of the process.

18. The absence of United Nations involvement would provide an umbrella for such an approach. Should the United Nations decide to observe a later stage of the process, I assume the chances of our observing would also be enhanced.

⁵ A handwritten comment from Peacock says: 'I disagree'.

⁶ A handwritten comment from Peacock says: 'This was from a very low level desk off[ice]r was it not? In any case we make our own assessments re Indonesia'.

⁷ Document 454.

19. Secondly, we could agree to observe the process at a later stage—such as the proposed Indonesian delegation visit to assess the wishes of the East Timorese at the end of this month—and, without prejudicing our support for self-determination, seek to get first hand information on what the process represents in terms of the situation in East Timor. Of course the ‘bad’ aspects of the process would attract attention and require official comment. But this could probably be done without causing unacceptable damage. Also that comment might not be as completely damning of the process as the rejection of invitations to observe it appears to be, especially as this time we would be rejecting an Indonesian invitation to observe conditions in a number of districts rather than a PGET invitation for a very brief visit only to Dili. This approach might also provide an opportunity for the Government to explain publicly the complex background to developments in Timor and the difficulties of holding a ‘genuine’ act of self-determination in East Timor, afflicted as it has been by civil war and political backwardness.

20. We consider the second approach would make it easier for the Government to come to terms eventually with East Timor’s integration into Indonesia. In terms of our future relations with Indonesia, as seen from Jakarta, this would also be the preferable approach.

21. We are afraid that sooner or later we have to come to grips with the issue of how long and far we pursue a policy which, while soundly based on principle, is unrealistic in that two of its three stated goals and possibly all th[ree] will prove unattainable. Also, if pursued beyond a certain point, they must erode the other broader aim of our policy, namely the maintenance of generally sound and close relations with Indonesia.

22. We know Indonesia is not going to withdraw all its forces from East Timor or admit to there being more than ‘volunteers’ there. What in Australia would generally be regarded as a ‘genuine act of self-determination’ will not take place (although Indonesia will maintain that the best process of self-determination possible in the complex circumstances of Timor has been carried out with some foreign observation). The third leg of our present Timor policy tripod, the return of the ICRC, is the only aspect of our policy which might be realised but here too the prospects now seem dim and our own capacity to influence the issue reduced. (Refer our O.JA7052.⁸)⁹

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/2/1, xiv]

⁸ 5 June. It reported a discussion on 3 June between Woolcott, Pasquier and Nessi about the possibility of the ICRC’s returning to East Timor and Woolcott’s conclusion that the prospects of an early return of the ICRC to Dili were remote: ‘The key to the matter is that the Indonesians apparently do not repeat not want an independent observer in East Timor for the time being. They may even string out consideration of the ICRC issue until 17 August after which they would argue that East Timor was an Indonesian domestic concern’.

⁹ A marginal comment reads: ‘*Mr Joseph* For the record. The Minister commented on this cable before he received your submission’. On 8 June Peacock wrote two comments: ‘1. I do not agree with the conclusions 2. What, however, does the Dept. think’.

461 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 8 June 1976

O.LB891 SECRET PRIORITY

East Timor*For Acting Secretary; For Woolcott*

We would agree with the first part of the Indonesian assessment in Paragraph 3 of O.JA7033.¹ As we have stated before, Antunes and the Sixth Provisional Government are not disposed to making Indonesia's legal problems over sovereignty in East Timor easy. If integration were recognised by the United Nations, Portugal would accept it, but not otherwise. The prisoners' issue is seen as a separate question and not a bargaining point.²

2. On the question of a different view being held by the Timor Cabinet, the Indonesians may not be aware of recent developments regarding the Cabinet's status. There has been much criticism of the Cabinet, its advice to the Government, and its director, Lemos Pires, over recent months, which we have reported. In the last few weeks, Pires, Mota and Jonatas have been removed from their positions and the Cabinet moved out of the President's Office. It is now being reconstituted with a new director (Colonel Magalhaes) within the Foreign Ministry. It has therefore come under Antunes' control, at least for the time being.

3. As a general comment, it is probably true that the military in the Timor Cabinet are more disposed to accepting the PGET view that the prisoners' issue is part of the overall Timor problem and are not as concerned as the Foreign Ministry with the legal problems of sovereignty. With the above reorganisation, however, Timor policy must now be considered as residing primarily with the Foreign Ministry. In this regard, it should be noted that Antunes' mandate as foreign minister has only a few weeks to run. The next foreign minister in the new government will be a member of the Socialist Party and in our experience the Socialist Party has not yet focussed on Timor as an issue. It is most likely then that, at least in the early weeks of the new government, Antunes' established policy on Timor will prevail, if only because it will have to grapple with more important (in Portuguese terms) and pressing matters.

4. It follows from the above that we doubt that there will be any major changes in Portugal's Timor policy before the Presidential election.³ The outgoing administration and President have already refrained from taking major decisions in even the more urgent issues facing

¹ 3 June. This cablegram reported that an Indonesian 'contact' had mentioned that secret contacts were taking place between the Indonesians and the Portuguese on East Timor. According to the 'contact', there were two main schools of thought on East Timor within the Portuguese Government: one from the office of Antunes, the Portuguese Foreign Minister, and the other from the Timor Cabinet and General Morais da Silva. In paragraph 3, the Indonesians were reported to consider that Antunes' office regarded the 23 Portuguese prisoners as a 'separate issue unconnected with questions relating to recognition and so on which it sees as belonging to the United Nations'. In addition, the Indonesians were reported to believe 'the second school of thought is prepared to view the prisoners issue as part of the overall Timor problem'. The Indonesian Government apparently had some hope 'that a deal can be worked out which overcomes the problem (for the Indonesians) of formal Portuguese sovereignty in East Timor'.

² Cablegram LB894 (9 June) reported that Villas Boas, Assistant Director-General of Political Affairs at the Portuguese Foreign Ministry, had confirmed to the Embassy in Lisbon that the Portuguese Government viewed the question of sovereignty and the Portuguese prisoners as separate issues. Villas Boas added that 'Portugal would never consider any bargains in which the prisoners were exchanged for Portuguese recognition of the PGET or integration'.

³ 27 June 1976.

Portugal. For the Portuguese, Timor is now a relatively minor issue, largely kept alive by the emotive plight of the prisoners. For domestic political reasons the Portuguese government will continue to give at least the appearance of actively seeking the return of the prisoners, but not at the expense of abandoning their legal position over sovereignty.

5. Portugal's political leaders will be preoccupied through most of July with the formation of a new government. General Eanes, who is likely to be the next president, has no illusions about Portugal's failures in Timor,⁴ but our impression is that, beyond expressing a wish that the prisoners' issue be resolved as soon as possible, he is likely to leave Timor to the new foreign minister. The prospect, therefore, is for little change in Portugal's Timor policy before Indonesia's formal integration of Timor on 16 August.

6. We shall be discussing Timor with the Foreign Ministry tomorrow and will report any further relevant comments.

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

SECRET CONTACTS BETWEEN PORTUGAL, INDONESIA AND THE PGET: JUNE–JULY 1976

In May 1976, President Gomes appointed his Chief of Air Staff, General Moraes da Silva, as special envoy to negotiate the release of the remaining 23 Portuguese prisoners held by the PGET in Indonesian territory, an issue of much importance to Portuguese public opinion. His mission was to be extremely secret, involving as it did the first contact between Portugal and the Indonesians since diplomatic relations were broken off on 7 December 1975. Da Silva belonged to the wing of the AFM that advocated rapid decolonisation and interpreted his instructions in the broadest possible political terms. During several meetings in early June, he offered the Indonesians the possibility of recognition of the PGET and the abandonment of Portuguese sovereignty in exchange for the return of the prisoners. Moerdani and Tjan, the two Indonesians appointed to meet with da Silva, were both confident that these talks held the best chance for a speedy resolution of the Timor problem, and, most importantly, the removal of the issue from the agenda of the UN.

The da Silva mission did not, however, have the full support of the Portuguese Government, and was particularly opposed by Antunes, the Foreign Minister. He was in the process of initiating his own secret talks with the PGET to take place in Bangkok during the first week of July. These talks were limited to strictly 'technical' matters (pensions, nationality, banking, prisoners, and the like). All attempts by the PGET delegates to raise the issue of recognition and sovereignty were solidly rebuffed by the Portuguese. Although the Indonesians were present in Bangkok, the Portuguese insisted that they be excluded from the talks.

These two strands of talks continued throughout July 1976, sending mixed signals to the Indonesians who were convinced that da Silva, as a representative of the military and the President, carried the greater authority. This was very much contrary to the changing political environment in Portugal that was being reported by Cooper in Lisbon.

⁴ Cooper paid a courtesy call on Eanes on 3 June. According to a record of conversation prepared by Cousins, Eanes commented: 'To anyone with good sense, no solution could have succeeded in Timor which did not take account of the views and concerns of Indonesia. No notice was taken of this, however, and Fretilin and their supporters pushed ahead to create a thorn in Indonesia's side, which ultimately proved unacceptable and provoked the Indonesian invasion'.

He insisted that da Silva's authority was negligible and limited solely to the question of the prisoners' release, particularly considering the impending change of government. The President-elect, General Eanes, had made it clear that he was unwilling to meddle in politics and saw da Silva's mission as merely a military representation for the release of prisoners of war. Soares, the incoming Prime Minister, was more outspoken. He condemned the secret diplomacy of Gomes and Antunes and insisted that the issue of sovereignty was negotiable only after an internationally acceptable act of self-determination had been guaranteed to the people of Portuguese Timor.

462 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 9 June 1976

O.CH366035 SECRET AUSTEO ROUTINE

Timor: Dili Meeting and Process of Incorporation

Ref O.JA7085,¹ O.JA7114²

For Heads of Mission

Thank you for your JA7085. The arguments for and against attendance at the Dili meeting were always finely balanced. The decision not to attend was taken only after the most careful consideration and, in our view, was vindicated by subsequent developments. There can be no question that a decision to attend would have drawn a very strong criticism in Australia. The Government would have been under considerable pressure to comment in detail on the meeting, and judging by what others who attended have said (your JA7077³) it is difficult to see how our representative could have reported other than adversely on what he had observed and experienced. Indeed it seems from your JA7077 that the arrangements for the Dili meeting satisfied none of those who attended.

2. We had of course recognised that our decision would disappoint and irritate the Indonesians. We also accept that our decision probably influenced the Japanese and United States decisions as well, although this was not our intention. Indeed, as you know, we went to some lengths to avoid such a situation, delaying advice of our decision until the last moment.

3. It is difficult to accept the proposition that it is Australia's policy alone which is damaging Indonesia's standing in the rest of the world. With all but ten of the twenty-four countries invited to the Dili meeting having already declined, it required no negative decision from Australia to cast doubts on the credibility of the Dili meeting. Indeed the support given to Indonesia even from its ASEAN partners has been less than robust. It seems to us that Indonesia miscalculated in deciding to invite foreign observers to the Dili meeting, and you will simply have to reject any suggestions from the Indonesians now that Australia is the source of their frustrations.

¹ Document 460.

² Cablegram JA7114 (8 June) reported that the attendance of the East Timor delegation on 7 June at the Merdeka Palace reflected the commitment by the President to the integration of East Timor. In a discussion with Moerdani, Soeharto had 'accepted full responsibility for the handling of all aspects of the Timor problem'.

³ See note 2 to Document 456.

4. But the reported Indonesian reaction to our decision is probably as much emotional as logical. You refer to some slippage in the total relationship and this certainly seems to have been the case. Indeed we probably have to accept that some further slippage may occur. It is still our objective, however, to try to isolate Timor from other aspects of the relationship and we believe there are many influential and serious minded Indonesians who support this approach. In terms of the personalities referred to in your telegram, we hope that it will be the views of Ali Murtopo which prevail rather than those being put by Panggabean.
5. You have made a number of specific points which should not pass without comment. First, while a trade-off between Indonesia's agreement to the Taylor mission and our attendance at the Dili meeting may seem valid in Indonesian terms, Moerdani ignores the fact that in the matter of the journalists Australia is the aggrieved party. By most standards of international behaviour Indonesia and the PGET were doing us no great favour in agreeing, seven months after the event, to an Australian team visiting the Balibo area.
6. We had noted that the Indonesians have not moved to replace their ambassador in Canberra. It would be a pity if this post were left vacant for too long. We understand, however, that a person has already been selected for the job and we have been told by the Indonesian Chargé that the delay is due to personal and temporary health reasons.⁴
7. Suggestions from Tjan and others that Indonesia may now take less notice of Australian views in regard to Timor would be more persuasive if, for example, the Indonesians ever intended to allow a genuine act of self-determination. Clearly they do not so intend. We have of course taken on board the Indonesians' arguments that western-style elections may not be possible at this point—but it is all still rather thin.
8. We could, as you say, now find the Indonesians more difficult in regard to our investigations into the deaths of the newsmen. They may also be less willing to cooperate in regard to the ICRC and the resumption of humanitarian aid. But again they have not been noticeably flexible to date on these matters and we would argue that it is in the interests of Indonesia as much as Australia to see that the journalists question is brought to a speedy and satisfactory resolution, to allow the ICRC back into Timor, and to avoid a situation where Australian private aid groups might be provoked into taking matter into their own hands.
9. Looking to the future, we agree that a case can be made for acceptance of an invitation to accompany the Indonesian fact-finding mission due to visit East Timor at the end of June. Our final decision about attendance would depend on being reasonably satisfied *in advance* that the process of consultation would involve some genuine element of choice for those whose opinions were being canvassed, and on Winspeare being prepared to attend and observe the process. We are assuming, of course, that the DPR mission will spend a sufficient time in East Timor to allow an informed assessment to be made.
10. It would seem to us that if Indonesia believes it can put a convincing case to the visiting DPR mission it would be in their interest to involve Winspeare in its observation. You should encourage them to do this.
11. The Minister, who has seen this telegram, has agreed that you may convey the foregoing to the Indonesians. You may also inform them that, we intend that our views on possible acceptance of an invitation to accompany the DPR mission should be conveyed to the United States, Japan and New Zealand and to the other ASEAN countries. Finally, the Minister has

⁴ Cablegram JA7160 (10 June) reported that President Soeharto had just approved the nomination of Major General Nurmahias, Director-General of Security and Communications in the Department of Foreign Affairs, as Indonesia's next Ambassador to Australia.

agreed that our mission in Geneva should speak again to Winspeare in an effort to encourage him to proceed with his delayed second visit to the territory.⁵

For Geneva

12. You will have received our earlier telegram (CH360998⁶) on this matter. You will also have seen the Minister's answers in the House (CH362207⁷) in which he expressed the Government's hope that Winspeare would soon resume his mission in East Timor. We should now like you to make further contact with Winspeare and ascertain his latest thinking on visiting Timor. In doing so you should invite his attention to the Minister's answers in the House. You should say that it is the hope of the Australian Government that he will be able to visit Timor before the end of the month, and that in any event, as is clearly implied in the Minister's answers, our own position on sending a representative to accompany the Indonesian fact-finding team is likely to hinge on whether the United Nations has also agreed to participate in the exercise.⁸

For Other Addressees

13. This telegram is for your own information at this stage. Advice to other governments might be delayed until after our Embassy in Jakarta has spoken to the Indonesians.

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

463 LETTER FROM TAYLOR TO CURTIN

Jakarta, 9 June 1976

EXTRACT

You will have our telegram on [Soeharto's] talk with Moerdani on 5 June¹ during which he apparently assumed full responsibility for the Timor business. I think this move demonstrates that Soeharto maintains his confidence. It also illustrates a decisiveness that some commentators have claimed has been lacking in his actions in the last 12 months.

⁵ In a handwritten note dated 8 June on the covering submission for the draft of this cablegram Peacock wrote: 'The attached draft is excellent. The only amendment I would make would be to delete the reference in clause 11 to obtaining Indonesia's agreement to informing the U.S.A. etc. What if Indon does not agree & we are asked by the U. S. for our attitude? I don't think we should allow ourselves to be closed off'.

⁶ Document 454.

⁷ 1 June. Peacock stated in answer to a question in the House of Representatives: 'In particular we are hopeful that the United Nations special representative will soon be able to visit East Timor, in accordance with his mandate, to reassess the situation in the territory'. Later the same day, he said: '... we have hopes for some sort of United Nations presence to return to East Timor and specifically that Mr Winspeare Guicciardi will resume his visit to reassess the wishes of a greater number of people within East Timor than he was able to do before. We would do all we could to assist his transport into that territory, if it were possible'.

⁸ Cablegram GE18616 (10 June) reported a lengthy discussion on 10 June between O. L. Davis, Permanent Representative, Australian Mission to the United Nations, Geneva, and Winspeare. Winspeare commented that he regarded his responsibility in East Timor as not being limited to observation of the military situation but as covering the whole range of the Security Council resolution (see note 2 to Document 443) including self-determination. He added that, if instructed by Waldheim, he was willing to make a further visit to East Timor before, during or after the visit of the fact-finding delegation of the Indonesian Government and Parliament (DPR). He suggested that the Australian Government raise the issue of his making a second visit to East Timor directly with Waldheim but that such a mission would need to go to areas of East Timor other than those he had visited the first time under Indonesian supervision.

¹ See note 2 to Document 462.

Tjan told us that Moerdani was quite relieved at the President's action. Tjan too was obviously happy about it. (I sense that Tjan was a little worried that he might attract some blame for the poor foreign attendance at the 31 May meeting—of which as you know he was one of the main architects—and as I think he sees it the President's move has protected him as well as Moerdani.) Moerdani has been criticised for some of the administrative and operational bungling during the Timor campaign. More senior generals than him have been kept right out of the operation and were peeved as a result. According to Tjan, however, the President's move has led to a halt in this criticism; now it would be aimed directly at the President and not at Moerdani.

Another line of comment I have heard a few times (from civilian sources outside the government) has been that Timor has demonstrated that Soeharto's judgement is not infallible. I do not believe that this is a widespread comment.

Despite the criticism of aspects of the operation particularly of the secrecy surrounding it (and the consequent hardships for next-of-kin of Indonesian soldiers in Timor, and the lack of the usual recognition of what the soldiers have been doing i.e. medals etc.), I have come across no criticism from an influential group of the policy that East Timor must be integrated into Indonesia. There is, however, a strong feeling that, after integration, East Timor should not be given special treatment *vis-à-vis* other provinces in Indonesia.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, xlvii]

464 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 10 June 1976

O.JA7161 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

East Timor: Five Journalists

*Ref O.CH363543*¹

Dan called today 10 June on Adenan (Foreign Ministry) in connection with the instruction in your reference telegram. Adenan was also given an *aide mémoire* which set out the relevant information.

2. He agreed to refer our request to the appropriate Indonesian authorities. He could not predict what the reply would be but his personal view was that we might be able to interview at least some of the personalities named by Martins.
3. He added that in agreeing to follow up our request and in expressing this personal view he was not repeat not acknowledging that the people named were in fact involved in the Balibo battle or that they might have some first-hand knowledge of the death of the journalists.
4. We also mentioned the approach the Australian Government had had from the solicitors of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Journalists' Association.
5. In conversation after this point had been made Adenan commented that sooner or later someone would have to reply to the important issues raised by the Indonesian Journalist Association in its statement of 25 May 1976. In particular there were two questions that had to be answered:

¹ Document 458.

- (a) who briefed the five journalists before they left Australia for Timor concerning safety precautions they should observe and on the rules (written or unwritten) concerning the behaviour of war correspondents in a war zone? And
 - (b) why did Shackleton deliver a military message for Fretilin at the front line, thereby forfeiting his neutral status as a war correspondent and compromising that of his companions?
6. With regard to (b), Adenan hinted that East Timorese war widows might also be interested in the question of financial compensation.
7. Adenan also asked why the Embassy had not made representations to the pro-Indonesian forces in East Timor concerning the safety of the five journalists before the 16 October 1975.

Comment

8. Adenan's ready acceptance of the *aide memoire* surprised us as did his personal view on the possible Indonesian response to our request to interview the Indonesians named by Martins. Our own feeling is that the chances of the Indonesian Government acceding to this request are remote (Adenan himself may get into trouble for going as far as he did).

9. In putting to Adenan the case in favour of Indonesian cooperation in this matter we did not argue directly that 'it is in the interests of Indonesia as much as Australia to see the journalists question brought to a speedy and satisfactory solution' (paragraph 8, O.CH366035²). The Indonesians, and particularly President Soeharto, do not like foreigners telling them what is in Indonesia's best interests. But we argued that the longer the distressing matter is drawn out the more difficult it will be to bring it to a conclusion.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, v]

465 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 10 June 1976

O.JA7165 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Timor: Dili Meeting and Process of Integration

*Ref O.CH366035*¹

Dan raised on 10 June with General Adenan (Foreign Ministry) the matter of the Indonesian fact-finding mission to East Timor scheduled for 24 June (paragraphs 9–11 of reference telegram).

2. Adenan said he was glad to have this advice. He was particularly pleased that we propose to encourage Winspeare to make his second visit to Timor. Adenan agreed that Winspeare's attendance was extremely important. He added 'if he does go, Australia can take some of the credit'. Indonesia, he said, had already urged Winspeare to go, and would continue to do so.

Comment

3. Would there be some merit in the Minister making a direct personal appeal to Winspeare (or the Secretary General) to make his second visit to Timor?

² Document 462.

¹ Document 462.

4. We have since spoken to the United States embassy which is inclined to recommend to Washington that since bilateral relations with Indonesia are of the greatest importance, the United States should accept the 24 June invitation whether or not the United Nations is represented.
5. In addition to our discussion with Adenan we have also taken Tjan through the relevant points in your O.CH366035 and informed him of our position on the next visit to East Timor.
6. We agree that the initial Indonesian response to our decision on the Dili meeting was as much emotional as logical. More recent conversations than those reported in O.JA7085² suggest that the Indonesians are taking a more philosophical approach in retrospect. We suspect that the President's acceptance of responsibility for all aspects of the Timor issue (O.JA7114 refers³) had led those directly involved in Indonesia's Timor policy to be more relaxed about the poor international response on 31 May and about Australia's non attendance.
7. At present the objective of isolating Timor from other aspects of our relationship is that followed by the Indonesian Government. In addition to the crucial support of Ali Murtopo it is also backed by the Foreign Ministry.
8. We understand that the next invitation to Ambassadors to visit East Timor will be sent soon. It will be from the Indonesian Government and addressed to all Ambassadors resident in Jakarta. The visit is now to be on 24 June and probably, as on 31 May, last no more than one day. The present intention is that the group will be divided up into smaller groups each of which would visit two centres in East Timor. The Indonesian group would be headed by Home Minister, Amir Machmud and another Minister, possibly Sumarlin (Administrative Reform).
9. As to the existence of a genuine element of choice in the process of consultation we have received no specific comments as yet. It seems likely, however, that the people in the various centres will simply be asked whether they agree or not with the petition of integration. As you say the Indonesians do not intend (and never have intended) to have what to Australia would be a 'genuine' act of self-determination. The message of public statements by both PGET and Indonesian spokesmen during the present visit of the East Timor delegation has been that the act of self-determination is over (O.JA7109⁴ and O.JA7120⁵ refer).

² Document 460.

³ 8 June. It observed that Soeharto's reception on 7 June at Merdeka Palace of the delegation from East Timor requesting integration into Indonesia 'publicly committed Indonesia at the highest level to East Timor's integration and to the manner by which it will be achieved'. It added that the Embassy in Jakarta understood that 'it was the President's own decision that he do so, taken against the recommendation of those working on Indonesia's Timor policy. (The initial idea was that the focus of the delegation's visit would be the DPR)'. See also note 2 to Document 462.

⁴ 8 June. It reported that a delegation from East Timor presented President Soeharto with a petition, signed at the meeting of the East Timorese Representative Council on 31 May, requesting the Indonesian Government's acceptance of East Timor's integration 'fully and without referendum'. Soeharto was reported to have replied: 'I herewith accept the petition as regards this integration'. In response to an invitation from the delegation for Indonesian leaders to visit East Timor, Soeharto was reported to have replied: 'It is not because we doubt the authenticity of the Balibo proclamation, it is not because we are not convinced of the importance of the petition, and it is not because we entertain doubts about your courageous leaders that we are sending the team but it is in order that the people of Indonesia will witness themselves the situation and speak face to face with their brothers in East Timor'.

⁵ 9 June. It reported that the head of the Provisional Government of East Timor, Arnaldo Araujo, had addressed the Indonesian Parliament (DPR) on 8 June, declaring: 'I hereby submit the firm determination of the people of East Timor to integrate with Indonesia . . . We impatiently wait for this great moment and we request the Government and people of Indonesia to accept our petition of integration in order to accelerate the process of East Timor joining Indonesia'. The chairman of the DPR, Idham Chalid, was reported to have said that 'with the acceptance of the petition of integration by the East Timor Popular Assembly the problem of the right of self-determination for the people of East Timor had been solved'.

10. With reference to your paragraph 3 the Indonesians are not, to our knowledge, claiming that it is Australia's policy alone which is damaging their international standing. But they recognise that our position on Timor issues has a considerable effect on the attitude of some other countries which are important to them. (It is not correct to say that Australia's decision not to attend the Dili meeting 'probably' influenced the Japanese and Americans. It was the decisive factor for them.)

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

466 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA, JAKARTA, GENEVA AND WASHINGTON

New York, 10 June 1976

O.UN5830 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

Timor: Process of Integration—Representations to Secretary-General

Ref O.CH366035, O.JA7165¹

Unless we can inject some new element I would not expect Winspeare to respond positively to our representations that he make a further visit to Timor in the near future or to associate himself with future Indonesian fact finding missions scheduled for 24 June.

2. We had therefore been considering whether there was anything we could do in New York. An approach to the Secretary-General is one of the possibilities we have had in mind, particularly as the Minister for Defence may be seeing Waldheim briefly late tomorrow 11 June² on the margin of the Security Council debate on Cyprus.

3. My judgement is that Waldheim would not be opposed in principle to a further visit by his representative for the purpose of updating facts for the Security Council, provided there were a reasonable assurance (which the PGET/Indonesia could no doubt give) that Winspeare would be able to travel freely or at least more freely and more widely than he did in January. Waldheim might also stipulate that Winspeare must be able to make contact with Fretilin leaders in Timor. It might be difficult to persuade Waldheim that there are no opposition leaders in Timor, unless we could give him a confidential assurance that we have evidence to support Indonesian claims that fighting has virtually ceased. Unfortunately I do not have material here even to rebut Fretilin claims that they control 80 percent of East Timor though Taylor's report³ suggests that the Fretilin presence is much smaller than the radio transmissions report. I should appreciate for this and related contingencies the latest JIO assessment of the situation in East Timor in particular the state of the Fretilin supporters and areas where the guerrillas operate.

4. The Secretary-General would be much less inclined to instruct Winspeare to go out at short notice to attend functions connected with Indonesian activities which are to be portrayed as part of the process of self-determination. Before he would agree to do this I would expect him to seek an assurance first that Indonesian forces have left or are in the process of leaving East Timor. The fact, (observed by witnesses of the assembly in Dili) that there are few Indonesian troops to be seen, would, I am afraid, not be sufficient. Again, Waldheim might be

¹ Documents 462 and 465.

² D. J. Killen was on an official visit to the United States of America.

³ Document 450.

influenced by an assurance by Australia that Indonesian announced partial withdrawal has in fact occurred and that Fretilin claims of massive reinforcements are incorrect. Again, I would appreciate your assessment.

5. I have just learned that the Portuguese asked Waldheim a few days ago for his reactions to the proceedings of the Dili assembly. Waldheim replied to the effect that Timor was not high on his priorities and that he had not yet arrived at any conclusions.

6. Waldheim would in any event be guided to a large extent by the reactions of the Security Council and Committee of 24 to a second visit by Winspeare. [According to Kosong]⁴ of Malaysia the Indonesians came under some criticism during the Algiers meeting of the non-aligned bureau,⁵ where the OPM attacked their annexation of West Irian, and Timor was also mentioned. The Indonesian representative was not very efficient in their defence, although there was no reference to Timor in the final communiqué. I am sure Waldheim will be sensitive to possible accusations by Tanzania/Mozambique and other non-aligned countries of sending Winspeare to give his blessing to a *fait accompli* or a demonstrably inadequate act of self-determination.

7. The final question which Waldheim might ask is: 'Can the Australian Government assure me, from their independent sources of information, that the people of East Timor, even if they have not been consulted in a proper fashion, do in fact, by a clear majority, favour integration with Indonesia?' If we had reasonable evidence that this is the case, then we could conceivably overlook failure by Indonesia to observe all the niceties of consultation of the people, and we could urge that Winspeare be sent out, confident that the true wishes of the people would emerge.

8. If these problems are not insuperable, an approach to Waldheim would I think be useful, even if in the event he declined to give a direction to Winspeare. A message by the Minister, together with any supplementary points you would wish me to make orally, would be an appropriate method.⁶

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

⁴ The text was corrupted in transmission. The reference is presumably to Kosong, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations, New York.

⁵ The 17-member Co-ordinating Bureau of the non-aligned movement (consisting of Algeria, Cuba, Guyana, India, Kuwait, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali, Nepal, Peru, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tanzania, Yugoslavia and Zaïre) met in Algiers from 30 May to 2 June.

⁶ Cablegram CH367450 (11 June) advised the Australian Mission to the United Nations to be guided in discussions with the UN Secretary-General (Waldheim) by paragraphs 5–7 of Document 468. It added that the Joint Intelligence Organisation had been asked to prepare an updated assessment of the situation on the ground in East Timor. The cablegram cautioned, however, that the Australian Mission to the United Nations would be unlikely to be able 'to speak other than in very general terms to the Secretariat about the military situation'. The cablegram warned that the Australian Government would not wish to be placed in the position of 'verifying for the United Nations Fretilin and Indonesian/PGET claims' or of verifying the safety or otherwise of any locations identified by Fretilin for a visit by Winspeare Guicciardi.

467 RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN TAYLOR AND TJAN

Jakarta, 10 June 1976

SECRET AUSTEO

EXTRACT¹

9. Tjan then returned to the history of the Timor problem (a common theme for him nowadays). He said that while Indonesia had had to be less than honest on a public level, it had been honest with Australia privately. We had been kept fully informed on what Indonesia was doing and intended to do. At the highest level the Australian Government had implicitly accepted Indonesian policy. Tjan referred specifically to Mr Whitlam's advice² to Her Tasning that what he, Mr Whitlam, had told President Soeharto should not be taken as a veto on Indonesian action. At the time Mr Whitlam had said this, Tjan argued that the possibilities for Indonesian action were severely restricted and the most obvious one was the use of force. Tjan claimed that Mr Peacock whilst his party was in opposition had been informed of Indonesia's policy.³ Since becoming Foreign Minister Mr Peacock had been kept informed of Indonesia's policies: in this regard Tjan referred to General Panggabean's two briefings⁴ for Mr Peacock and to Mr Peacock's telling Panggabean on his visit in January that the fighting in Timor should be ended quickly.⁵

10. I contested any implication that either Australian Government had condoned the use of force in Timor. I also said that I thought Mr Peacock's remark to Panggabean about finishing the fighting quickly had been misunderstood by the Indonesians. I felt sure that what Mr Peacock had had in mind was that a genuine act of self-determination should be held and the fighting stopped.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxiii]

¹ Omitted paragraphs record Taylor's discussion with Tjan reporting Documents 461 and 462; Tjan's prediction that the Indonesian Government would react badly to the Embassy in Jakarta raising specific names of Indonesians in relation to the deaths of the Australian journalists in Balibo; his perception that Shackleton had been sympathetic to Fretilin and that Martins was unreliable; and his assessment that Moerdani's reputation had been enhanced by his handling of East Timor.

² See Document 254.

³ Peacock had been briefed by Tjan during a private visit to Bali in September 1975. See Cablegram JA2026 (24 September), Cablegram JA4882 (17 February 1976), and a note by Taylor, 1 December 1975. [On file NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xvi.]

⁴ See Documents 404 and 442.

⁵ See Document 404.

468 CABLEGRAM TO POSTS

Canberra, 11 June 1976

O.CH367176 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY¹**Dili Meeting and Process of Integration**

Thanks your O.JA7165.² We are encouraged by Adenan's reaction. You will also have seen O.GE18616.³ We agree than an approach should now be made directly to the Secretary-General and are instructing New York accordingly. It must be accepted, of course, that the possibility of inducing the Secretary-General to authorise Winspeare to involve himself in the fact-finding mission is still at best doubtful. We believe, however, it would be helpful if a number of regional countries were to speak to him and to Winspeare, and again we are instructing posts accordingly.

2. We are glad that the Indonesians themselves will continue to urge Winspeare to visit the territory. In the light of O.GE18616, you might encourage them to approach the Secretary-General as well, perhaps in the company of other ASEAN countries.

3. Since our own acceptance of the Indonesian invitation is likely to hinge on Winspeare's participation as well, it may be difficult to engage the Indonesians in further discussions about the scenario for the fact-finding mission. But you should know that we should find the idea of Australian participation in a one-day visit (albeit under the arrangements sketched in your paragraph 8) entirely unsatisfactory and believe, like Davis, that Winspeare would take this view as well.

For New York

4. We are encouraged by Winspeare's response reported in O.GE18616. We are particularly encouraged by his acceptance of the view that his mandate is not limited to observance of the military situation, but covers the whole range of the Security Council resolutions including self-determination. As you know, our preference has always been to encourage the continuing involvement of the Special Representative rather than the Committee of Twenty-Four in what is essentially a highly delicate political exercise.

5. Could you now approach the Secretary-General in the same terms as paragraph 12 of O.CH366035?⁴ When doing so you might, as Geneva suggests, refer to Davis' discussion with Winspeare and note that Winspeare had said he was happy to proceed with this delayed second visit to the territory as soon as authorised by the Secretary-General.

6. The points covered in paragraphs 4 and 8 (and 7) of O.GE18616 may be very relevant to the Secretary-General's decision. If the Secretary-General enquires, you might say that our own knowledge of the situation on the ground in Timor suggests that the extent of Fretilin control, over any area, is now very uncertain. This assessment may be disputed by Horta and other Fretilin personalities outside the country. However, we ourselves see much merit in the approach suggested by Winspeare, namely that Horta should be pressed by the United Nations to name specific locations to which Winspeare might safely go in order to make contact with the 'other side'. The onus would then be on Fretilin to designate some safe area.

¹ This cablegram was sent Priority to Jakarta and New York, and Routine to Washington, Tokyo, Wellington, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Singapore, Bangkok and Port Moresby. It was repeated to Geneva and Lisbon.

² Document 465.

³ See note 8 to Document 462.

⁴ Document 462.

7. In regard to assisting Winspeare to reach such areas (if they exist) you may inform the Secretary-General that the Australian Government would, of course, be prepared to consider any request addressed to it by the United Nations. We would assume, however, that the Secretary-General would have first obtained full and firm assurances of safety from the other parties, namely the Indonesians and the PGET, before authorising the Special Representative to proceed to any claimed Fretilin area. Access would, of course, also need to be feasible and safe on technical grounds. Thus, while Fretilin may continue to occupy and control some mountain areas, access to them may not be possible because of technical hazards.

For other posts

8. You will have seen O.JA7165. We are also sending to you separately Geneva's O.GE18616.

9. Please now inform governments to which you are accredited of Australia's position on acceptance of the expected Indonesian invitation to accompany the Indonesian fact-finding mission to East Timor. We should also like posts, in particular Washington, Tokyo and Wellington, to encourage other governments to approach the Secretary-General in New York (and perhaps Winspeare in Geneva) along the lines that we have instructed Harry and Davis.

10. In discussions with the Japanese Embassy in Canberra on 10 June, the Japanese made the point—on instructions from Tokyo—that the invitation to accompany the fact-finding mission would this time be issued by the Indonesian Government and not by the PGET, and that the stated purpose of the mission was 'fact-finding' and not to observe 'an act of self-determination'. Japan was thus likely to accept the Indonesian invitation if any of the United States, Australia or the United Nations took up the Indonesian invitation as well.

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

469 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 11 June 1976

O.JA7180 SECRET AUSTEO IMMEDIATE

East Timor: Five Journalists

General Adenan (Foreign Ministry) spoke to me 11 June about our representations yesterday concerning the five journalists.¹

2. He said that he had been instructed to say that our request to the Indonesian Government to follow up matters concerning the five journalists had been 'rejected'.

3. When I sought elaboration he said there was nothing more to add except to repeat that our request to the Indonesian Government had been rejected. He declined to discuss the matter further.²

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, v]

¹ See Document 464.

² Official Australian reporting, dated 9 June, was to the effect that the Indonesian Government did not know the exact circumstances of what occurred at Balibo in October 1975 but believed that the journalists had been killed by Indonesian troops, and probably in the course of battle.

470 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 13 June 1976

O.UN5839 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

Timor—Visit by Special Representative of UN Secretary-General

I saw Waldheim late on 11 June. He was already aware of Minister's statements¹ in the House and had spoken to Winspeare from Rome. He had just received Indonesian invitation to visit East Timor on 24 June.² He had also been advised by his staff that neither the Committee of 24 [nor] the Security Council was likely to accept the invitation to accompany the Indonesian mission. The Provisional Government had presented what was in effect a *fait accompli*.

2. I stressed that we had reached the view before receiving the Indonesian invitation that a second visit by Winspeare was desirable before the end of June.³ There had been fresh developments and Winspeare could provide additional facts. His visit could begin before the 24 June and perhaps extend beyond it. The Indonesians and PGET were particularly anxious for him to be there on 24 June but I believed they would accept him earlier.

3. Waldheim said Winspeare was not prepared to go again to Timor just to meet the same people he met before. He must be able to make contact with the opposition. He could not sit around for days as he had done in Australia.

4. I pointed out that Winspeare could certainly visit places he had not been to before, on the South coast for example. We were also anxious that he should assess the feelings of a wider cross section of people. However the extent of Fretilin presence was uncertain. This might be tested by challenging Horta and other Fretilin leaders to name one or more places where they would be prepared to meet Winspeare. If there were such a place and if the PGET gave assurances of safety, Australia would consider a request for help with transport. Of course, some places in the mountains might be inaccessible for purely technical reasons. Waldheim said he did not think it was reasonable for Winspeare to go out just to visit one or two more places. He would, however, consider our suggestion that Horta be invited to name a place for a meeting.

5. I suggested that he consider also the possibility of having Winspeare's visit coincide with the Indonesian mission. The observing of this mission was a somewhat different proposal from the Assembly meeting on 31 May. The observers were being invited to visit several different centres and to verify the wishes of the people. Australia had not felt able to lend its presence to the ceremony in Dili in the absence of observation by the UN. We thought there might be wider participation by Ambassadors from Jakarta in this next phase. Our own decision whether to accept an invitation would be influenced by what the UN did. It would be difficult for the committee of 24 to send a mission, but Winspeare could go.

6. Waldheim said he would let me know his decision as soon as possible.

HARRY

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxiii]

¹ See note 7 to Document 462.

² Cablegram UN5822 (10 June) communicated the text of a letter signed by Sani, and sent on 10 June to the UN Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council and the Chairman of the Committee of 24. The letter referred to the petition presented on 8 June by the delegation of the Provisional Government of East Timor to the President and Parliament of Indonesia and the decision of the Indonesian Government and Parliament to send a 'mission for the purpose of making an on-the-spot assessment of the wishes of the people of East Timor, as formally expressed in the petition, to be integrated with Indonesia'. It then extended invitations to the recipients to visit East Timor together with the mission sent by the Indonesian Government.

³ See Document 462.

471 CABLEGRAM TO PEKING

Canberra, 21 June 1976

O.CH370806 SECRET PRIORITY

Timor: Indonesian Fact-Finding Mission*For Minister and Secretary¹*

We need to answer Indonesia's invitation² to accompany the fact-finding mission to East Timor. The mission, comprising Indonesian Ministers and members of the DPR, is to leave Jakarta on the evening of 23 June. It will spend the night in Bali and leave for Dili early on 24 June. At Dili there will be a short meeting with PGET leaders. The party will then divide into two (or three) groups which between them are to visit all thirteen districts of East Timor. The party will return to Jakarta late on 24 June.

2. The Indonesians have been adamant that the duration of the visit cannot be extended beyond one day. They have pleaded lack of accommodation and other facilities, and they imply that by splitting the party into groups it will be possible for the mission to meet a fair cross section of the people in the time available. It seems unlikely that those participating will be given more than about three or four hours outside Dili, or that those whose opinions are to be canvassed will have any choice other than to state whether or not they are in favour of the petition for integration. The whole process pre-supposes the validity of the 31 May proceedings³ and would seem to fall short of our requirement that the mission should provide reasonable opportunity for a genuine sounding of opinion in the territory.

3. It appears that few foreign embassies will accept the Indonesian invitation. As of 20 June those who had accepted are: Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Panama, Philippines and Syria.⁴ Of the other regional countries, Singapore and PNG have decided against attendance, while Thailand is, at most, a waiverer. If Australia does not attend we doubt whether the United States will do so. This would call into question Japan's attendance, while New Zealand seems unlikely to repeat its near solo performance of 31 May. The EEC nine have decided against attendance.

4. It is also clear that Winspeare will not be a participant in the process. Nor will the Committee of Twenty-Four or the Security Council (because of Indonesia's non-compliance with the Security Council Resolutions on Timor).

5. In the light of the above there seems no alternative to informing the Indonesians that Australia too will not be taking up the Indonesian invitation.

6. On this occasion we have given the Indonesians plenty of forewarning of our views. They will be aware too of the considerable efforts by Australia to get Winspeare involved,

¹ Fraser, accompanied by Peacock and Renouf, visited the People's Republic of China from 20 to 27 June.

² Cablegram JA7205 (15 June) communicated the text of a Note, dated 10 June, inviting diplomatic missions in Jakarta to accompany the fact-finding mission sent by the Indonesian President and Parliament to East Timor.

³ See Document 456.

⁴ Cablegram JA7578 (2 July) reported that these eight States and India and Yemen sent representatives to accompany the Indonesian fact-finding mission to East Timor on 24 June. The cablegram added that translation facilities for the visitors were poor and that no attempt was made by the Indonesian delegation to ascertain whether the East Timorese people wanted integration or independence. The leader of the delegation, Indonesian Home Minister Machmud, was reported to have said that the petition presented to President Soeharto on 7 June was an 'undeniable truth and reality' and that 'there is no doubt about the truthfulness of the petition since it has really been democratically decided by the will of the whole people. Therefore this delegation has no intention to examine, to check or review the truthfulness of the petition'.

these efforts including encouragement to others (the US, UK, Japan, New Zealand and Malaysia) to do likewise.

7. Winspeare himself was initially inclined to respond fairly positively to our representations, but Waldheim was quite unhelpful. It was perhaps natural that he should wish to avoid a situation where, as in January, the Indonesians effectively stage-managed Winspeare's visit. But on this occasion the Indonesians had indicated Winspeare could travel extensively and to all thirteen districts. The Secretary-General failed to respond to our (and Winspeare's) suggestion that he might invite Fretilin to name one or more places where they could be prepared to meet Winspeare and that he should seek guarantees from Indonesia and the PGET that they would not impede such a meeting.⁵ Harry also informed the Secretary-General that, if Fretilin could designate such a location, and if it were accessible and the Indonesians and PGET had given the required assurances of safety, Australia would be prepared to consider a request from the United Nations for help with transport. But again the Secretary-General has not responded.

8. Indeed it seems pretty clear that the Secretary-General has set himself against any involvement at this stage. Winspeare has commented to Davis that Waldheim is most concerned not to cross China, which in Security Council consultations has opposed any United Nations concessions to Indonesia—all of which, it has been suggested, may relate to the Secretary-General's candidacy for re-election.

9. The reports we have received do not rule out the possibility of a second visit by Winspeare, but clearly such a visit could only take place sometime after 24 June.

10. Subject to your views, we would therefore propose to ask Woolcott to decline the Indonesian invitation to accompany the fact-finding mission to East Timor. He might do this late on 22 June.

For Jakarta

11. Subject to the Minister's views, you should in conveying the decision to the Indonesians invite their attention to our previous advice that Australia has always regarded United Nations participation as an important part of the self-determination process in East Timor, and that acceptance of Indonesia's invitation to accompany the fact-finding mission to Timor was always conditional on there being a credible United Nations presence as well. That Winspeare is not to participate is not for the want of Australia's own efforts. We have been active not only in New York and Geneva but also in regional capitals in trying to generate the circumstances which would have made his acceptance of the invitation possible. In the event, these efforts had not succeeded. We are disappointed, but we note that a second visit by Winspeare is still a possibility a little later on.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxiii]

⁵ See Document 470.

472 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Lisbon, 23 June 1976

O.LB913 SECRET AUSTEO PRIORITY

EXTRACT

East Timor: Indonesia/Portugal Meeting*Ref O.JA7342¹*

11. In formulating a position on Timor, the new Socialist Government² will need to have regard to the following considerations:

- (a) Portugal has maintained publicly for many months the illegality of Indonesia's actions and has taken the matter to the Security Council. Most recently, in the Foreign Ministry's statement of 17 June, Portugal has reaffirmed that the matter is in the hands of the United Nations.
- (b) There have been poor responses (notably from Portugal's NATO allies) to Indonesia's invitations to witness the process of integration. United Nations bodies and the Secretary-General continue to take a tough line with Indonesia. As seen from Lisbon, the world community is supporting the position adopted by Portugal. To change course now and adopt a position at variance with the U.N. would be counter-productive for Portugal's general foreign policy objectives. It would *inter alia*, result in a deterioration in relations with Mozambique and Angola (who support Fretilin) and thereby make it more difficult for the Government in future negotiations with these countries on economic, financial and humanitarian problems of far greater magnitude than the question of 23 Portuguese prisoners in Timor.
- (c) To adopt a Silva 'solution' as one of its first acts would create an adverse image for a socialist government vis-à-vis Africa, East Europe and the Arabs, which still constitute an important element of Portugal's new foreign policy. It would also provide leftist critics of a socialist government with evidence of a 'sellout' in its dealings with 'reactionary forces'. (A minority socialist government will be very susceptible to pressure from the left.)

Conclusion

12. Our conclusion is that Morais [da] Silva had a brief (from whom is not clear) to discuss the question of the prisoners and the terms for their release but that he had no authority to enter into any commitments. He is likely to encounter resistance to the course of action he suggests, not only from Antunes but also from the remaining leftists on the revolutionary council, the Socialist party (i.e. the incoming government) and the left of centre press. We doubt therefore that Morais [da] Silva's initiative will resolve the sovereignty issue in the near future and before the United Nations has itself taken a position on the integration issue. In the early weeks of a socialist government, we can see no compelling reasons, and in fact, just the

¹ 22 June. This reported Tjan's views on the secret talks between Morais da Silva and the PGET. The earlier parts of cablegram LB913 indicate Cooper's assessment of the da Silva mission. See Editorial Note: Secret Contacts between Portugal, Indonesia and the PGET, pp. 782-3.

² As a result of elections for the new Portuguese Constitutional Assembly held on 25 April, the Socialist Party led by Mario Soares emerged as the party with the largest number of seats. When General Eanes, who had won the election for the Presidency on 27 June, was sworn in on 14 July, he called on Soares to form a government.

opposite, for the Portuguese Government to offer recognition of the PGET in return for the prisoners. We therefore see little prospect of any major change in Portugal's position on Timor, before Indonesia's formal integration of the territory in mid-August. Meanwhile the Portuguese will continue to explore ways and means of securing the release of their prisoners within whatever legal framework is approved by the United Nations.

COOPER

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

473 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA AND HONG KONG

New York, 25 June 1976

O.UN5928 SECRET PRIORITY

Timor: Winspeare's Mission

Ref O.CH373176,¹ O.CH373177²

Hong Kong: For Minister and Secretary

In considering possible further action in UN, in particular a further approach to Waldheim, I should like to be clear about our recent and current objectives.

2. I had assumed that our purpose in advocating United Nations participation in supervision or observation of self determination in East Timor was to secure if possible acceptance by the international community of the emerging settlement, or, if we found it necessary to question the basis of the settlement, to do so as part of a United Nations judgement and not in isolation.

3. What the Secretary-General has done in tabling Winspeare's report (and by timing this before the verification visit organised by the Indonesians on 24 June) is to indicate that he is not able to carry out the role of facilitating a settlement between the 'parties' (a normal Secretary-General role) and that he is not prepared to inquire into or certify the factual situation in East Timor generally. He is no doubt influenced in this by the strong sentiments on the question of Timor of one permanent member of the Security Council, China.

¹ (25 June). It reported that a second report, dated 22 June, from Winspeare Guicciardi explained that he could not accept Fretilin's invitation to proceed to East Timor because Fretilin could not identify any areas where he could meet Fretilin leaders and neither Fretilin nor the PGET could give him the necessary assurances for his safety. His declining Indonesia's invitation to visit East Timor on 24 June was explained by the fact that his 'mandate derived specifically from Security Council resolutions 384 (1975) and 389 (1976), and taking into account the decisions which were taken by the Security Council and the Committee of 24 with respect to the similar invitations addressed to them'.

² (25 June). It communicated for approval the text of a draft message to the UN Secretary-General. The draft message expressed the Australian Government's hope that Winspeare would be able to proceed with a second visit to East Timor and its willingness 'to lend whatever assistance it reasonably can in such an enterprise'. Cablegram CH373177 instructed Harry and Davis to reiterate that Fretilin's ability to nominate a site for proposed talks with Winspeare should be fully tested, 'as should the willingness of the PGET and the Indonesians not to impede a meeting between Winspeare and Fretilin'.

4. As Jakarta has pointed out there was little likelihood that Fretilin would in fact nominate a specific rendezvous.³ They have in the past [p]referred to allege that the PGET/Indonesians would take military advantage of any revelation of the Fretilin position. I had assumed that in proposing the challenge to Horta to name a site we were mainly seeking to dispose of Winspeare/Waldheim's argument that they had a duty to contact Fretilin and could not visit Timor unless such contact is possible. Our hope, I thought, was that if they could demonstrate that Fretilin had no visible presence they might agree to a visit to check on other aspects of the situation.

5. I am not sure what we hoped Winspeare would find and report. He would have been reluctant to make assessments of such questions as continued fighting, Fretilin strengths, continued presence of Indonesian forces and other questions relating to the pressures on the people and their ability to express their views freely. Winspeare, in making a report, would continue to be guided by his desire not to draw too much fire from China and others. I do not believe that we could ever expect more than bland, largely insubstantial reports from Winspeare (and Waldheim).

6. There was a hope, however, that Winspeare might, at least indirectly, throw some objective light on the claim of the Fretilin to control 80 percent of East Timor and to have the support of masses of the people.

7. There does not seem to be much likelihood that Waldheim would react other than negatively to the message which you have proposed the Minister send to the Secretary-General. Waldheim could easily duck the issue by saying that the question of further action is now in the hands of the Security Council and that he could not, immediately after the publication of the second report, attempt to resume activity without the further endorsement of the Security Council. If your intention is to evidence our effort to seek UN involvement in the territory it would be sufficient for a letter from myself to be sent to Waldheim, to be distributed as a Security Council document. In this letter I could make reference to our various suggestions relating to the return of the Special Representative to East Timor. We might also wait a few days until we can study information from participants in the visit of 24 June before deciding on our next step.

8. An approach to the Secretary-General could tie in with an Indonesian plan to write to the Secretary-General, putting down on paper the Indonesian offer to facilitate to the fullest extent a further visit of Winspeare. This letter is apparently still in the drafting stages.

9. My assessment is that the United Nations as a whole now has very little to offer by way of substantive action on East Timor. While Ambassador Salim of Tanzania and the Missions of Benin and China have indicated to us that they expect Council consideration of the second Winspeare report, they have not done so with any sense of urgency, and all have admitted that there is nothing of substance the Security Council can do. They will no doubt be critical of Indonesia when Timor is debated in the Security Council, the Committee of 24 and the General Assembly, but we do not see any concrete proposals coming from any of these bodies.

10. Australia is in fact one of the countries which has been most active on the question of Timor in New York. We have been putting constructive proposals before the relevant UN bodies since this matter became a matter of controversy in the UN last year. The government

³ Cablegram JA7405 (25 June) commented that 'while we need to be seen to explore every avenue, we would be deluding ourselves if we thought there was any possibility that Fretilin will be able to nominate a genuine and practical site in East Timor which Winspeare could visit. Equally there is no chance whatever that in the event that Fretilin did nominate some probably impractical location that Indonesia or the PGET would facilitate any meeting between Winspeare and Fretilin'.

will no doubt wish this mission to participate in the debates that are foreshadowed in the Security Council, in the Committee of 24 and in UNGA 31, but I do not feel that we need play a leading role, unless of course some new possibility for an initiative emerges.⁴

HARRY

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxiii]

FRASER'S MESSAGE TO SOEHARTO: JUNE 1976

On 24 June the Australian reported that, during a speech in Peking, 'Mr Fraser expressed doubts on the ability of the regime in Indonesia to remain effective . . .' On 27 June the Australian Embassy in Jakarta was made aware that the Indonesian Government would take a most serious view if reports of Fraser's statement proved to be true. The following day the same source indicated that the President was greatly 'agitated', as much by the suggestion that his was a 'regime' as by the suggestion that his government was 'ineffective'; never before had Soeharto been so 'excited' about newspaper reports. In Cablegram MN9373(28 June) Renouf instructed Woolcott to inform the Indonesian authorities that Fraser's reference to Indonesia had been very brief and was concerned principally with warning the Chinese against making too great an issue of Timor for fear that the Russians would also interfere. Fraser's remarks about 'the nature of the regime' were in reference to 'the fact that the present Government of Indonesia depends very much upon President Suharto himself'. There had been no reference to the 'effectiveness' or otherwise of the Government of Indonesia. By 30 June the Indonesian press were running the story, indicating that the Indonesian Government would view the remarks, if they proved to be true, to be those of an unfriendly country. On 30 June Woolcott was instructed by the Prime Minister to pass on a personal message to Soeharto (Document 474).

⁴ Cablegram HK11812 (28 June) conveyed an instruction from Peacock not to send the proposed message to the UN Secretary-General (see note 2). Peacock considered that the Australian Government's views on all aspects of the Timor question were already well known and thoroughly recorded but might be reiterated if the question were taken up again by the Security Council.

474 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 30 June 1976

O.CH375152 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

Message to the President from Prime Minister

The following is the text of the message referred to in our immediately preceding telegram:¹

Begins

Your Excellency,

I have asked my Ambassador, Mr Woolcott, to see you personally to give you background information about my talks with the Chinese leaders. I have in mind that he particularly discuss with you press reports which could give a misleading impression of the substance of our discussions.

I am particularly upset about press reports which imply that comments had been made reflecting on Indonesia and your own distinguished leadership. You should know that during my discussions I was very conscious of the need to keep Indonesian interests in mind, and the Ambassador will be able to make this clear to you. I want you to know that I hold the relationship between Indonesia and Australia in the first importance and I attach great significance to the development of a close relationship between us personally.

With this in mind I feel it important to have a personal meeting with you as we had agreed in our previous exchanges.² I should like to visit Indonesia at a time that is convenient to you, but the dates I have tentatively set aside are 10 to 12 October. I would be grateful if you could confirm whether these dates would be convenient to you, or any alternative dates you may have in mind around this period.

Malcolm Fraser

Ends

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/10/1, v]

¹ In Cablegram CH375151 (30 June) Renouf informed Woolcott that the Prime Minister wished him 'to see President Soeharto at the earliest possible moment and pass on to the President himself the contents of the message Dan has already delivered lower down the line'. He asked Woolcott to emphasise to Soeharto the importance which Fraser attributed to relations between Indonesia and Australia as well as 'the importance to both countries of the avoidance of Great Power conflict or interference in South East Asia'. Woolcott was also asked to 'assure the President of the high regard Mr Fraser has for him, for Mr Fraser's appreciation of what the President has done in Indonesia and Mr Fraser's feeling that very much in Indonesia depends upon the continuation of the President's leadership of his country'. It concluded by advising Woolcott that the immediately following cablegram contained the text of a message which Fraser wished the Australian Ambassador to pass to Soeharto.

² See Documents 343 and 344.

475 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 30 June 1976

O.JA7484 UNCLASSIFIED PRIORITY

East Timor

The press this morning reported that President Soeharto approved the integration of East Timor with Indonesia at a Cabinet meeting yesterday.

2. Soeharto reportedly concluded that:

- (A) The Government of Indonesia respond positively to and approve the East Timorese petition for integration,
- (B) Integration will be arranged through constitutional procedures,
- (C) The Government of Indonesia will submit a draft bill on integration to the House of Representatives (DPR). The bill will be passed into a law legalising integration, and
- (D) All Indonesian government agencies are instructed to help development in East Timor.

3. Information Minister Mashuri is quoted as saying he hoped the process of finalising integration would not repeat not take long.

4. We understand the President is to discuss the integration bill with DPR leaders today.¹

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/10/1, v]

476 SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 30 June 1976

CONFIDENTIAL

Timor: Round-up of Developments

This submission summarises developments over the past two weeks on Timor. We should be grateful for a direction on the suggestion in paragraph 6.

Winspeare's Mission

2. Winspeare's second report¹ has been circulated in New York. It has a strong note of finality about it. Harry reports that the Secretary-General intends no further action on Timor unless instructed by the Security Council.²

¹ The bill was submitted to the Indonesian Parliament on 5 July. The preamble of the bill stated that the PGET and the people of East Timor had submitted to the Indonesian Government and Parliament a petition seeking the integration of East Timor into the unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia; that a delegation of the Indonesian Government had obtained convincing proof that the people of East Timor in fact possessed a 'strong and free' desire to integrate the territory into Indonesia; and that a law was needed to ratify the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia. Article 1 ratified the integration of East Timor into the unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Article 2 formed the 'level one area province of East Timor whose territory covered the former territory of Portuguese Timor'. Article 3 stated that 'Matters in connection with the implementation of the determination referred to in article 2 are to be arranged in more detail by individual regulations, with regard to the situation and development in the territory of East Timor'. Article 4 stated that the law would take effect from a date to be proclaimed.

¹ See note 1 to Document 473.

² Cablegram UN5901 (23 June).

3. There will be those who believe the Secretary-General has given up too easily and it would have been reasonable for him to have built on the expressed Indonesian willingness to have Winspeare visit East Timor again. Moreover the Secretary-General also seems willing to leave uncontested the capacity of Fretilin to nominate a site for talks and/or the willingness of the Indonesians to allow this.

4. You will recall that you decided while you were in Hong Kong that you did not wish to send a further message to the Secretary-General, still expressing our hope that Winspeare might yet make a second visit to East Timor. You made the point that our views are well known and recorded and that should be sufficient for the time being.

5. Since then several new considerations have arisen. First, the ASEAN countries, in their joint declaration³ issued following last week's ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting, urged that the UN special representative should complete his mission to Timor. Second, some recent Ministerial letters, and enquiries from Mr Fry, M.P., suggest that future domestic criticism could focus on this aspect and assert that, while criticising the former government for inactivity in the UN, the Government has itself been inactive in trying to get Winspeare to finish his mission. Third, we heard this morning that the New Zealand Minister for Trade and Foreign Affairs (Talboys) has asked for a letter to be drafted for him to send to Malik advocating that Indonesia make a further effort to get Winspeare back to East Timor again.

6. With these developments in mind you may wish to keep open the possibility that there might be merit in making yet another approach to Waldheim about getting Winspeare back to East Timor. In the meantime you may wish to consider Harry's alternative suggestion that he, as Permanent Representative, address a letter to the Secretary-General which sets out Australia's various suggestions about the return of the special representative to Timor.⁴ Such a letter would be distributed in the normal way as a Security Council document and would be visible evidence of the Government's offer of full cooperation with the United Nations. *We recommend* this course to you.⁵

ICRC

7. You will know that our efforts to bring about the return of the ICRC to Timor have run into difficulties. A visit by Pasquier and Nessi of the ICRC to Dili on 1 June went badly: they were denied freedom to travel to other centres which they claimed was necessary to undertake a proper assessment of relief needs. Nessi told Woolcott on 3 June that he intended to recommend that the EC postpone its offer of food aid.

8. We do not know whether such a recommendation has gone forward to the EC. But we continue to believe that the ICRC should concentrate at this point on getting a foot in the door and not set pre-conditions which could frustrate that objective. We are continuing to urge flexibility on the ICRC.

³ Cablegram MN9408 (30 June) cabled the full text of the communiqué issued at the end of the ninth ASEAN ministerial meeting, held in Manila from 24 to 26 June. The section relating to Timor in the cabled text reads: 'In this connection, the meeting heard with appreciation the evaluation given by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia on the question of East Timor that recent developments in East Timor correspond with the provisions of the United Nations Security Council resolutions No. 384 of Dec 22, 1975, and No. 389 of April 22, 1976. Considering the expressed readiness of both Indonesia and the Provisional Government of East Timor to cooperate with the United Nations in the implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions, the meeting called on the United Nations to take cognizance of these assurances. In view of the developments in that territory, the meeting urged the Special Envoy of the U.N. Secretary-General, Mr Vittorio Winspeare-Guicciardi, to complete his mission as entrusted to him by the said resolutions'.

⁴ Cablegram UN5830 (10 June).

⁵ Peacock wrote in the margin: 'agreed'.

9. We also asked Davis to enquire of ICRC headquarters in Geneva whether an offer of a new Australian cash contribution would be of help in bringing about some movement in the situation. The ICRC response was that such an offer 'could be helpful and could be made at any time'.

10. We are proposing in a separate submission that you send a new letter to the Treasurer seeking his concurrence to a fresh Australian cash offer to the ICRC.

Portuguese/Indonesian Contacts

11. 'Secret contacts' between the Indonesians and Portuguese in New York, and later Bangkok, led to a visit to Timor on 20 June by the Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Air Force, General Morais [da] Silva. The visit was primarily connected with the Portuguese prisoners captured last September, but political discussions of a general nature also took place.

12. It seems clear that Silva, a conservative member of the Armed Forces Movement in Lisbon, and well connected with the newly elected Portuguese President, General Eanes, would like to trade Portuguese recognition of the PGET for the release of the 23 Portuguese prisoners. The Indonesians (Tjan) believe that Silva has some kind of mandate to conclude such a deal, they seem to be pinning their hopes on Silva's reported influence with President Eanes. Cooper in Lisbon is sceptical. He points out that, with the imminent formation of a civilian government, the policy making role of the Armed Forces in Portugal is coming to an end. He expects that the new socialist government would be too concerned about its image in the United Nations and the impact on its relations with Angola and Mozambique to allow any formal concessions to Indonesia over Timor. Cooper concludes that Portugal will continue contacts on the prisoners but will not give formal recognition to the PGET.

13. Further talks are to take place with the PGET, probably in Kuala Lumpur, later in July. It is possible of course that re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Portugal after 17 August—foreshadowed by Silva—could be managed in such a way as to amount to implicit Portuguese acceptance of the incorporation of East Timor.⁶

The Balibo Affair

14. Indonesia has reacted sharply to our request to interview the various Indonesian nationals named by Martins as having been associated with the attack on Balibo. On 11 June our Embassy was informed by the Foreign Ministry that our request had been 'rejected'; the Foreign Ministry refused to discuss the reasons.⁷ On 18 June we called in the Indonesian Chargé (Kadri) and presented him with a Note requesting reconsideration of the Indonesian decision. We are awaiting the Indonesian reply. But it seems fairly clear that the Indonesians have decided (probably at a high level) to cease further cooperation in our enquiries.

15. The Legal Adviser, meanwhile, has discussed the AJA's submission with Mr Opas, Q.C., (representing the AJA). Mr Opas did not contest Mr Lauterpacht's advice that the International Court of Justice would have no jurisdiction in the matter. He also seemed to recognise that the prospect of the Indonesian Government agreeing to pay reparations was slight; he referred several times to the alternative possibility that aid to Indonesia might be reduced by some suitable sum which could then be paid to the next-of-kin. This idea has also been aired publicly by Walsh of the Victorian Branch of the AJA.

⁶ The 23 Portuguese prisoners were formally released and flown to Lisbon on 28 July along with 113 Portuguese civilian evacuees. The Bangkok Agreement, which was signed by Morais da Silva on 25 July, contained an agreement for the release of the prisoners which included the following words: '... since 17 July 1976 the Territory of East Timor has been totally integrated with the Republic of Indonesia, *de facto* as well as *de jure*'. Da Silva and the Portuguese Government firmly denied that in signing the Agreement Portugal had recognised Indonesian sovereignty in East Timor.

⁷ Document 469.

16. Mr Lauterpacht expects to conclude his study of the legal aspects by mid-July. We shall then need to decide whether to lodge a formal request for compensation with the Indonesian Government. Any such Australian approach, of course, is likely to be rejected. It may in fact provoke a counter claim: the Indonesians have already made the point that entries in Shackleton's diaries, suggesting he had delivered a military message for one of the Fretilin commanders, provide a basis for claims by 'PGET widows' for compensation.

17. But the main point is that we are approaching the end of the road in regard to our enquiries into the Balibo incident. We shall then need to consider a final statement which would presumably need to retrace the efforts made by the Government to establish the facts and also draw together a number of conclusions.⁸

Roger East

18. According to press reports emanating from Jakarta there is a possibility that Roger East may still be alive in East Timor. These reports are based on an account of a Fretilin defector that he had seen an unnamed 'white man'. We have asked Jakarta to take these reports up with the Indonesian Government.

[*matter omitted*]

A. R. PARSONS

Acting Deputy Secretary

[NAA: A1838/319, 3038/10/1/2, iv]

477 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 2 July 1976

O.CH376559 SECRET PRIORITY

EXTRACT

Timor

7. We note (paragraph 6 of JA7542¹) that the Indonesians are still willing to facilitate a visit by Winspeare and that he would be able to visit all provinces. The problem remains, however, that the Secretary-General is unlikely to authorise his Special Representative to visit 'one area' without his either going to the 'other area' as well, or in effect proving that such an 'other area' no longer exists. We continue to feel that the best course in this situation is to encourage the Secretary-General to test the ability of Fretilin to nominate a practical site for talks. Such a course would imply that Indonesia/PGET would guarantee, presumabl[y] in advance, not to impede contacts if Fretilin were able to nominate a venue. This may be hard for Indonesia to swallow, but if, as Idris maintains, Fretilin no longer has accessible area under its control, why not expose this situation by encouraging the Secretary-General to test the situation?

8. The Minister had decided to reserve his position on the idea of a personal message to Waldheim (paragraph 8 of your JA7542), but had agreed on 1 July that we should meanwhile

⁸ At both paragraph 16 and 17 Peacock wrote in the margin: 'Please keep me informed'.

¹ 1 July. It reported a discussion between Woolcott and Idris, and the Indonesian request for Australian Government opinion on the location of Fretilin-controlled areas of East Timor.

proceed with the alternative proposal (paragraph 7 of UN5928²) that Harry should address a letter to the Secretary-General setting out our suggestions relating to the return of the Special Representative to Timor, including our offer to consider a request to assist with transport.

9. In the light of Idris' representations we plan to withhold action for the time being as Idris' response to your further approaches could possibly affect the terms of any further action in New York. But we think it important to pin the Indonesians down on whether they are serious about wishing Winspeare to proceed with a second visit to the territory. If they are—and we have noted the reference in last week's A[S]EAN declaration³ to urg[e] the Special Representative to complete his mission—then Indonesia must try to create conditions to allow a visit to take place. In particular we should like you to put to Idris the considerations outlined in paragraph 7.

10. You will be aware that the New Zealand Foreign Minister is considering sending a message to Malik advocating a further Indonesian effort to get Winspeare back to Timor. The New Zealanders are also considering the possibility of a separate message to Waldheim.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/13/10/1, v]

478 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 3 July 1976

O.JA7582 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Meeting with President Soeharto

For Renouf from Woolcott

I called on the President this morning.

2. I handed to him the Prime Minister's message¹ which he read immediately. I said I was sorry that I had not repeat not been able to see him earlier as the Prime Minister had wanted to move as quickly as possible to prevent any misunderstandings stemming from press reports affecting relations with Indonesia. The President said he had seen me as soon as he could and that he appreciated the Prime Minister's prompt action.

3. I then gave the President as much background as I could along the lines that you have provided in recent messages.²

4. I said the Prime Minister in discussing the Asian region had told the Chinese of the importance we attached to ASEAN and of the support which we gave to ASEAN. I also said that the Prime Minister had told the Chinese that we supported ASEAN's objective of preventing the domination of South East Asia by any of the major powers, adding that competition between the major powers in the area could lead to instability.

5. I said in this context the Prime Minister had referred to the 'progress' being made under the 'present government' of Indonesia.

² Document 473.

³ See note 3 to Document 476.

¹ Document 474.

² See Editorial Note: Fraser's Message to Soeharto: June 1976, p. 800; and note 1 to Document 474.

6. I said also that the Prime Minister had not repeat not used any words such as 'ineffective' to describe the Indonesian leadership or government. He had referred to there being a possible question mark over the future of Indonesia because of the nature of the regime but that what the Prime Minister had in mind was the importance of President Soeharto's own role in maintaining stability in Indonesia in the future.

7. Although I had said I did not repeat not intend to do so (our JA7570³), President Soeharto was appreciative and relaxed by this stage and so I did add that, as far as the use of the word 'regime' was concerned, it had no unfavourable connotations when used in Australia. It was synonymous with the word 'government' which the Prime Minister had in fact used in respect of Indonesia earlier in the discussion on South East Asia. (In fact somewhat to my surprise the President used the word regime himself to describe the Indonesian Government later in the conversation.)

8. I said one of the main purposes the Prime Minister had during the discussion was to get the message over that China should not repeat not interfere in the internal affairs of Indonesia or other ASEAN countries and that the Prime Minister was also hoping to obtain a reaction from the Chinese of support for ASEAN, which in fact he did.

9. The Prime Minister attached importance to the assurances that he had received from the Chinese Premier that the Chinese would not repeat not let party-to-party relations harm state-to-state relations. The President did not repeat not react, as I had expected he might to this, simply nodding.

10. Finally, I told the President that the Chinese Premier had raised the question of the re-establishment of relations with Indonesia. He might be interested to know that Hua had said there were no difficulties from the Chinese side but that China was not impatient and if Indonesia still had difficulties China would not repeat not press the matter. The President thanked me for passing this on but made no direct comment.

11. The President said he would like me to pass on to the Prime Minister his 'heartfelt appreciation and thanks' for the Prime Minister's message. He added that he was very grateful for the useful background which I had been able to give him. All of this put the press reports which had caused concern into a completely different perspective.

12. The President said he could understand the embarrassment created for Mr Fraser by inaccurate press reports. There was of course embarrassment for him and Indonesia too. He said he was very pleased that we had moved so quickly to remove any misunderstandings before they gathered momentum.

13. The President added that some western journalists harboured ill feelings towards Indonesia and wanted to upset relations between Australia and Indonesia. They had tried to use the Timor question to do this and would use any issue which came to hand. The President said there were a number of foreign journalists who reported negatively about progress and development in Indonesia and about the 'leadership of the present regime'. Their purpose was to stir up international opinion against Indonesia and to create dissatisfaction and a lack of confidence in the Government, if possible, within Indonesia as well. The President said that he had noticed that I had now visited more than half of the 26 provinces of Indonesia. I would probably have observed during these visits that these hostile influences were not repeat not succeeding. There was considerable progress and general stability in the country and he was determined that this would be maintained. Indonesia was not repeat not a perfect society and there were many areas which needed improvement. But the Government was both aware of this and acting accordingly.

³ 2 July.

14. The use of the phrase 'ineffective leadership' in the 'Straits Times' and some other papers had been unfortunate as such references could do damage to relations between our two countries if people were to believe them.⁴ A number of prominent Indonesians had expressed surprise and disappointment at the use of this phrase, if it had been used. It would be made clear to those concerned that this report was false.

15. The President recalled Mr Fraser's message⁵ to him in November during the period of the caretaker government and said he had the fullest confidence that the Prime Minister wanted to strengthen relations between Australia and Indonesia.

16. The President said that relations between the two countries should be further advanced by the Prime Minister's visit to Indonesia. The President said that the commencing date Mr Fraser had suggested was, barring some 'unforeseen or extraordinary circumstance', suitable to him. He hoped the Prime Minister would be able to pay more than a brief visit to Jakarta and would be able to see something of the country. We would follow up the details. In principle October was a good time. It was after the National Day celebrations in August and Ramadan in September.

17. The President then said he would like to raise an issue which was not repeat not directly related to my call, (in fact I believe he was linking the two) and that was Timor. He said that he hoped the 'process of integration in East Timor' would 'not repeat not lead to a further deterioration of relations between Australia and Indonesia'. For about fifteen minutes the President went back over the background saying that while he was aware of the problems which had arisen in Australia he wanted to stress that Indonesia had no expansionist designs on any territory. It had not repeat not really wanted East Timor. East Timor was very backward and would create additional development problems for Indonesia. However, given the background of the failure of Portuguese policies there, the resort to arms by Fretilin, the civil war, the influx of 40,000 refugees into Indonesia, the appeal to Indonesia for assistance from other parties, and the alternatives to inaction, Indonesia had no choice but to adopt the course of action it had adopted.

18. The President added that had Indonesia not repeat not acted bloodshed and chaos would have continued. In such a situation the sort of communist or major power interference about which the Prime Minister was concerned could occur.

19. The President said he very much hoped the Prime Minister personally would understand Indonesia's concerns on this issue. A very small, unstable Fretilin-controlled state in East Timor would not repeat not [be] in the interests of Australia or of any other country in the region. While an Angola type situation may appear to be a remote possibility to us in Australia, East Timor was in the Indonesian Archipelago. After its long struggle for national unity Indonesia could not repeat not take the sort of risks which could well confront it in the next decade if it had permitted the situation to drift.

20. The President then said that apart from this background he believed that the PGET was representative of a widespread desire to integrate with Indonesia. He said he fully understood the problems that the issue had generated in Australia and the problems caused for friendly European countries because of their relations with Portugal.

21. He then said before the DPR mission had gone to Dili, a delegation from Lisbon led by General [da] Silva acting with the agreement of President-elect Eanes had held talks with PGET leaders and had visited the 23 Portuguese prisoners. The President outlined in some detail the background to this, about which we have kept the Department fully informed.

⁴ The *Straits Times* of 25 June had reported that Fraser had stated to the Chinese leadership that he was 'concerned the Indonesian leadership was ineffective'.

⁵ Document 343.

22. The President clearly attaches considerable importance to the possibility that the new Portuguese Government, Indonesia and the PGET will come to terms and he seems optimistic that they will do so.

23. The President said that he believed that in the next round of talks the PGET representative would try to convince the Portuguese Government that they were reflecting the present wish of the majority of the East Timorese people for integration. The President added that if agreement could be reached between the PGET and the Portuguese officials, he hoped Portugal could be persuaded to withdraw the issue from the United Nations. He also said that if Portugal, the PGET and Indonesia were able to come to some agreement about the integration of East Timor he hoped that Australia would accept this.

24. The President then asked me to put it to the Prime Minister and the Australian Government that an agreement with Portugal now offered the best prospects for coming to terms with the integration of East Timor. He hoped we would see this and urge the Portuguese Government to acknowledge the PGET and to accept that integration was not repeat not only unavoidable but in the best interests of the East Timorese themselves, Portugal, Indonesia and he believed, of Australia. It would also be the best way to resolve the problem with the United Nations. The President said he was 'not repeat not seeking justification of the policies of the Indonesian Government on Timor' but he hoped we could move towards the acknowledgment of the PGET and its position as representative of the majority of the East Timorese and that we could assist behind the scenes in the discussions with Portugal. He said that if the new Portuguese Government acknowledged the PGET, and if the matters of the 23 prisoners and compensation were resolved, then diplomatic relations could be resumed between Portugal and Indonesia after the 17 August. In this way Portugal would automatically acknowledge integration.

25. The President said that he was confident a 'good base' had been developed in the earlier talks between General [da] Silva and the PGET. He believed that the President elect of Portugal also supported this course. He repeated the hope that the Australian Government could now play a helpful role with Portugal. He said the Portuguese Government 'should not repeat [not] lose face' and it would be helpful if Australia and Western European Governments could help [P]ortugal to come to terms with integration. (Our JA7405⁶ is relevant to this proposal.)

26. The President said he hoped that the 23 prisoners would be released and the PGET acknowledged by Portugal before the bill for integration was passed by the DPR.

27. I said there could be difficulties in his proposal with Portugal depending on the balance of political forces in the new government and with the United Nations itself. I said that the Australian Government's policy had been that there should be a proper act of self-determination in East Timor with which the United Nations should be in some way] associated. The President said that he knew this. But a new situation had arisen. The Indonesian Government accepted that the PGET represented the majority of the East Timorese and that they now wanted integration. Integration would take place shortly. Given the political and economic backwardness in East Timor, the recent civil war, and the tribal nature of East Timorese society, the sort of act of self-determination the United Nations seemed to have in mind would not repeat not be practical without a lengthy period of preparation. Because of the previous Portuguese Government's actions this had not repeat not been possible. I undertook to report his views fully to the Prime Minister and the Minister.

28. The President asked that his representations on this matter be kept confidential. (He added, with a smile, 'please do not repeat not let any notes of our discussion fall into the hands of the press'.)

⁶ 25 June.

29. I then raised with the President the likelihood that the Prime Minister or the Foreign Minister might wish to say something publicly about our meeting to help put to rest continuing speculation about possible damage to our relations. The President said he would welcome this. I went through with him the lines of a possible statement as set out in paragraph 5 of our JA7570. The President read this and then had the fourth paragraph of the draft translated into Bahasa Indonesia.⁷ He said this was perfectly acceptable to him. He would be happy for the Prime Minister to make such a statement if the Prime Minister wished to do so.

30. The Indonesians had arranged for the press to be present as they do not repeat not get into the President's house without an invitation. They were there in force. I said to them that it was possible that the Prime Minister or the Foreign Minister might want to say something in Australia about the meeting and so I did not repeat not wish to comment here beyond saying that I had a 'very cordial' meeting with the President and that I believed that 'any misunderstandings which had arisen recently over press reports had now been put to rest'.

31. I also had a chance to talk to Sudharmono who was at the President's house but not repeat not present at the talks. I told him we did not repeat not intend to make the transcript of the talks available to any government. This would not repeat [not] be appropriate without the approval of the Chinese Government. I said that I have given the President personally a full account of the substance of the only part of the record which dealt with Indonesia. Sudharmono accepted this and I do not repeat not expect that Indonesia will pursue this further unless what purports to be the text is published and leads to further questions.

32. Generally, I think the meeting went off very well and that we have achieved all we could have hoped for in the circumstances. Although a little cool at the beginning the President was friendly and relaxed for most of the discussion.

33. We shall be better placed to give a fuller assessment of how the situation stands early next week. Meanwhile, it seems the Indonesian Government wants to put the issue behind it. But it does seem to be attempting to link this and the maintenance and future development of good relations generally at least to some extent with a presidential appeal for us to adopt a more understanding approach to their position on the Timor issue during the period leading to integration.

[NAA: A11536, xxiii]

⁷ It read: 'President Soeharto asked the Ambassador to convey to me (the Prime Minister) his warmest regards and his appreciation that misunderstandings resulting from reports in the press on this matter had now been dispelled'.

479 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 7 July 1976

O.UN5957 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

East Timor: Committee of Twenty-Four*Ref O.UN5943¹*

We have spoken to the Indonesian Mission and to Minchin (Acting Secretary, Committee of Twenty-Four) about the Secretariat working paper on Timor.

2. The Indonesians are unhappy with what they term the 'anti-Indonesian bias' of the working paper. They point to the fact that the paper was prepared by a Chinese member of the Secretariat. We understand that Ambassador Sani's first reaction was to write to the Secretary-General complaining about paper's bias. The Indonesian Mission, however, has taken the alternative course of drawing to the attention of Minchin by letter specific Indonesian complaints about the paper, in the expectation that the Secretariat will issue a corrigendum or an addendum or even a completely revised working paper.

3. In speaking to Minchin we made clear our own surprise that the Secretariat's working paper referred to the position of the Australian Government. We noted that the Australian Government had sought from the beginning to make clear that it did not consider itself a party principal to the affairs of Timor. We said we were surprised to see such a reference to Australia when many other countries had participated, for example, in the Security Council's debates on Timor. We went on to say that we were furthermore dissatisfied with the way in which the paper described the Australian Government's position. It seemed to us an unsatisfactory summary of the Ambassador's statement in the Council in December last year.²

4. Minchin said that he took our point and he noted that the Indonesian mission had also just forwarded to him extensive comments on the working paper. He said he believed the Secretariat would have to produce a corrigendum or an addendum (or, perhaps, both) to the original working paper. Whether this further document would be a corrigendum or an addendum (or both) would depend principally on the number and nature of revisions to the paper sought by delegations. He did not hold out the hope that a full revision would be possible. He said he would welcome our comments in writing, including our preferred phrasing of paragraph 40 of the working paper.

5. We clarified with Minchin what Salim's plans were for the Timor item, commenting that Salim had told us that the Timor item would have to be 'dealt with'. Minchin said that Salim wanted to see the East Timor question referred to the Fourth Committee without a debate. Salim would have a legitimate reason for doing so because the Committee was far behind in its work. A full debate was therefore most unlikely.

6. Since it appears that the Timor item will be referred directly to Fourth Committee without debate, the Secretariat paper will then become sole contribution of Committee of 24 to Fourth Committee's consideration of Timor.

¹ 30 June. It reported that the UN Secretariat had distributed an information paper in preparation for the Committee of 24 debate on East Timor due in August. The paper suggested that Australia had been a party principal in the affairs of East Timor. A brief summary of Australia's position read: 'Australia, which has emphasised the urgency of a cease-fire as a first step towards a solution to the situation in Timor, has also expressed confidence that the Indonesian elements in the territory will withdraw when order is restored. As regards the exercise of self-determination for Timor, Australia has suggested that once conditions have been normalised, the United Nations might assume responsibility for carrying out a consultation with the people of Timor'.

² See Document 382.

7. I would suggest, therefore, that I write to Minchin expressing dissatisfaction with the formulation of paragraph 40 of the working paper and propose, as a *corrigendum*, a new formulation of this paragraph, which could simply reiterate the four points of Australian policy on Timor, namely calls for:

- (a) an end to hostilities
- (b) the withdrawal of all outside forces
- (c) a genuine act of self determination
- (d) resumption of international humanitarian aid to the territory.

Now that Australia is already mentioned in the working paper, we see some disadvantages in seeking to have reference to us removed. We can see to it, however, that our position is accurately described for the record.

HARRY

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxiv]

480 MINUTE FROM LAUTERPACHT TO WILLIAMS

Canberra, 9 July 1976

CONFIDENTIAL

East Timor: Journalists

You have sent me a copy of a memorandum from our Minister¹ in Jakarta (No. 851, file 860/119/1/5) in which he makes certain points.²

2. First, he suggests that if we contend that the Indonesian Government is the legal successor to the Portuguese Government in East Timor, the Indonesian Government will be able to invoke the waiver of responsibility which was signed by the journalists in favour of the Portuguese Government.³

3. While this may no doubt be true, one has to recall what the whole dispute is about. My understanding is that we allege that the journalists were deliberately killed by Indonesian forces (or at any rate, that they died in circumstances in which there is a strong probability that they were killed by Indonesian forces). We are not alleging that Indonesia is responsible because the journalists were killed by anyone other than Indonesian forces. While the waiver given to the Portuguese authorities absolves them from responsibility for injuries done to the journalists, it cannot be interpreted as giving the Portuguese authorities the right to kill the journalists. No more could the waiver, if invoked by the Indonesian authorities, be said to have given the Indonesian authorities the right to kill the journalists. All the waiver does is to say that the beneficiary of it, namely the Portuguese or the Indonesian authorities as the case may be, will not be liable for injuries caused to the journalists *by others*.

¹ Malcolm Dan.

² 29 June. Dan noted that an approach treating Indonesia as the successor state 'just might provide the Indonesians with a way to pay compensation without thereby admitting any involvement in or direct liability for the deaths of the journalists'. Dan added that the Embassy assessment was that 'if it were put to them, the Indonesian Government would firmly reject this argument and decline even to discuss it'.

³ See Editorial Note: Air Travel to Timor, p. 485.

4. The second question raised by Mr Dan's memorandum is 'whether Shackleton forfeited his rights as a neutral war correspondent, and compromised that of his colleagues, when he delivered the message from the FRETILIN commandant at Balibo to the FRETILIN at Maliana on 12 August'. Clearly, a neutral war correspondent ought not to give assistance to either side in combat. However, if he does so, the worst that can happen to him is that he should be assimilated to the forces of the party to which he has given assistance. But, no belligerent has the right indiscriminately, or discriminately, to kill persons seeking to surrender as prisoners. There is no evidence that, at the moment when the journalists were killed, the Indonesians had any awareness of the fact that Shackleton might have carried a message. There was, therefore, at that moment no conceivable justification for assimilating him or his colleagues to the forces whom the Indonesians were fighting. The subsequent discovery of an indication that a message had been carried, while slightly embarrassing, is quite irrelevant to the killing of the journalists; even if the fact had been known to the Indonesians at the time of the killing, it still would not have entitled the Indonesians to kill the journalists.

E. LAUTERPACHT

Legal Adviser

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/12/4, v]

481 CABLEGRAM TO NEW YORK

Canberra, 13 July 1976

O.CH381012 SECRET PRIORITY

East Timor: United Nations

Ref O.JA7748¹

Unless you see any problems in this course of action at this stage we should now like you to send a letter to the Secretary General along the following lines:

Begins

'I have read with interest Mr Winspeare Guicciardi's second report on East Timor which brings up to date the account of his activities pursuant to Security Council Resolutions 384 and 389.² The report reflects the seriousness with which Mr Winspeare Guicciardi, as your Special Representative, has approached what is a very difficult undertaking. The work he has done is much appreciated by the Australian Government.

I am sure you will recognise the importance Australia attaches to this matter. It is the hope of the Australian Government that all possible avenues for the further pursuit of Mr Winspeare Guicciardi's mission could be explored in order to ensure continued

¹ 12 July. It reported that the Embassy in Jakarta had discussed in detail with the Indonesian DFA the proposal that Harry should write to the UN Secretary-General reaffirming the offer of the Australian Government to consider a request from the United Nations to assist Winspeare Guicciardi with transport during a second visit by him to Timor. The Indonesian DFA was reported to have replied that it would have 'no objection' to the Australian Government making such a further representation to the UN Secretary-General.

² See note 2 to Document 443.

United Nations involvement in consultations with the parties in East Timor. In particular, as has been known to you in recent weeks, my Government is hopeful that Mr Winspeare Guicciardi will be able to proceed with a second visit to East Timor. The Australian Government is willing to lend whatever assistance it reasonably can in such an enterprise.

My Government recognises your concern that the Special Representative should be able to visit all areas of the territory, including such as might be held by the FRETILIN forces. In this connection I have been instructed to reiterate that, were FRETILIN able to designate a venue for a meeting with the Special Representative, and if such a venue were accessible and all parties had given firm assurance of safety, the Australian Government would be prepared to consider a request for help with transport'.³

Ends

2. We recognise that Waldheim will be reluctant to authorise a further visit by Winspeare without the concurrence of the Security Council (paragraphs 7 of UN5901⁴ and 5920).⁵ But in fact Winspeare can hardly be said to have yet discharged his functions under the existing Security Council mandate (Resolution 389). In any event in conveying your letter to the Secretary General we should hope that you could reinforce orally our concern, in common with all of the ASEAN countries and New Zealand, that a return visit should be made, and in the near future. It also seems to us that with a second visit being urged by FRETILIN as well as the PGET, the political risks to the Secretary General in authorising a return visit would be minimised.

You could of course inform the Secretary General that we share his concern that his Special Representative should be able to visit all areas of the territory. Our understanding, however, is that the PGET authorities on this occasion are agreeable to Winspeare visiting all provinces, and indeed 'any part of East Timor', and stay as long as he likes. In any event the PGET's willingness to facilitate a visit of this kind might be thoroughly explored and tested.⁶

3. In regard to FRETILIN-controlled areas, you could repeat that, despite FRETILIN's latest communications⁷ to the Secretary General, we are by no means convinced that FRETILIN has *any* secure and accessible areas under its control. But again our view is that FRETILIN's ability to nominate a site for talks might be tested. If in fact FRETILIN were able to designate a time and place for a meeting with Winspeare, and if such a venue were accessible and all parties had given the United Nations firm assurances of safety, Australia would be prepared to consider helping out with transport. We should of course expect the United Nations to obtain the required assurances and guarantees.

³ Joseph indicated in a letter to Dan of 8 July that this last paragraph was necessary for both international and domestic consumption.

⁴ Paragraph 7 of Cablegram UN5901 (23 June) advised that: 'It may now require renewed Security Council consideration and request to Winspeare if Winspeare is to make a return visit to the territory. We are not sure that the Council will be anxious for a third debate on Timor but the attitude of some of the Council members could be influenced by Fretilin's response to the second Winspeare report. We will gather reactions of Council members and report'.

⁵ See note 2 to Document 473.

⁶ Reporting from Jakarta since early July had indicated that the Indonesians and PGET were beginning to welcome the opportunity for a further visit by Winspeare Guicciardi.

⁷ Horta's letter to the Secretary-General was repeated in Cablegram UN5988 (12 July). The letter, in conjunction with an attached map, asserted that Fretilin had control of the more populated areas of East Timor.

4. For the sake of avoiding unnecessary misunderstanding with the Indonesians it may be as well, as suggested in JA7748, for you to go over the ground once again with Sani before sending the proposed letter to the Secretary General.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxiv]

482 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

New York, 13 July 1976

O.UN5998 SECRET PRIORITY

East Timor and the United Nations

If we are to send a letter to the Secretary-General it will have to be done at the latest on 14 July since the Indonesian deadline expires 17 July.

2. One concern I have about the letter you propose I send to Waldheim is the danger that it might continue rather than cure the misunderstanding with Indonesia and possibly involve us in lengthy disputation with third countries about the true situation on the ground in East Timor. You will now have Horta's letter to the Secretary-General (O.UN5988¹). FRETILIN is clearly not going to nominate specific places. They hope to get Winspeare on the spot in Dili and then themselves take him to areas they claim to be FRETILIN controlled. I have no doubt that Waldheim and Winspeare will consider this arrangement dangerous and quite unsatisfactory. But our offer to lend whatever assistance we reasonably can to a return visit by Winspeare, without more specific qualification, could be interpreted by some as an offer by us of land transport in East Timor. We can argue that this interpretation is unreasonable but such a request may still be made to us. It may thus lead to lengthy and fruitless disputation on the role we ought to play in getting Winspeare back.

3. I also had some reservations about writing to the Secretary-General at this stage urging a return visit by Winspeare so soon after Horta had addressed a communication to the Secretary-General. A letter by us at this time might be interpreted as lending weight to the FRETILIN argument that FRETILIN controls the bulk of the territory of East Timor. Already we have had to discount suggestions by some delegations that we have 'special knowledge' that corroborates the FRETILIN claims.

4. I would not ask to have my letter circulated as a document of the Security Council but you will know that letters to the Secretary-General on matters with which the Security Council is seized are as a matter of course distributed informally to all members of the Security Council.

5. However, my principal concern was to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of Indonesia. I spoke therefore to Joko Yoewono (Chargé d'Affaires, Indonesian Mission) this afternoon, 13 July. I told him of your proposal that I write to the Secretary-General and I showed him text of the proposed letter. He commented that 'there was no conflict' between our proposed letter and his letter of 4 July to the Secretary-General,² although he noted that

¹ 12 July. It communicated the text of a letter, distributed on 12 July, from Horta to the UN Secretary-General. Horta's letter indicated that Winspeare Guicciardi should 'travel overland by jeep clearly marked with United Nations flag and symbols to the countryside to places to be nominated by the Central Committee of Fretilin in such a way that secrecy is maintained'.

² Cablegram UN5968 (7 July) communicated the text of this note, which promised the full co-operation of the Indonesian Government for any future visit by Winspeare to East Timor.

the Provisional Government had expressed a 'preference' for a visit by 17 July, 1976. He asked, however, for time to refer the question to Jakarta, commenting that during his visit here on 4 July, Foreign Minister Malik had told him that he was puzzled that Australia had offered transport to Winspeare to reach alleged FRETILIN-held areas, when on the other hand we had declined to participate in 31 May and 24 June visits to East Timor. (Joko Yoewono revealed this in confidence and I undertook to protect his confidence.) Joko also commented that while the Indonesian Mission to the UN had attempted to put a case for proper UN involvement in East Timor, this had not always been understood or accepted by 'Jakarta'. He is therefore urgently referring the question to Jakarta for comment. I have told him that I will send the proposed letter to Waldheim tomorrow 14 July New York time, unless he gets back to me with comment by 0930 hours the same day.³

HARRY

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxiv]

483 CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 16 July 1976

O.CH383025 CONFIDENTIAL ROUTINE

Timor

Personal for Woolcott

The following is the text of a working draft¹ which you may find useful background.

Begins

The Government has been aware throughout the Timor conflict of the anguish and strong feelings within the Australian community. A wide variety of views has been expressed. All points of view cannot be satisfied but the Government has sought to pursue a consistent policy based on those principles to which it believes most Australians are attached.

Since coming to office last December, it has sought an end to the fighting in Timor; the withdrawal of Indonesian forces; a genuine process of self-determination for the people of East Timor; and the resumption of international humanitarian aid for the area.

We see no need to change or to resile from any of these principles.

Indeed, it has been in the support of these principles that we have taken a strong and independent line which has often brought us into public argument and disagreement with Indonesia.

The problem had its genesis in the failure over the years of Portugal to plan for a reasonable and phased process of decolonisation in East Timor. Inevitably history caught up with East Timor and one result of the country's lack of political development was that sudden and traumatic choices were thrust upon countries in the region.

³ Cablegram CH381239 (13 July) advised that the letter to the Secretary-General should not be circulated as a Security Council document unless it were the wish of Waldheim himself. Cablegram UN6002 (14 July) advised that the letter had been delivered to the Secretary-General's office on the afternoon of 14 July.

¹ Of a public statement for use after 17 July.

In the fighting which erupted in East Timor thousands of innocent people were killed or forced to flee their homes and, indeed their country.

As the Government has made clear on many occasions, it deplores what happened. It deplores the whole course of events since early August 1975 when UDT and FRETILIN first took their struggle for political power into the streets, and when Portugal's weakness and irresolution led it precipitately to abandon the territory. Seen in its historical context, Indonesia's direct intervention in December was the last in a most unhappy chain of events.

Indonesian spokesmen have spoken of East Timor as a potential Angola. They may have been right or they may have been wrong. But, however understandable was Indonesia's concern about the effect of instability in East Timor on its own security we continue to believe that this intervention from outside has been an unfortunate and tragic feature of the Timor situation. The Government made it clear that it could not condone this resort to force. We made it clear, both inside and outside the United Nations. We registered our opposition with Indonesia at the highest level.

It has been a prime objective of our policy to see the cessation of the conflict. We note that the fighting has died down and it appears now that whatever fighting still continues it is of a minor and sporadic nature. The conflict did not leave Australians unscathed. We need hardly be reminded of the tragic deaths of the five journalists employed by Australian television networks. The Government is still pursuing its enquiries into their deaths.

The central issue in the past year has been the right of the people in East Timor to determine for themselves how and by whom they wish to be governed. We realise and we have said that the right of self-determination does not mean that there must be elections, referenda or parliaments in our own image. We recognise, and indeed we support, the view that any expression of self-determination must accord with the traditional practices and forms of government of the people themselves. We have been assured publicly and repeatedly by the PGET authorities and the Indonesian Government that a genuine act of self-determination has taken place.

Indonesia yesterday announced the integration of East Timor as its twenty-seventh province. It seems likely that the fact of integration will soon be accepted by many governments. Nevertheless, and without wishing to doubt the Indonesian authorities in their expression of view, I do not believe that Australia, nor many other countries, can be quite so sure about how extensive and representative the exercise of self-determination has been.

It is true that Australia was invited to observe part of the self-determination process and to send representatives to witness the steps in this process—one on May 31 and the second on June 24. On both occasions we gave very serious thought to the idea of attendance, but in the end did not accept the invitations. We did not accept because we believed that the United Nations ought in some way to have been involved in the self-determination process. It is the body which is the focus of the world conscience and concern about self-determination issues. It is the body able to give an independent view. It is the body which ought to have played an active role in East Timor.

To be fair to Indonesia it has invited and continues to invite the United Nations to send representatives to East Timor to form a definitive view on recent developments there. We are very disappointed that the United Nations has let pass several opportunities to play an active and independent role in East Timor. We, ourselves, have made many representations to the United Nations and have sought to influence other government[s] to do the same. In recent approaches to both Mr Winspeare-Guicciardi and Dr Waldheim, Secretary-General of the

United Nations, we have urged that the Secretary-General authorise his Special Representative to pay a second visit to the territory.

The Secretary-General has been concerned that were his Special Representative to visit Timor again, he should be able to visit all areas of the territory, including such areas as might be under FRETILIN control. We accordingly informed the Secretary-General that were FRETILIN able to name an accessible venue in East Timor for a meeting with Mr Winspeare-Guicciardi and all parties had given firm assurances of safety, Australia would be prepared to consider a request from the United Nations for help with transport.

It is not clear to the Government whether in fact FRETILIN's wish or ability to nominate a site for talks was fully tested. Certainly Indonesia and the PGET have asserted to the Secretary-General that FRETILIN did not control any areas. The Indonesian Government and the provisional authorities have also said that the Special Representative would be able to visit all thirteen provinces, and that he would have freedom of movement within those provinces. The Government regrets, in all these circumstances, that further efforts were not made to explore the willingness and capacity of all parties to agree to those conditions which would have allowed a further visit by Mr Winspeare-Guicciardi to proceed.

In short, therefore, these responses to our representations have been very discouraging. But we still believe that it is not too late for the United Nations to be involved in East Timor again and to play a constructive role in observing and testing the claims of the rival groups about the support each commands in the territory. After all the United Nations is still seized of the matter. The matter is still on its agenda.

We have noted that the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at their meeting in Manila late in June formally agreed in their final communiqué² that they too believed that the United Nations had not finished its job and that its Representative ought to make a second visit to the area.

The Government has consistently supported international efforts to provide humanitarian aid to the victims of the fighting and disruption that followed. We remain willing to do this and would actively and generously support any further move[s] by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to provide assistance to the area.

But we continue to be disappointed that, in spite of our persistent efforts, the ICRC has not yet returned to East Timor. There have been difficulties on both sides—on the side of the ICRC as well as that of Indonesia and the PGET. Australia's own efforts have been focused on the need for the ICRC to return without preconditions, whether these be laid down by the PGET or the ICRC. The Government has offered an immediate cash contribution of dollars 250,000 for urgent expenditure on relief supplies, including if need be for purchase of supplies in Indonesia.

Again, we must register our regret that Australia's efforts to break the impasse have not so far succeeded. It is still our hope, however, that conditions will be established to enable the resumption of international relief operations in the territory.

Looking to the future, we must hope for reconciliation in Timor. We believe it important that the remaining FRETILIN forces be offered some prospects other than simple defeat. We urge that Indonesia adopts a policy of compassion and reconciliation towards those of FRETILIN who remain in the field. At this stage we believe it is a humanitarian necessity to seek such reconciliation. Nobody derives any advantage from the continued divisiveness that the fighting in Timor has generated.

² See note 3 to Document 476.

484 CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA

Jakarta, 17 July 1976

O.JA7855 CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE

East Timor

Tjan (CSIS) and the State Secretariat have just told us that President Soeharto signed the bill integrating East Timor with Indonesia during a ceremony held this morning 17th July. In the Indonesian view the formal and legal integration of East Timor is thus complete.

2. During the ceremony President Suharto presented to the East Timor delegation a duplicate of the Indonesian flag first raised by Soekarno and Hatta on 17 August 1945. This flag will be raised in Dili on 17 August in commemoration of Indonesian independence.

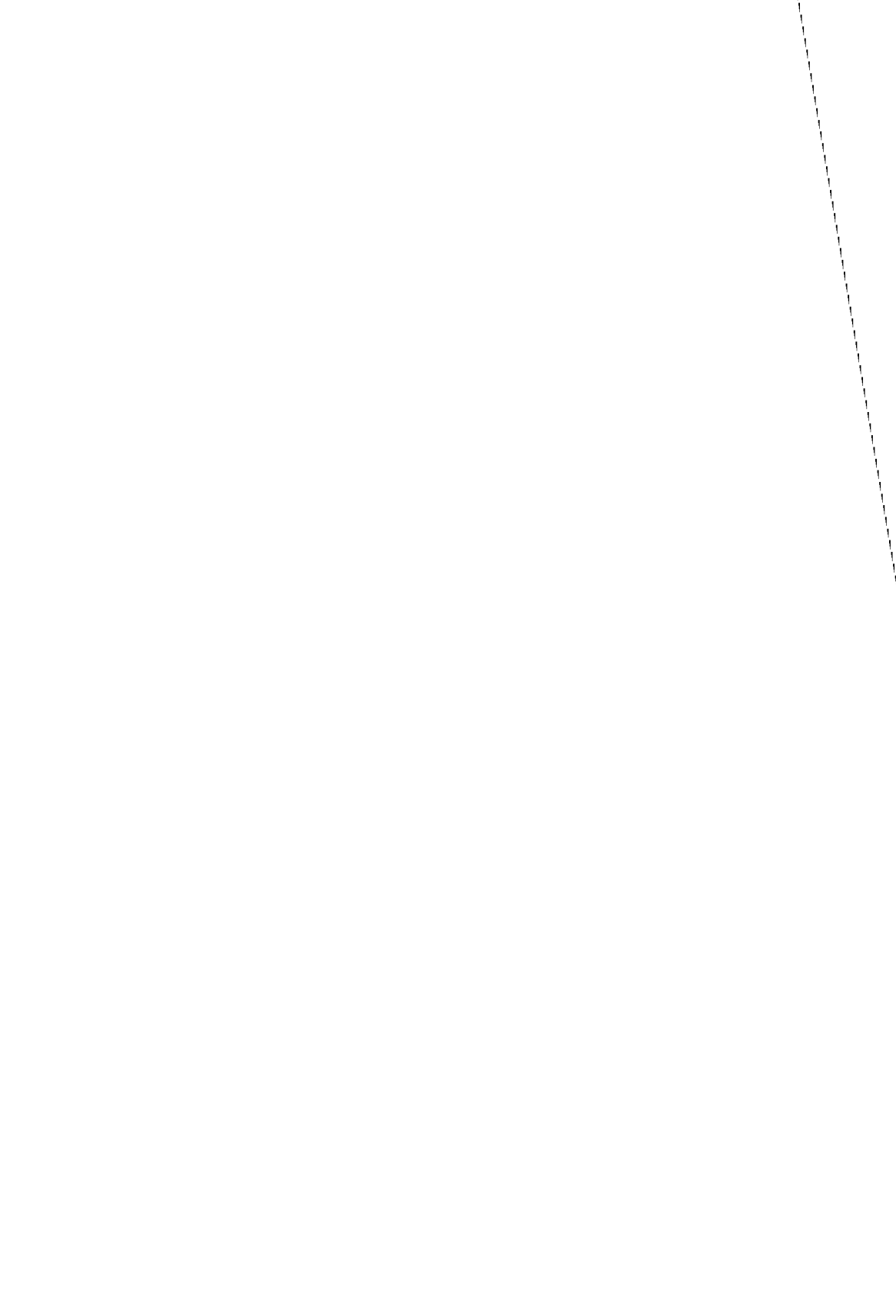
3. In Indonesian and PGET eyes East Timor is now a province of Indonesia under acting Governor Araujo until he is formally installed which is expected shortly.

4. Continuing support for FRETILIN will in future be regarded as an attempt to undermine Indonesian unity (Roque Rodrigues['] activities in Australia which are being given wide coverage on Radio Australia will be seen in this light).

5. Indonesia will want humanitarian aid for East Timor to be channelled through the Indonesian Red Cross in future rather than through the ICRC.

6. There are of course other implications for Australia/Indonesian relations and we shall report further on this on Monday.

[NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xxiv]



*Australia, Indonesia and East Timor,
July 1976 – February 1979*

On 17 July President Soeharto signed the bill integrating East Timor with Indonesia. The Australian Government was then forced to focus on the practical, legal and political implications for Australia of Indonesia's incorporation of Portuguese Timor. Posts quickly requested guidance and provided advice to Canberra on the question of Australian recognition. From New York Harry set out some options: 'The issues include whether we should explicitly approve or accept with or without disapprobation or regret the integration of the Territory, whether we avoid open comment but still acquiesce in integration, or whether we contest or question the legality of the Territory's integration'.¹ On 21 July (prior to receiving Cablegram CH383967, p. 824) Woolcott recommended: 'our policy should now be directed towards at least tacitly accepting the reality of East Timor's incorporation into Indonesia, a less active Australian role in the United Nations on the question in the near future, seeking to limit pro-Fretilin activity by non-Australians in Australia, and looking to the future rather than back to the recent past to an effort to consolidate again our relationship with Indonesia by the time of the Prime Minister's visit'.² From July 1976 until January 1978 Australia's policy of non-recognition of the incorporation was persistently challenged both from outside (see Submission to Fraser, p. 825) and within DFA (see Cablegram JA13174, p. 836) on the grounds that the incorporation was a reality, and that the Australian Government could not maintain a strong bilateral relationship with Indonesia if it continued to avoid the issue of East Timor.

Australian policy-makers began to sense in 1977 that Australia's non-recognition of Timor's incorporation was increasingly damaging to bilateral relations, and that sections of the Indonesian Government were no longer willing to separate the Timor issue from wider policy. In Cablegram JA13084 (19 May 1977) Woolcott noted:

While some Economic ministers, like Widjojo, tend to try to overlook our differences over Timor and seek to develop our relations in the economic sphere, others of our influential Indonesian friends here now tend to regard us, potentially if not actually, as an irritating, uncertain and unpredictable element in the South East Asian situation. This attitude is not limited to Generals and hard-liners but extends to civilian ministers like Mochtar and Salim. The longer the Timor issue remains prominent the greater is the danger that such attitudes will spread.³

This irritation persisted despite the practical evidence that Australia had responded to the realities of Indonesian control by the closure of illegal radios, re-opening a telecommunications link to East Timor through Jakarta, and the frustration of suspected illegal visits to Timor.⁴ Even so, DFA was confident the Government's Timor policy had not seriously affected other aspects of Australia's bilateral relationship with Indonesia.⁵

By January 1978, however, it seemed likely that continuing public refusal to accept the reality of Indonesian control of East Timor might have more serious consequences for the

¹ Cablegram UN6034 (19 July 1976). [On file A1209, 76/55, vi.]

² Cablegram JA7900, 21 July 1976. [On file A1838, 801/13/11/1, xxv.]

³ On file A10005, TS202/1/1 ANNEX 4.

⁴ See note 3, p. 827. In a Ministerial Submission dated 25 August 1976, Peacock endorsed the restoration of a previously existing telecommunications link. [On file NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, v.]

⁵ Draft Cabinet Submission from the Department of Foreign Affairs, attached covering letter dated 11 January 1978. [On file NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1 Annex A.]

relationship. Non-recognition could jeopardise the developing relationship between Soeharto and Fraser, continuing negotiations on humanitarian assistance including refugee reunions, and future negotiations of the seabed boundary for the area adjacent to East Timor. It was seen as important nationally and internationally that Australia uphold a foreign policy that was realistic as well as principled, and in which regional security interests were not undermined.

In early January 1978 a submission to Cabinet recommended reconsideration of the existing policy of non-recognition. Advice to Cabinet stressed the need for Australia to recognise publicly the reality of Indonesian control of East Timor, but not the means by which it was brought about. Peacock's press statement of 20 January, giving *de facto* recognition to the incorporation, clearly stated this shift in policy. By December 1978 it had become apparent that the Australian Government would use seabed negotiations, expected to commence early the following year, to 'slip' into *de jure* recognition (see Submission to Peacock, p. 839). On 16 December 1978 the *Canberra Times* reported Peacock as saying: 'The negotiations, when they start, will signify *de jure* recognition by Australia of the Indonesian incorporation of East Timor . . . The acceptance of this situation doesn't alter the opposition which the Government has consistently expressed regarding the manner of incorporation'.

CABLEGRAM TO JAKARTA

Canberra, 20 July 1976

O.CH383967 RESTRICTED IMMEDIATE

Timor

The following press statement is to be issued in Canberra later today.

Begins

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Andrew Peacock, said today that the Government had long held the view that the process of decolonisation in East Timor should be based on a proper act of self-determination, preferably carried out with the observation and participation of the United Nations.

'In the case of the consultative acts carried out in East Timor on 31 May and 24 June there must still be uncertainty about how extensive and representative the exercise of self-determination has been,' he said.

Mr Peacock recalled that Indonesia had invited the United Nations to send its representative to East Timor, and had renewed the invitation on several occasions. In doing so, Indonesia and the PGET gave assurances of freedom of movement in all thirteen districts of the territory.

'We ourselves made repeated representations to the United Nations seeking a return visit by Mr Winspeare Guicciardi', he said. 'We encouraged other Governments to make similar representations'.

'We informed the Secretary-General that if Fretilin were able to name an accessible venue in East Timor for a meeting with Mr Winspeare Guicciardi and if all parties had given satisfactory assurances of safety, Australia would have been prepared to consider a request from the United Nations for help with transport'.

The Minister said that the Government regretted, in all these circumstances, that further efforts were not made by the United Nations to play a more decisive role.

‘The present situation is that Indonesia has moved, without United Nations involvement, to integrate East Timor as its twenty-seventh province,’ he said. ‘But in the circumstances Australia cannot regard the broad requirements for a satisfactory process of decolonisation as having been met’.¹

Ends

[NAA: A1209, 76/55, vi]

SUBMISSION TO FRASER

Canberra, 6 August 1976

SECRET

Relations with Indonesia: Timor

The resumption of Parliament on 17 August and your planned visit to Indonesia in early October suggest the need for a careful but speedy stock-taking of our position on Timor and the state of our relations with Indonesia.

For a number of reasons, outlined below, the time may have come to modify our present policy and concentrate on developing the positive elements of our relationship with Indonesia.

The integration of East Timor into Indonesia is an accomplished fact which we are not likely to be able to change. We have made considerable efforts to secure an acceptable process of self-determination in East Timor, but it is difficult now to see what more we can do.

The prospects for the continuing viability of our present policy are dim. We probably could not expect much support in the United Nations. Only a few countries have spoken out against the Indonesian action—e.g. China, Kampuchea, Tanzania, Mozambique and Vietnam.¹ It may be that even for some of these countries their statements are little more than ritualistic public positions. In maintaining our present policy we may risk becoming increasingly isolated and standing against the drift of international opinion.

¹ Initial Australian press reaction was critical of the statement as not strong enough. The Indonesian press gave it wide coverage and reported Malik's comment: ‘I understand Minister Peacock's way of thinking but he should also understand the way of thinking of the people of East Timor who want to integrate with their fellow brothers in Indonesia’ (Cablegram JA7921, 22 July 1976). The Australian Embassy in Jakarta requested further advice on ‘how the conditions of decolonisation can now be fulfilled in the future. Guidance on this point would be appreciated in case the Indonesians raise with us the question of whether we formally object to integration, as Radio Australia reported last night, or whether we intend to contest the legality of integration. The latter could of course have serious consequences here’ (Cablegram JA7904, 21 July 1976). Cablegram CH385239 (22 July 1976) conveyed Canberra's reply: ‘we do not wish to elaborate on or interpret in any way the Minister's statement. If pressed something would probably have to be said to the effect that the statement means non-recognition of integration. The corollary, of course, is that Indonesia would do better not to press us’. In a later discussion with Woolcott, Moerdani asked ‘what the final paragraph really meant. I said that we had received no elaboration of the statement and that I thought it would be preferable not to make an issue of its interpretation. Moerdani said that, speaking frankly, he and other senior Indonesians had been “annoyed” by the statement’ (Cablegram JA8119, 2 August 1976).

¹ These countries expressed opposition to the incorporation of Timor by Indonesia and support for Fretilin, calling for a withdrawal of Indonesian troops whose presence was perceived to be in violation of the principles of the non-aligned movement and UN Resolutions.

Until now Indonesia has shown itself willing—as have we also of course—to isolate the Timor question from our overall relationship. Both countries have been able to trade on the previously accumulated store of goodwill. We wonder whether this can last for much longer. With the integration of East Timor a fact, and one that will probably be generally accepted by the international community, the Indonesians could become increasingly self-confident and less accommodating.

If it wished, Indonesia would be well able to create difficulties for us, both political and economic. For example, there have already been informal suggestions (from General Moerdani) that because of the difficulties over Timor it might be desirable to postpone your visit. The negotiation of a seabed boundary with Timor is an issue in which we have an important interest which Indonesia could choose to threaten.

Unless we change gear soon we might expect our relations with Indonesia to deteriorate substantially, possibly also affecting our relations with other South East Asian states. In this we risk losing the initiative and influence in perhaps the most important aspect of our foreign policy. The longer we leave it, the harder it will be to change our policy; we could find ourselves eventually forced to eat an embarrassingly large slice of humble pie.

Your forthcoming visit makes it imperative that the matter be examined as a matter of urgency. Unless our policy is publicly modified the prospects for a successful and meaningful visit do not look good. The Indonesians could be expected not to seek to embarrass you during the visit, but if the differences between Australia and Indonesia persist, the press would certainly emphasise them. This would create an undesirable atmosphere and could positively harm relations with Indonesia. To defer the visit would probably be taken as a deliberate slight by Indonesia and would create further strains. On the other hand, if Australia were to adopt a line which the Indonesians considered more understanding of their position, many of the difficulties would disappear and the success of the visit would be assured. Both sides could take the opportunity to inject new energy into the relationship.

Public opinion in Australia will be the most difficult problem to overcome should the Government decide to relax its attitude on Timor. However, the public presentation could reiterate our position of principle, point to the efforts that the Government has made to put that principle into effect, but acknowledge, reluctantly, a *fait accompli*. It might say further that the Government intends now to concentrate on restoring good relations with Indonesia and to examine with the Indonesian Government ways of assisting the welfare of the Timorese people. Our outstanding offer of humanitarian assistance to the International Red Cross might be renewed to the Indonesian Red Cross.

It would be convenient if we could await Portugal's recognition of Indonesian sovereignty, expected within the next couple of months. However, unless we urge earlier Portuguese recognition—perhaps through representations by the United States—we cannot rely on Portugal's moving soon enough for our purposes.² It would seem desirable to be ready for Question Time on the first day of the Parliamentary session (although it might be preferable if

² Indonesian discussions with Morais da Silva, involving the issue of Portuguese prisoners, had raised an expectation that this would occur within the next couple of months, (see note 6 to Document 476 and Editorial Note: Secret Contacts between Portugal, Indonesia and the PGET, pp. 782–3). This expectation was supported by reports from the Embassy in Lisbon that '(a) having dropped the problem into the UN's lap, Portugal has played a relatively insignificant and inactive role in the UN thereafter, and (b) once the Portuguese prisoners are safely returned residual Portuguese interests in Timor are so minor that there will be little incentive in Lisbon to stand firm on the self-determination principle. The Portuguese will say they simply bowed to *force majeure* in Timor and that Portugal cannot be expected to correct a situation that proved to be beyond the capacity of the UN to solve' (Cablegram LB983, 22 July 1976). In the event, Portugal never recognised Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.

any answer simply gave notice of a Ministerial statement). From the point of view of your proposed visit to Indonesia, any change of position should probably be made as soon as possible in order to allow time for the dust to settle.

If you share our view that our policy should be reviewed quickly, there are a number of other loose ends which would need to be examined. As well as the major question and other associated tactical questions, there are the future of Fretilin activities in Australia (which Indonesia may now regard as seeking to undermine its national unity); the existence of the radio transmitter in Darwin;³ our intended attitude in the UNGA and the possible channeling of assistance through the Indonesian Red Cross.

It is recommended that the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Prime Minister and Cabinet be directed to put these matters to urgent and careful consideration.

ROGER HOLDICH

Acting First Assistant Secretary

External Relations and Defence Division

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

[NAA: A1209, 76/55, vii]

COMMUNIQUE BY FRASER

Canberra, 10 October 1976

Following is the communiqué issued on 10 October at the conclusion of the visit to Indonesia by the Australian Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Malcolm Fraser:

At the invitation of His Excellency President Suharto, the Prime Minister of Australia the Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser, M.P., accompanied by Mrs Fraser, visited Indonesia from 7 to 11 October 1976. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Andrew Peacock, M.P., also accompanied the Prime Minister. This was the Prime Minister's first official visit to Indonesia since he took office and provided the President and the Prime Minister with the opportunity for a series of wide-ranging discussions in Jakarta, Bogor and other places on regional and global problems. These discussions were held in an atmosphere of friendly and mutual understanding and revealed a close similarity of views between the two leaders on many matters of mutual concern.

[matter omitted]

The Prime Minister said that he regarded his visit to Indonesia for discussions with President Suharto as a positive indication of the very high importance which Australia placed on maintaining and developing further in the future the strong and close relations that had been established over the years with Indonesia. As an important element in strengthening this relationship, the Prime Minister said he placed great value on building up the personal relationship between himself and the President, which would facilitate further exchanges and mutual understanding. The President shared the Prime Minister's sentiments for the further strengthening of the existing friendly relations between the two leaders.

³ A minute written in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on 20 August 1976 stated: 'The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister agreed this morning that any radio stations found to be operating illegally in Australia should be closed down because they were contravening Australian laws'. [On file NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, Annex B.]

President Suharto and the Prime Minister outlined to each other the foreign policies of their two Governments. The Prime Minister emphasised to the President that the Australian Government sought to approach international problems in a realistic and enlightened way and to work with others in finding practical solutions to problems that arose. The two Heads of Government emphasised their conviction that Australia and Indonesia have a common interest, not only in close co-operation between themselves, but also in contributing to the development of the South-East Asian region in peace and prosperity and in harmony with the interests and aspirations of all its people.

[*matter omitted*]

The President gave the Prime Minister a comprehensive briefing on the development of Indonesian policy in East Timor. He reiterated Indonesia's position on this question and recalled that Indonesia had assumed responsibility for the administration of East Timor and for the well-being of its people, after the process of decolonisation had already been completed in accordance with the wishes of the people there. The Prime Minister recalled that Australian policy on the East Timor question had been clearly set out by the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Peacock) in the Parliament. He said that it is a complex question which was greatly complicated by the rapid changes in Portugal and the breakdown in that country's control and administration of East Timor.

The Prime Minister considered that the important thing now was to look to the future, and to alleviate, so far as possible, the human suffering which had come with the fighting and associated disruption in the territory. Australia had already indicated that it is prepared to help with this humanitarian task. Australia had already made over \$80,000 available through the Indonesian Red Cross and a further \$250,000 would be made available as required.

The Prime Minister noted that another aspect of the human suffering caused by the conflict had been the plight of the refugees who had gone to Australia without their families. The President and the Prime Minister agreed that officials of their two countries would be meeting to resolve the problems of these refugees.

[*matter omitted*]

The Prime Minister expressed to the President his deep gratitude for the friendly and hospitable attention accorded him and all members of his party during their visit. Both leaders agreed that their frank and useful discussions had been very valuable. In particular, the two leaders agreed that the visit had been a success, not only in establishing close personal relations between them, but also in advancing Government to Government relations, goodwill and understanding between Indonesia and Australia. They looked forward to future meetings and expressed confidence that as a result of their talks the two countries could work together even more closely and constructively in the years ahead. The Prime Minister extended an invitation to the President and Madam Suharto to visit Australia at a convenient time. The President was pleased to accept this invitation.

[*Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, vol. 47, no. 10, October 1976, pp. 537–40.]

SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 17 March 1977

RESTRICTED

Timor*For the Minister*

These are the draft notes we were proposing should be passed to those Senators requesting them.¹ The thought would be for each to make his own selection of individual points and use them as he thought best.²

2. Do you wish to add to or modify any of these points please?³

A. R. PARSONSFirst Assistant Secretary
South-East Asia and PNG Division**Attachment****TIMOR**

The Australian Government has nothing to be apologetic about in its Timor policy. The record of what the Government has done speaks for itself. It shows that the Government has adopted a position of principle while at the same time carefully balancing Australia's interests and responsibilities and keeping in mind the significance to Australia's national interests of our relations with Indonesia and the ASEAN area. Nevertheless the Government at no time has been inhibited from expressing its policy attitude on East Timor.

The Government policy on the Timor issue was based primarily on opposition to the use of force as a means of solving international disputes, support for the self-determination of the people of East Timor and the need to provide humanitarian assistance. It is fair to say that the Australian Government has been more outspoken than any other Western Government in support of an orderly process of decolonisation in East Timor.

The Government's policy was pursued vigorously both within the United Nations and through its bilateral contacts with the Indonesian Government.

Before the Indonesian attack on Dili on 7 December 1975 the Government sought to avoid conflicts breaking out by facilitating talks between the factions in East Timor.

United Nations

In late 1975 the Australian delegation to the United Nations in New York joined with the delegations of other countries in the region in efforts to gain UN backing for the attempts then

¹ Senators were supplied with this paper in preparation for a debate in the Senate on 24 March. Senator Arthur Gietzelt (ALP, NSW) had proposed a motion that a Select Committee of the Senate be appointed to inquire into and report on various issues relating to East Timor: aid, refugees, the journalists, communications, the current position of conflict between the Timorese people and Indonesian forces, and any other related matters. A lengthy debate ensued with Senator Alan Missen (Liberal, Victoria) proposing an amendment referring the matter to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. The motion was seconded by Senator Neville Bonner (Liberal, Qld).

² Peacock's handwritten comment said 'I agree'.

³ Peacock's handwritten comment said 'No'.

still under way to get round-table talks going between representatives of the various factions in East Timor.

Unfortunately, these efforts were overtaken by Indonesia's military intervention on 7 December 1975. Nevertheless, the Australian delegation was able to play a leading part in the formulation of the resolution adopted by the UNGA on 12 December, which emphasised the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination and urged the withdrawal of all outside forces.

Australia was not a member of the Security Council, but in December 1975 and again in April 1976, we worked with the Council in trying to bring about the constructive participation of that body in the Timor issue.

Mr Winspeare visited Timor in January 1976. On 1 February he flew to Darwin to attempt to establish radio communication with FRETILIN forces in Timor. A Portuguese naval vessel was placed at his disposal but there were technical difficulties impeding communications. The Australian Government made Australian Telecommunications Commission facilities available to supplement the radio facilities of the Portuguese vessel to ensure that there were no technical difficulties impeding contact. Despite this assistance contact with FRETILIN could not be made.

On 23 December 1975 a unanimous Security Council resolution requested, *inter alia*, the UN Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative for East Timor. This move was first suggested by Australia even though Australia was not a member of the Council.

The Australian Government pressed hard for an early visit by the Special Representative (Mr Winspeare Guicciardi) to East Timor. The visit took place in January 1976.

Australia's representative addressed the UN Security Council again on 14 April 1976 and called for:

- (a) renewal of Mr Winspeare's mandate.
- (b) withdrawal of Indonesian forces.
- (c) genuine act of self-determination in East Timor.

These points were adopted in the Security Council's second resolution on East Timor on 22 April 1976.

The Australian Government worked hard to achieve a second visit to East Timor by the UN Special Representative.

Australia had made repeated representations to the UN that a second visit to East Timor should be made by Mr Winspeare. Australia made efforts to encourage other governments to make similar representations. In the hope of ensuring that any second visit by Mr Winspeare to East Timor would be successful, Australia informed the UN Secretary-General that if FRETILIN were able to name an accessible venue in East Timor for a meeting with Mr Winspeare, and subject to all parties giving satisfactory assurances of safety, Australia would have considered a UN request for help with air transport for Mr Winspeare. Mr Winspeare, however, did not make a second visit.

The General Assembly in 1976 again took up the question of East Timor. The Fourth Committee prepared a resolution which was adopted in plenary on 1 December.⁴ The voting was indecisive for a United Nations resolution under a 'decolonisation' heading: 65 in favour (the main sponsors of the text were Algeria, Tanzania and Guinea Bissau), with 20 opposing (including Indonesia and three other member countries of ASEAN) and 53 abstaining (including New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Fiji, United Kingdom and the FRG).

⁴ The text of the General Assembly Resolution 31/53 reaffirmed the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence and the legitimacy of their struggle, and rejected the claim that East Timor had been integrated into Indonesia. The resolution then called for the withdrawal of Indonesian forces, the dispatch of a visiting mission to the territory and the inclusion of the 'Question of East Timor' in the provisional agenda for the 32nd Session.

For reasons stated by our delegation, Australia abstained in the vote on the resolution. The Government took the view that the resolution failed to make a balanced appeal for the avoidance of further bloodshed (i.e. the appeal was not properly addressed to both sides in the conflict). The Government had reservations about the language and elements of judgement involved. It thought that some of the steps that were proposed in the resolution were unnecessary. There were, however, points of principle in the resolution which, although not expressed as the Government would have preferred, are fundamental to Australian policy as consistently stated by the Government. For this reason Australia did not oppose the resolution. On the other hand we did not regard it as being realistic or constructive, and for that reason we abstained.

The aspects of the resolution about which the Government had misgivings became more apparent when the resolution is compared with the UNGA resolution of 1975, which Australia supported. The 1975 resolution was addressed to all parties in the Timor dispute and it sought to preserve the options of the Timorese people to seek independence as a separate state or to integrate with Indonesia. The 1976 resolution, by contrast, did not have the breadth of appeal and it proposed only independence. The 1975 resolution called for a peaceful solution: the 1976 one promoted a 'liberation struggle'. Where the 1975 resolution sought to make a constructive contribution, the 1976 resolution made no effort to look for new or constructive proposals. The Government's policy was, then as now, forward-looking, realistic and constructive: it did not seem that the 1976 resolution was compatible with this approach.

Contacts with Indonesia on Timor

The Government's stated policy at each and every stage of developments relating to Timor has been placed forcefully and unambiguously to the Indonesian Government. During his visits to Jakarta in January and April 1976 the Minister for Foreign Affairs pressed for a cessation of hostilities in East Timor, the withdrawal of Indonesian troops from East Timor, the holding of a genuine act of self-determination and the return to the territory of the ICRC. These points were also made continuously through diplomatic channels.

The Government has not recognised Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor. (It was not represented at either stage of the act of self-determination arranged by the Indonesians.) But for practical reasons such as the provision of humanitarian aid and the re[uni]ting of families separated by the Timor troubles it has accepted certain realities.

The Government is still opposed to the use of force by Indonesia in East Timor (just as Australia was opposed to Indonesia's use of force during confrontation with Malaysia and in West Irian in the fifties and sixties).

It is a fact that neither Australia nor any other member state of the UN nor the UN itself has been able to have a policy supporting an orderly and peaceful settlement in Timor fully implemented. As the Indonesian Government now regards East Timor as an internal matter, it is quite unlikely that this situation will be changed in any way by the activities of an Australian Senate Select Committee.

Humanitarian Assistance to East Timor

The Government has repeatedly expressed its regret and concern about the loss of life and human suffering which resulted from the fighting in East Timor.

The Government has been in the forefront of governments from most countries in providing humanitarian assistance to East Timor.

We consistently supported the relief operations in East and West Timor of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The Government expressed its disappointment and regret that the ICRC's operation in East Timor came to an end.

The ICRC relief operation came to an end when three quarters of the original Australian pledge of \$250,000 had been spent. The Government then indicated that it would be prepared to pledge a further \$250,000 if the ICRC relief operation was resumed in East Timor. It made strong representations to the Indonesian Government and to the then authorities in Dili that an ICRC presence in East Timor be allowed again.

It became clear, however, that the ICRC would not be allowed to return.

In the circumstances the Government was anxious to find ways of continuing to assist in East Timor. The Indonesian Red Cross (IRC) was the only available channel for such aid.

In October 1976, therefore, the Government provided \$83,000 to the Indonesian Red Cross for humanitarian aid in East Timor.

A second contribution of \$250,000 was made available to the IRC in December 1976.

The Australian contribution has been spent on medical and relief supplies and on upgrading and providing clinics and hospitals and is thought to have had a direct effect in helping to alleviate the suffering of at least some of those people in East Timor who have suffered because of the fighting and disruptions to peace that have occurred.

Fate of Journalists from Australia

(a) Five Journalists killed at Balibo on 16 October 1975

The Australian Government has made persistent attempts to determine the fate of the five journalists from Australia killed at Balibo in East Timor in October 1975. Substantial obstacles have stood in the way of the enquiries mainly due to the fact that the deaths occurred in a foreign territory during a period of undeclared hostilities.

After a long period of representations the Government succeeded in getting a team from the Australian Embassy in Jakarta to Balibo. Although the team had no authority to insist on the appearance of witnesses or persons with knowledge relevant to the deaths, it was able to interview, among others, Tomas Goncalves, who claimed to have been the APODETI leader during the attack on Balibo. In Australia the Department of Foreign Affairs interviewed at length the KOTA leader JOSE MARTINS who claimed also to know how the journalists died. In response to the requests for assistance in following up statements by Mr Martins alleging that certain Indonesians possessed knowledge of the event at Balibo, the Indonesian authorities stated that they believed that they had cooperated as fully as possible and could not agree to pursue the matter further.

The Government has studied other accounts of the deaths of the journalists. It has, without success, sought to interview those who were alleged to be eye-witnesses.

There have been, and continue to be, many conflicting accounts of the journalists' deaths. The Government's investigations, as the papers placed in the Parliamentary Library by the Minister for Foreign Affairs show, have not led to a substantiated account of the tragic event. But it cannot be claimed that the Government has failed to do what it can to determine the facts surrounding the death of the five men.

No new avenues of investigation have been opened up that suggest that any additional form of enquiry would add to what is known already. The experience of the Government on

this issue to date suggests very strongly in fact that any new enquiry would achieve little more than going over the same ground with the same results.⁵

Before going over the well known accusations and counter-accusations, claims and counter-claims surrounding the Balibo affair we should also keep in mind the sensibilities of the next-of-kin, some of whom would prefer to let the matter rest in order not to be constantly reminded of the grief and pain they have suffered already.

(b) *Roger East*

The Government shares public concern in Australia about the fate of Mr East since 3 December 1975 when he declined an invitation to join an evacuation flight from Dili. The only information available about him has been obtained at second-hand and contains conflicting allegations. (On the one hand it is said that Mr East was shot by Indonesians in Dili on about 7 December 1975; on the other, that he went with FRETILIN forces and supporters into the mountains at about that time.) The Government's enquiries have been as exhaustive as possible in the circumstances: they include approaches to the previous so-called Provisional Government of East Timor, the Indonesian Red Cross and (on many occasions) the Indonesian Government. Also at the Government's request the UN Special Representative, Mr Winspeare Guicciardi, enquired about Mr East during his visit to Dili in January 1976, without success. No new evidence has been brought to light that raises hopes that Mr East's real fate might be now discovered.

Timorese Refugees

The Australian Government has made facilities available to refugees from Timor. It has been sympathetic in according the right of permanent residence in Australia.

The Government has emphasised the need to alleviate the suffering caused by the conflict in Timor. To this end, the Prime Minister reached agreement with President Soeharto in Jakarta in October last year that Australian and Indonesian officials should meet to resolve the problems of the East Timorese refugees who came to Australia without their families. Several such meetings have now taken place, and progress is being made towards finalising the arrangements which will have to be made for the family reunion of persons concerned.

In addition, the Government is considering applications for entry from Timorese refugees now in Portugal.

Discussions with the Indonesians about arrangements for the reunion of separated families have so far made good progress and the Indonesian authorities have been cooperative and forthcoming. It is a strong possibility that if a Senate Committee were to launch an enquiry into

⁵ From July 1976 onwards, partly as a result of pressure from family members and the press, claims of new evidence and witnesses continued to be made from time to time. Claims of new information made in October 1995, on the twentieth anniversary of the deaths, resulted in an official investigation led by Tom Sherman, whose report was published in June 1996. Sherman concluded that it was 'more likely than not' that the five Balibo journalists had been killed early on 16 October by members of an attacking force consisting of Indonesian irregular troops and anti-Fretilin Timorese, and led by Indonesian officers, that the bodies were later dressed in Fretilin uniforms and photographed, and later burnt. Sherman made no conclusions on the extent to which the five contributed to their own deaths. He concluded also that there was stronger consistent evidence concerning the death of Roger East, who was 'more likely than not' executed by an unidentified Indonesian soldier on 8 December, and that although East remained in Dili longer than prudent he 'could not reasonably have foreseen the manner of his treatment'. In October 1998, in response to a further eyewitness account linking the deaths to a particular Indonesian officer, Sherman undertook a second investigation into the deaths at Balibo. This report, published in January 1999, concluded that information from witnesses on that incident remained inconsistent and that the new claims were uncorroborated. He added nothing to his earlier findings.

the Timor issue, progress on reuniting refugees might have to be suspended until the enquiry was completed. This would be of little comfort to those suffering the effects of separation at present.

Allegations of Atrocities

Many allegations of Indonesian atrocities and large scale killings in East Timor have been made. Some are disturbing, but others are clearly exaggerated and unsubstantiated. It is alleged, for instance, that the number of people killed in East Timor since the troubles started could be as high as 100,000. A source for this figure is a statement by an ex-UDT leader LOPES DA CRUZ who said in Jakarta that there had been 60,000 casualties in the conflict. This statement was later clarified and it transpired that the figure included the 40,000 refugees in West Timor and others whose lives had been disrupted. There is no substantiated evidence that 100,000 people have been killed; it would seem to be exaggerated by a factor of ten.

The allegations that 100,000 people have died as a result of Indonesian actions have not been supported by any concrete evidence. These allegations depend on hearsay and second-hand evidence coming from persons who would have had no opportunity to make even a cursory check through the whole of the territory of East Timor.

There have also been allegations of atrocities committed by FRETILIN followers on which some documents have also been produced (with photographic evidence) by the PGET authorities and by the Indonesians themselves.

Impact on the South East Asian Region

A Senate Committee of Enquiry would be likely to affect adversely Australia's image and standing in the eyes of the other ASEAN member countries.

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1/2, v]

CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA, JAKARTA, WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK

Lisbon, 23 May 1977

O.LB1474 SECRET AUSTEO

Portuguese Policy on Timor

For Parkinson from Cooper; Jakarta for Woolcott; Washington for Renouf; New York UN for Harry

Some time ago I reported (O.LB1295¹) that the Portuguese MFA accepted the need for a fundamental reappraisal of their Timor policy and to this end they proposed to develop some

¹ 4 March 1977. Cooper reported that the attention of the Portuguese Government was focused on joining the European Economic Community, and he did not expect it to address policy problems relating to Timor. Villas Boas of the Foreign Ministry believed that Portugal needed to solve practical problems such as the issue of Timorese who still wished to leave East Timor and the Foreign Ministry needed a clear policy directive within which to work. 'Villas Boas indicated that they did not pretend to have any clear ideas as to what policy options they should put to the Government. He saw no advantage from Portugal's point of view in seeking to force the issue with the Indonesians. On the contrary, he thought that Portugal's interests would be best served by continuing to reserve their position since virtually any action they might take now could be construed as a move towards at least *de facto* recognition of Indonesia's take over. Villas Boas had no illusions about the prospects for any substantive action in the United Nations'. [On file NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, ix.]

policy guidelines which, if the Government accepted them, would provide a framework within which some residual practical problems left over in Timor could be tackled.

2. Prompted by para 9 of Woolcott's O.JA12920,² I have made a further check with the MFA and, as expected, it seems that Portuguese thinking has not progressed very far. Still less has any thought been given as to how the Timor issue might be handled at the next General Assembly. Unlike Australia, Portugal does not regard itself as being under any pressure to resolve the Timor question. Nor do the Portuguese share our need for the restoration of good relations with Jakarta. Having taken the Indonesians to the United Nations, Portugal cannot afford (as Woolcott correctly points out) to pursue a Timor policy which is less critical of Indonesia than some of the African States which are still important to it. Thus, as I see it, Portugal will not take the lead, either in the UN context or elsewhere, in recognizing or condoning Indonesian action in Timor, but would respect any UN 'consensus' to that effect. There is therefore no point in our seeking to persuade the Portuguese to recognise integration unless and until we are prepared to grasp this nettle ourselves. Portugal will only take this step when other countries and especially those with interests in the region have already acted. So long as Indonesia stands formally condemned by the UN for its use of force in Timor the Portuguese will not themselves seek to change that position. On the other hand I agree with Woolcott that the Portuguese would prefer to see the issue die away and will not therefore play a leading role in the UN one way or the other.

3. Turning now to Woolcott's O.JA13084 para 41,³ it will be clear from what I have already said that I am not very sanguine about the fifth of Jakarta's policy recommendations, namely that we should actively seek to enlist the help of the Portuguese in trying to settle the Timor question in the UN. None of the imperatives that apply to us apply to the Portuguese and they would be the first to recognise this. We want to dispose of the Timor issue but the Portuguese don't really care one way or the other. In so far as they do care, Timor for the Portuguese represents a national humiliation and there is still considerable bitterness in official circles towards the perpetrators of their humiliation.

4. I note that Jakarta quotes evidence . . . that Portugal 'is ready to recognise incorporation'. I very much doubt the truth of that statement. All the evidence at our disposal suggests that while Portugal sees no point in being isolated on the issue, it is not repeat not seeking 'evidence of general support for such a course'. Portugal will take its eventual decision in the light of what others decide to do and not vice versa.

5. I must also state that Portuguese sympathy for our policy objectives would have been easier to generate had we ourselves shown a little more awareness of Portugal's economic and social problems. Last year we virtually closed down the Embassy's migration establishment when the need for it (at least in Portuguese eyes) had never been greater. We did this without any prior consultation with the Portuguese (or even with this Embassy for that matter) and then we added insult to injury by transferring our migration officer to Madrid despite Portuguese representations to the contrary which we even failed to acknowledge. Throughout this period Canada (a comparable country in Portuguese eyes) maintained (and still does) a Canada based

² 12 May 1977. Paragraph 9 requested an assessment of Portugal's likely approach at the next meeting of the UN General Assembly. Indonesia hoped that Portugal could be persuaded to recognise integration and let the matter drop in the United Nations. The Jakarta Embassy noted that Timor was on the General Assembly agenda and 'countries which were important to Portugal, like Mozambique and Angola, would probably seek to maintain the issue'. [On file NAA: A1838, 49/2/1/1, ix.]

³ 19 May 1977. Paragraph 41 suggested that Australia might improve relations with Indonesia by discussing the possibility of settling the Timor issue in the United Nations with Portugal. Portugal might choose this course if it had support from countries such as Australia and the United States.

migration staff of four headed by a Counsellor. I am sure also that the Portuguese will be aware of our failure to respond to the U.S. feelers about the consortium loan in which Canada is an active participant. I report these things because I am sometimes surprised at the amount of goodwill we somehow manage to retain with the Portuguese (as indicated by their recent decision to support us for election to the Human Rights Commission) despite our seeming indifference to their problems.

6. If I might be permitted to offer a comment on Jakarta's policy recommendations, taken together they constitute a pragmatic and realistic 'package'. However the question remains as to whether the package (in so far as it involves recognition of Timor's integration with Indonesia) is saleable to Australian public opinion. There will be many people in Australia, who are not necessarily anti-Indonesian, who will nevertheless be troubled if the Government were at this time to grasp the nettle of recognition. One of the common threads running through the foreign policies of the Fraser and Carter Administrations is the belief that our policies should not merely promote our national interests, but that they should also be based on certain moral principles such as respect for human rights and the settlement of disputes by negotiation rather than force. If the Government now decides to recognise what it has previously condemned the question many people will ask is not whether we can live with it but whether we can live with ourselves.

7. Whilst I do not regard the contents of this telegram as particularly sensitive, I have decided to give it the same classification and distribution as Woolcott's reftel in order to minimise the risk of leaks.

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 3]

CABLEGRAM TO CANBERRA, LISBON, NEW YORK

Jakarta, 26 May 1977

O.JA13174 SECRET AUSTEO

Timor

For Parkinson from Woolcott; Lisbon for Cooper; New York UN for Harry

I would like to make several comments on Lisbon's O.LB1474.¹ Generally I think Cooper makes some good points in paragraphs 1 to 4 of his reference telegram.

2. Given the situation as he describes it, I am not inclined to press my earlier suggestion (para 3 of reftel) that we try to enlist the help of the Portuguese in trying to settle the Timor question in the United Nations. We should remain alert for any possibility of cooperation with Portugal and should keep in close touch, but I accept Lisbon's assessment that the Portuguese are not likely to show much interest in such activity.

3. As far as paragraph [6] of O.LB1474 is concerned, the series of steps which we have suggest[ed] would involve *de facto* recognition but not *de jure* recognition. The question of whether or not this would be saleable to public opinion in Australia is one for the Government rather than posts to judge.

¹ See pp. 834–6.

4. It is difficult to assess with confidence from abroad what Australian ‘public opinion’ is on Timor (or any other issue). But whether or not the Government considers it could sell to the Australian public any change in attitude on Timor, the situation in Timor itself will not be affected in any way.
5. It is open to the Government to explain fully any action it might take to the public as was done, for example, at the time of our recognition of Bangladesh and at the time of policy changes on Vietnam. (One of our problems in this case—and this of course is partly Indonesia’s fault—is that sections of public opinion in Australia have been strongly aroused against Indonesia.)
6. I agree with the implication in paragraph 6 of O.LB1474 that the pursuit of national interests must be limited by certain internationally accepted principles. However the resolution of the Timor issue is not simply a black and white choice between respect for *mora*[l] principles as against the use of force. Such an approach over-simplifies the whole complex background which led up to the Indonesian use of force.
7. While it is for Washington rather than for us to assess United States attitudes, the view of the American Embassy here, as well as the views of Holbrooke, Congressman Wolff, Congressman Goodling and Congresswoman Mayner following their recent visits to Indonesia and East Timor, as we understand them, suggest that the American Government regards integration now as the only viable outcome of East Timor’s decolonisation and acknowledges its *de facto* integration into Indonesia, whatever reservations they may have about the methods used and the blind eye turned to the situation by the Ford Administration.²
8. Also in our view the last two sentences of paragraph 6 of Lisbon reftel miss the point. In the first place, we do not see what national interest is se[r]ved by withholding *de facto* recognition of what major powers and other regional countries have already acknowledged—that East Timor is now part of Indonesia.
9. What was said in the past about Timor may well have been valid at the time, but it is not necessarily inconsistent to change one’s views or to accept the previously unacceptable when circumstances change. We did this over Angola. The essence of an effective foreign policy is continuous reappraisal of that policy in the face of changing circumstances and the finding of the right balance between internationally accepted principles and national interests. One may regret the way things went but it is a general assessment here that nothing short of invasion by a major outside power could now take East Timor away from Indonesia. This would seem out of the question.
10. While we can appreciate the subjective sentiment behind the final comment in Lisbon reftel we are not dealing simply with the matter of living with ourselves. We are dealing with a question of living in the South East Asian region in which certain developments, which we may not necessarily have liked, have nevertheless occurred and with which other countries in the region have already come to terms.
11. Also if we are to ‘live with ourselves’ morally, it would seem to us that we should be concerning ourselves more with the welfare of the people in Timor and seeking to take realistic steps to help them than with reiterating previous criticism of Indonesia. The only practical way of doing anything about that is to provide aid (especially in the fields of health, agriculture and communications) and to encourage the Indonesians to devote resources to Timor.
12. The only way to provide aid on a worthwhile scale would be to do it as part of our Indonesian Aid Program—anything else will be unacceptable to the Indonesian Government.

[NAA: A10005, TS202/1/1, ANNEX 4]

² From December 1976 the United States continued to vote with Indonesia against all three General Assembly Resolutions—31/53 (1 December 1976), 32/34 (28 November 1977), and 33/39 (13 December 1978).

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS NEWS RELEASE

Canberra, 20 January 1978

No. M10

Relations with Indonesia

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Andrew Peacock, announced today that the Government had decided to accept East Timor as part of Indonesia.

Mr Peacock said that, like most Australians, the Government deeply regretted that events in East Timor since August 1975 had caused so much human suffering. 'The humanitarian issues arising from the conflict had been and remained a major concern of the Government,' he said.

'The need to direct emergency assistance to the people of East Timor led the Government in 1976 to direct funds through the Indonesian Red Cross for relief work in East Timor. This followed the breakdown of negotiations for access to the territory by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Government has also discussed arrangements with the Indonesian Government for the reunion with their families of Timorese refugees in Australia.'

Mr Peacock said that in political terms the events which culminated in the Indonesian Government's decision in late 1975 to intervene in East Timor had created a most difficult and complex problem. He noted that the situation by then had already developed over a period. In referring to the facts as they faced the Government when it came to power in December 1975, Mr Peacock recalled the confused political situation in Portugal in 1974 and that the Portuguese Government had committed itself to decolonisation in East Timor. The policy had never been effectively administered and the resources required had at all times been beyond the Portuguese Government's means and resolve. The consequences of the failure of this policy in East Timor had been tragic. The attempted coup by the UDT, the subsequent armed takeover by FRETILIN and the ensuing military and political confusion had led directly to the Indonesian decision to intervene.

The Minister said: 'That decision and the events that followed continue to attract criticism both here and overseas. These issues are indeed very real and have never been susceptible to ready solution.' The Australian Government had deplored these developments, above all the use of force by Indonesia. 'The Government has made clear publicly its opposition to the Indonesian intervention and has made this known to the Indonesian Government,' Mr Peacock said.

'Since November 1975 the Government has made every effort to seek a peaceful solution of the problem. In this it has espoused neither the ambitions of any particular East Timorese political movement nor the position of the Indonesian Government. Movement for international intervention whether by the United Nations or other countries has never gained the required support. Since November 1975 the Indonesian Government has continued to extend its administrative control over the territory of East Timor. This control is effective and covers all major administrative centres of the territory.'

In conclusion Mr Peacock noted that the future progress of family reunion and the rehabilitation of Timor were important ingredients in a practical contribution to the peace of the area. He emphasised that in order to pursue these objectives Australia will need to continue to deal directly with the Indonesian Government as the authority in effective control.

‘This is a reality with which we must come to terms’, Mr Peacock said.

‘Accordingly, the Government has decided that although it remains critical of the means by which integration was brought about it would be unrealistic to continue to refuse to recognise *de facto* that East Timor is part of Indonesia.’¹

[NAA: A1838, 3038/10/1, ANNEX B]

SUBMISSION TO PEACOCK

Canberra, 26 April 1978

SECRET

EXTRACT

Recognition by Australia of Indonesian Incorporation of East Timor

5. Looking into the future, it is likely that negotiations with Indonesia on a seabed boundary between the south of East Timor and Australia will lead to inferences that Australia is according *de jure* recognition of Indonesia’s incorporation of East Timor. Any agreement on such a boundary is likely to strengthen such inferences. Senator Knight’s letter to you makes it clear that his constituent, Mr G. Miller, has already assumed that this would be the case. The legal position here is complicated.

6. In the absence of an express statement to the contrary, there is a strong presumption that a government accepts the validity of another government’s title (i.e. *de jure* recognition) to territory from which an international boundary is measured for the purpose of negotiating an agreement on an international seabed boundary. The presumption of recognition is cogent when concluding a bilateral treaty, especially if the treaty relates to territorial claims or affects the rights and obligations of individuals. However, recognition is primarily and essentially a matter of intention. In international law, there is, as a rule, no conduct however conclusive in ordinary circumstances the normal legal consequences of which cannot be averted or interpreted by a clear manifestation of a contrary intention.

7. Applying these principles to the East Timor situation it is clear that negotiations with Indonesia on a seabed boundary south of East Timor would give rise to a strong legal presumption that Australia had moved to a *de jure* recognition of Indonesia’s incorporation of East Timor. It is doubtful whether a statement (i.e. statement of 20 January) made several months before the negotiations with Indonesia would be sufficient to rebut that presumption.

¹ Indonesian response to Peacock’s statement was slow, as the statement had coincided with an Indonesian crackdown on newspapers and students. In Cablegram JA17137 (4 February 1978) Woolcott reported emphasising to Moerdani that Australia desired a concrete Indonesian response to Australia’s *de facto* recognition. Moerdani replied that the timing was regrettable: ‘He asked me if I would try to get the message over to the Australian Government that, while the Indonesians really welcomed our decision and regretted the coincidence of the timing with their own crackdown, they were preoccupied at present with the domestic situation and with the meeting of the MPR next month to elect the President. Moreover, there would be many changes in the Ministry and amongst senior officials and provincial Governors. We could not r[epea]t not therefore expect people to take decisions if they did not r[epea]t not know whether they would still be in their jobs after March or to focus on non-domestic issues for the time being . . . once the Presidential election was over and Cabinet and senior Departmental appointments announced, we could move ahead in a practical way to build on the 20 January statement’. [On file NAA: A1209, 76/132, i.]

If the Government did not wish these negotiations to give rise to a situation of *de jure* recognition, it might be necessary to affirm at the relevant time that the negotiations do not affect Australia's policy on recognition. The difficulty with this option, however, is that such a statement would appear to others, including the Indonesian Government, to be in contradiction with our behaviour. We feel, however, that this is the only avenue available in international law to rebut the presumption referred to above.

8. In all the circumstances the Government may prefer to 'slip' into *de jure* recognition of Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor. This would not require any new announcement. If questions are asked about these changes the Government could explain its position by arguing that it was necessary to acknowledge Indonesia's claim to East Timor for the purpose of negotiating an international agreement which is very much in Australia's interest, but that the Government remains critical of the means by which integration was brought about.¹

R. J. SMITH

First Assistant Secretary
Legal and Treaties Division

[A9737, 92/012409, vii]

¹ On 15 December 1978, after meeting with Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar, Peacock announced to a press conference that as a result of seabed negotiations Australia would give *de jure* recognition to Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor. Official negotiations on the delineation of the seabed between Australia and East Timor commenced on 14 February 1979.

Appendixes

APPENDIX I

Biographical Guide

This is a guide to the relevant positions occupied by selected persons whose names occur in the documents.

Abbas, Colonel	Intelligence Officer, BAKIN
Abdul Razak bin Hussein, Tun Haji	Malaysian Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1970 – January 1976
Adenan, Brigadier General A.	Director, Asia-Pacific Directorate, Indonesian DFA
Akosah, Major General	Head, Asia-Pacific Directorate, Indonesian DFA
Alatas, Alex	Private Secretary to Malik
Alkatiri, Mari	Member of Fretilin Central Committee; Minister of State for Political Affairs, Democratic Republic of East Timor, from 1 December 1975
Alves, Major Vitor Manuel Rodrigues	Member of the AFM Co-ordinating Committee; Portuguese Minister without Portfolio, 19 July 1974 – 26 March 1975; member of the Supreme Military Council, from 17 March 1975
Amaral, Francisco Xavier do	President, Fretilin, from 12 September 1974; President, Democratic Republic of East Timor, from 1 December 1975
Anderson, James Duncan	PM&C: Assistant Secretary, External Relations, from 1973
Antunes, Major Eduardo Augusto de Melo	Portuguese Minister without Portfolio, from 17 July 1974; Minister for Foreign Affairs, 26 March – 7 August 1975 and 19 September 1975 – 22 July 1976
Araújo, Arnaldo dos Reis	Chairman, Apodeti, from 1974; Chairman, PGET, from 1976
Araújo, Casmiro di	Chief Editor, Apodeti newspaper, Dili
Arriens, Jan Willem Floris	DFA: First Secretary, Jakarta, 25 May 1973 – 8 November 1974; First Secretary, Bonn, from 7 December 1974
Ashwin, Charles Robin	DFA: Assistant Secretary, Defence Policy Branch, 1974–1975
Atsabe, Liurai (Rajah) of	<i>see</i> Gonçalves, Guilherme Maria
Azevedo, Admiral José Baptista Pineiro de	Prime Minister of Portugal, 29 August 1975 – 23 June 1976

Barnard, Lance	Australian Deputy Prime Minister, 5 December 1972 – 12 June 1974; Minister for Defence, 5 December 1972 – 6 June 1975
Bello, Tony	Fretilin Information Officer and representative in Darwin
Birch, Robert Nivison	DFA: High Commissioner, Singapore, from March 1974
Blount, John Charles	DFA: Third Secretary, later Second Secretary, Jakarta, 17 October 1973 – 23 October 1975; Indonesia Section, 26 November 1975–1976
Boas	<i>see</i> Villas Boas
Boyd, Susan Jennifer Delyse	DFA: Third Secretary, later Second Secretary, Lisbon, 1971–1974; West Europe Section, 1974–1975; OECD/EC Section, then Malaysia Singapore Section, 1975–1976
Briot, Geoffrey T.	Private Secretary to Willesee
Caetano, Marcello José das Neves Alves	Prime Minister of Portugal, September 1968 – April 1974
Cairns, Dr James Ford	Australian Deputy Prime Minister, 12 June 1974 – 2 July 1975; Minister for Overseas Trade, 19 December 1972 – 11 December 1974; Treasurer, 11 December 1974 – 6 June 1975; Minister for Environment, 6 June – 2 July 1975
Callaghan, (Leonard) James	UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 1974–1976
Campbell, Archibald Duncan	DFA: Minister and Deputy Permanent Representative, Australian Mission to the UN, New York, 24 June 1973 – 14 January 1976; Assistant Secretary, International Organisations Branch, from 1976
Campinhos	<i>see</i> Campinos, Prof Jorge
Campinos, Prof Jorge	Portuguese Deputy Foreign Minister, from May 1974; Minister for External Trade, 19 September 1975 – 23 July 1976
Carrascalão, Mário Viegas	UDT Leader; member of the PGET
Chi'ao Kuan-hua	Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, from 1974
Cook, Michael John	DFA: First Assistant Secretary, North and West Asia Division (later North and South Asia Division), 1974–1975
Cooper, Frank Bell	DFA: Head, Europe, Central and Southern Africa Branch, 1973–1974; Ambassador, Lisbon, 26 August 1974 – 26 August 1977

Costa Gomes	<i>see</i> Gomes, General Francisco da Costa
Cottrill, Ross William	DFA: Head, Policy Planning Section, from 12 January 1975
Cousins, Ian Herbert	DFA: First Secretary, Lisbon, 31 July 1974 – 7 April 1977
Crespo, Rear Admiral Vitor Manuel Pereira	Portuguese Minister for Extra-territorial Co-operation, 1975–1976
Crosland, S. P.	Federal Secretary, Australian Journalists' Association
Cruz, Magalhaes	Director-General of Political Affairs, Portuguese Foreign Ministry, 1975
Cumes, James William Crawford	DFA: First Assistant Secretary, International Organisations Division, 1971–1974
Cunningham, Gary James	New Zealand cameraman with the Channel 7 team at Balibo
Curtin, Michael Shane Garrad	DFA: First Secretary, Australian Mission to the UN, New York, 20 February 1973 – 24 February 1975; Head, Indonesia Section, 1975–1976
Curtis, Peter Campbell John	DFA: First Assistant Secretary, Public Affairs and Cultural Relations Division, from 1974–1975
da Cruz, Francisco Xavier Lopes	Chairman, UDT
da Silva, General José Morais	Chief of Staff, Portuguese Air Force; Presidential envoy, 1976
Dading	<i>see</i> Kalboeadi, Lieutenant General Dading
Dalrymple, Frederick Rawdon	DFA: Assistant Secretary, Europe Branch, 1975–1976
Dan, Malcolm John	DFA: Minister, Jakarta, June 1974 – August 1976; Chargé d'Affaires a.i., December 1974 – March 1975
Danudirdjo, Ashari	Secretary-General, Indonesian DFA
Darby, Michael	Head of ASIAT
Davis, Owen Lennox	DFA: Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Australian Mission to the UN, Geneva, from 19 December 1974
Djajadiningrat, R. B. (Didi)	Director-General for Political Affairs, Indonesian DFA
Dunn, James Stanley	Legislative Research Service, Parliament House, from 1969; Director of Foreign Affairs Group, Parliament House, from 1971; Australian Consul, Dili, 1962–1964

Eanes, General António dos Santos Romalho	Chief of Staff, Portuguese Army, from December 1975; President of Portugal, from July 1976
East, Roger	Australian journalist; Head, East Timor News Agency (Fretilin), 1975
El Tari, Major General	Governor of Nusa Tenggara Timur Province, Indonesia
Evans, Graham Charles	DFA: Policy Planning Section, Executive Branch, 1974
Favaro, Frank	Australian businessman and pilot, Dili
Feakes, Graham Barton	DFA: First Assistant Secretary, South Asia Division (later South-East Asia and Papua New Guinea Division), 1974–1976; High Commissioner, Kuala Lumpur, from 27 April 1976
Fernandez, Roy Robert	DFA: First Assistant Secretary, Western Division, 1974–1975; First Assistant Secretary, Defence Division, from 1975
Fisher, Denis James	DFA: Third Secretary, and later Second Secretary, Jakarta, 10 October 1972 – 18 April 1975; Indonesia Section, 1975–1976
Fitzgerald, Dr Stephen	DFA: Ambassador, Peking, 1973–1976
Forrester, Geoffrey John	DFA: Indonesia Section, 1973–1975; First Secretary, Australian Mission to the UN, New York, from 3 September 1975
Fraser, (John) Malcolm	Prime Minister of Australia, from 11 November 1975
Fry, Ken	Member, Australian House of Representatives (Fraser, ALP)
Furlonger, Robert William	DFA: Ambassador, Jakarta, 11 March 1972 – 18 December 1974
Gilchrist, Hugh	DFA: Assistant Secretary, Legal & Treaties Branch, 1972–1974; First Assistant Secretary, Legal and Treaties Division, 1974–1976
Girao, Dr	Portuguese Chargé d'Affaires, Jakarta
Goh Keng Swee	Singapore Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, from 1973
Gomes, General Francisco da Costa	Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of Portugal, 1972–1974; member of Junta of National Salvation, 1974–1975; President of Portugal, October 1974 – June 1976; member of Supreme Revolutionary Council of the Armed Forces Movement, from 1975
Gonçalves, Guilherme Maria	Liurai (Rajah) of Atsabe; Apodeti leader; Chairman of the Advisory Council of the PGET

Gonçalves, Thomas	Apodeti Military Commander at Balibo
Gonçalves, Brigadier-General Vasco dos Santos	Member of Junta of National Salvation, Portugal, 1974–1975; Prime Minister of Portugal, 19 July 1974 – 28 August 1975; member of Supreme Revolutionary Council, March–September 1975
Greet, Raymond James	DFA: Head, West Europe Section, 1973–1974; Assistant Secretary, Europe and Central and Southern Africa Branch, 1974–1975
Griffith, Allan Thomas	PM&C: First Assistant Secretary, External Affairs and Defence Division, from 1970
Guicciardi, Vittorio Winspeare	<i>see</i> Winspeare Guicciardi, Vittorio
Habib, Lieutenant General Adil Hasnan	Chief of Staff, HANKAM, 11 April 1973 – 17 February 1975; Chief of the Administrative Staff, HANKAM, from 17 February 1975
Harry, Ralph Lindsay	DFA: Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Australian Mission to the UN, New York, from 14 May 1975
Her Tasning	<i>see</i> Tasning Daeng Toro, Lieutenant General H. Chaeruddin
Hill, Brian Clarence	DFA: First Assistant Secretary, Pacific and Western Division, 1972–1974; High Commissioner, Wellington, 1 October 1974 – 28 November 1975
Horta, José Manuel Ramos	Party Secretary, Fretilin; Minister for External Relations and Information, Democratic Republic of East Timor, from 1 December 1975
Ibnu Sutowo	<i>see</i> Sutowo, Lieutenant General H. Ibnu
Idris, Imrad	Director, International Organisations Division, Indonesian DFA
Jensen, Erik	Special Assistant to the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to Portuguese Timor (Winspeare Guicciardi)
Jockel, Gordon A.	Director, Joint Intelligence Organisation, from 1972; Australian Ambassador, Jakarta, 17 March 1969 – 3 February 1972
Johnson, Richard Kenneth	DFA: Third Secretary, Jakarta, 1 October 1974 – 8 October 1976
Johnston, Marshall Lewis	DFA: Ambassador, Bangkok, from May 1974
Joseph, Lance Louis Ettelson	DFA: Assistant Secretary, South-East Asia Branch, 1974–1976

Kadri, Martono	Minister, Indonesian Embassy, Canberra, from 1975
Kalboeadi, Lieutenant General Dading	Commander, Indonesian Security Defence Area Command (East Timor), from 1975
Kelly, Kevin	DFA: Ambassador, Lisbon, 1970–1974
Kerin, John	Member, Australian House of Representatives (Macarthur, ALP)
Kerr, Sir John Robert	Governor-General of Australia, from 1974
Killen, (Denis) James	Australian Minister for Defence, from 12 November 1975
Laurie, Robert Stephen	DFA: Assistant Secretary, Information and Cultural Relations Branch (later Information Branch), 1974–1975
Lauterpacht, Elihu	DFA: Legal Adviser
Lavett, John Leslie	DFA: Assistant Secretary, South-East Asia Branch, 1973–1974; Deputy High Commissioner, Port Moresby, from 12 December 1974
Lede Umbu Zaza, Dr	Third Assistant to El Tari, Governor of Nusa Tenggara Timur
Lee Khoo Choy (K. C.)	Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Singapore
Lee Kuan Yew	Prime Minister of Singapore, from 1959
Lim Bian Kie	Private Secretary to Ali Murtopo
Lopes da Cruz	<i>see</i> da Cruz, Francisco Xavier Lopes
McCredie, John Daniel	DFA: Minister, Jakarta, 8 August 1972 – 23 June 1974
McElligott, Daniel Philip	PM&C: Acting Assistant Secretary, External Relations, 1974–1976
McIntyre, Sir Laurence	DFA: Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Australian Mission to the UN, New York, April 1970 – March 1975; Consultant on Portuguese Timor, 1975
McLennan, Alister Duncan	DFA: Policy Planning Section, 1972–1974; Head, Indonesia Section, 1974
Malik, Adam	Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs, from 1966
Marcos, Ferdinand Edralin	President of the Philippines, from 1966
Martins, José Celestino da Silva	President, KOTA, from 1975
Mashuri	Indonesian Information Minister
Matias, Dr Antonio Cabrita	Portuguese Ambassador to Australia, from 1974
Mayne-Wilson, Warwick	DFA: Head, Public Information, 1974; Deputy High Commissioner, Kuala Lumpur, from 19 January 1975

Melhuish, Arthur John	DFA: Head, UN Political Section, 1974–1976
Melo Antunes	<i>see</i> Antunes, Major Eduardo Augusto de Melo
Menadue, John Laurence	PM&C: Secretary, 1974–1976
Miller, Walter Geoffrey Thomas	DFA: Assistant Secretary, Executive Secretariat, 1975–1976
Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, Prof	Indonesian Minister of Justice, 1974–1977; Acting Foreign Minister, August–October 1975
Moerdani, Major General Leonardus Benjamin (Benny)	Head, G1 (Intelligence), HANKAM, from 3 August 1974; Head, Strategic Intelligence Centre, HANKAM, from 17 February 1975
Moertopo	<i>see</i> Murtopo, Major General Ali
Moraes da Silva	<i>see</i> da Silva, General José Moraes
Morrison, William Lawrence	Australian Minister for Science, from 19 December 1972; Minister assisting the Minister for Defence, 12 June 1974 – 6 June 1975; Minister assisting the Minister for Foreign Affairs in matters relating to Papua New Guinea, from 30 November 1974; Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, 23–30 April 1975; Minister for Defence, 6 June – 11 November 1975
Mota, Major Francisco	Chief Adviser to Governor Pires, Government of Portuguese Timor
Mott, Hamilton Charles	DFA: Head, News and Media Section, 1974–1975; Assistant Secretary, Information Branch, from 1975
Moushino	<i>see</i> Mousinho, César Augusto da Costa
Mousinho, César Augusto da Costa	UDT leader; Mayor of Dili
Murdani	<i>see</i> Moerdani, Major General Leonardus Benjamin
Murtopo, Major General Ali	Head, Division III, BAKIN; Head, Special Operations (OPSUS)
Ne Win, U	Prime Minister of Burma, from 1958
Nutter, Daniel Gerald	DFA: Ambassador, Manila, from 10 January 1975
Oliveira, Dominguis	Deputy Leader, UDT
Osório Soares, José Fernando	Apodeti leader
Oxley, Alan Robert	DFA: Private Secretary to Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1974–1975
Panggabean, General Maraden Saur Halomoan	Indonesian Minister for Defence and Security; Commander-in-Chief, Indonesian Armed Forces, from 28 March 1973

Parkinson, Nicholas Fancourt	DFA: First Assistant Secretary, Management Services Division, from 10 May 1974; Deputy Secretary, from 5 December 1974; Ambassador, Washington, 6 March 1976 – 27 January 1977; Secretary, from 28 February 1977
Parsons, Alfred Roy	DFA: High Commissioner, Kuala Lumpur, 8 February 1973 – 26 April 1976; First Assistant Secretary, South-East Asia and Papua New Guinea Division, from 1976
Pasquier, André	ICRC Regional Director, Kuala Lumpur; Head, ICRC operations in Timor, 1975
Peacock, Andrew Sharp	Australian Opposition spokesman on Foreign Affairs and External Territories, 14 June 1974 – 11 November 1975; Minister for Foreign Affairs, from 12 November 1975
Peters, Brian Raymond	British cameraman with the Channel 9 team at Balibo
Piper, John Anthony	DFA: Assistant Secretary, United Nations and International Agencies Branch (later International Organisations Branch), 1974–1976
Pires, Lieutenant Colonel Mario Lemos	Governor of Portuguese Timor, from November 1974
Price, Geoffrey John	DFA: Assistant Secretary, Consular and Immigration Branch, 1975–1976
Pritchett, William Beal	Department of Defence: First Assistant Secretary, Defence Planning Division, from 1973
Ramos Horta	<i>see</i> Horta, José Manuel Ramos
Rennie, Malcolm Harvie	British journalist with the Channel 9 team at Balibo
Renouf, Alan Phillip	DFA: Secretary, 20 February 1974 – 12 October 1976; was accredited to Portugal when Ambassador, Paris, 1969–1971
Rodgers, Peter William	DFA: First Secretary, Jakarta, 9 July 1974 – 1 September 1977
Rogers, Kenneth Henry	DFA: First Assistant Secretary, Defence Division, 1974; First Assistant Secretary, International Organisations and Protocol Division, 1975–1976
Rowland, John Russell	DFA: Deputy Secretary, from 16 December 1974
Ruivo, Dr Mario	Portuguese Foreign Minister, 8 August 1975 – 19 September 1975
Rutter, David Colin	DFA: First Secretary (Consular and Administration), later Counsellor (Consular and Administration), Jakarta, 20 December 1974 – 9 December 1976

Salim, Emil	Indonesian Minister for Communications
Salim, Salim Ahmed	Tanzanian Ambassador to the UN, New York; Chairman of the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation (Committee of Twenty-Four) from 1972
Sani, Chaidir Anwar	Indonesian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN, New York
Santos, Dr António de Almeida	Portuguese Minister for Inter-Territorial Co-ordination, from 16 May 1974; Minister for Social Communications, from 19 September 1975
Satari, Colonel	BAKIN official seconded as Deputy Head, Oceania Division, Indonesian DFA
Say, Ben Mang Reng	Indonesian Ambassador to Portugal, 1975
Sellers, Leslie Gerard	DFA: Assistant Secretary, Protocol and Consular Branch, 1975–1976
Shackleton, Gregory John	Australian journalist with the Channel 7 team at Balibo
Soares, Major António João	Portuguese Presidential envoy to Portuguese Timor, September 1975
Soares, Domingos Pinto	Member of Praesidium of Apodeti
Soares, José Fernando Osório	<i>see</i> Osório Soares, José Fernando
Soares, Mário Alberto Nobre Lopes	Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs, 16 May 1974 – 26 March 1975; Minister without Portfolio, 26 March – July 1975; Prime Minister, 1976–1978
Soedharmono	<i>see</i> Sudharmono, Major General
Soegama	<i>see</i> Sugama, Lieutenant General Yoga
Soeharto, General	President of Indonesia, from 1968
Soekarno	<i>see</i> Sukarno
Soemitro, Major General R.	Head, Indonesian Command for the Restoration of Security and Public Order, 1969–1974
Soenarso	<i>see</i> Sunarso, Colonel
Soerono	<i>see</i> Surono, General
Soetowo	<i>see</i> Sutowo, Lieutenant General H. Ibnu
Spinola, General António Sebastião Ribeiro de	Deputy Chief of the Portuguese Armed Forces, 1973–1974; Head of the Junta of National Salvation, 1974; President of Portugal, 15 May – 30 September 1974
Starey, John Macartney	DFA: Head, Projects and General Services Section, 1973–1975; Head, Commonwealth and Multilateral Organisations Section, 1975–1976

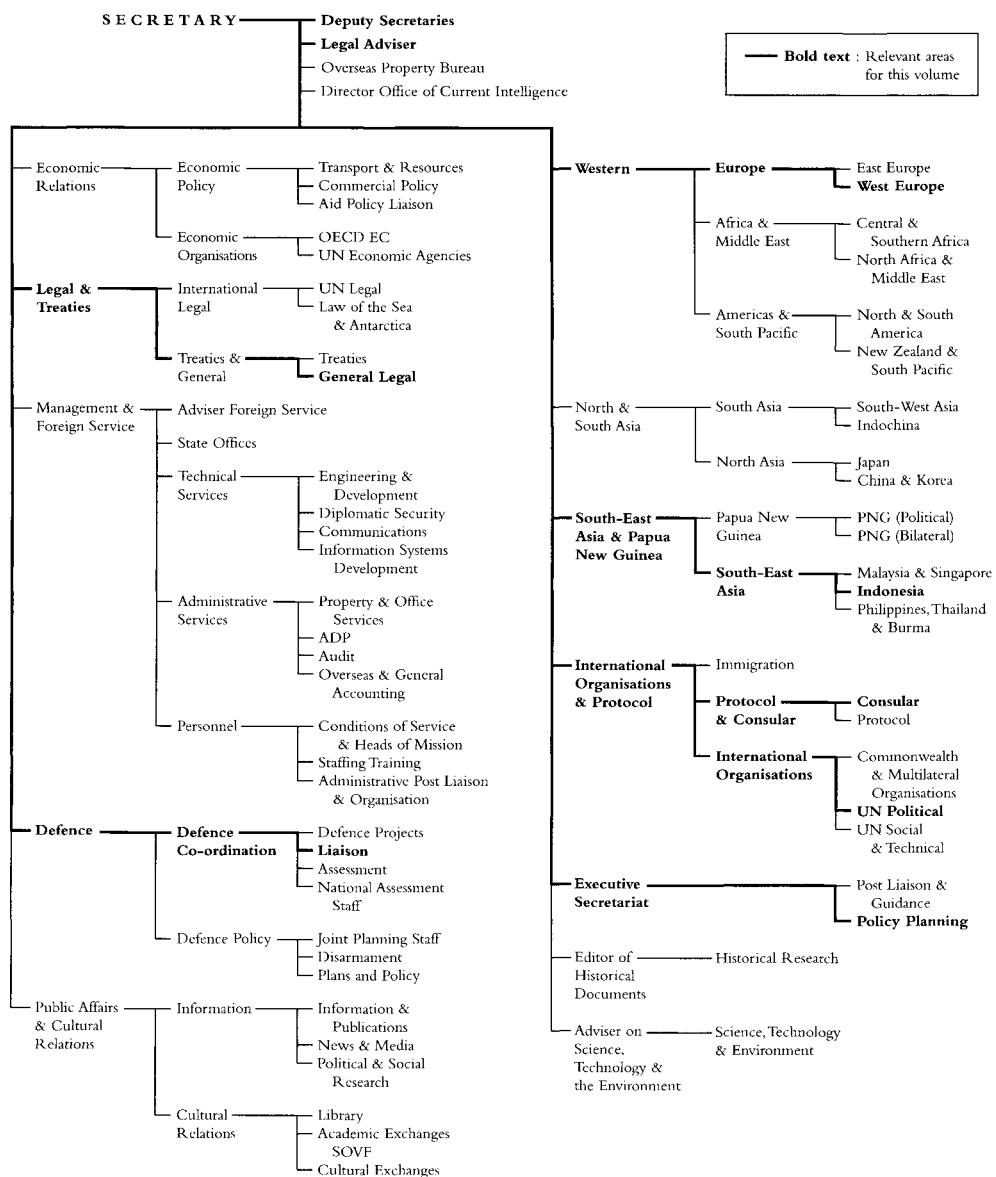
Stewart, Anthony John	Australian sound-man with the Channel 7 team at Balibo
Stone, Gerald Louis	Australian journalist; National Nine Network News Director, 1974–1976
Sudharmono, Major General	Indonesian Minister and State Secretary; Cabinet Secretary, State Secretariat; Head of the Presidential Staff
Sugama, Lieutenant General Yoga	Head, BAKIN, from 28 January 1974
Suharto	<i>see</i> Soeharto, General
Sukarno	President of Indonesia, 1945–1968
Sumitro	<i>see</i> Soemitro, Major General R.
Sunarso, Colonel	Foreign Liaison Officer, BAKIN
Surono, General	Deputy Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, from May 1974
Sutowo, Lieutenant General H. Ibnu	Director-General, Pertamina, 4 March 1972 – 5 March 1976
Sydell, Reckerby Kerridge Martin (Rex)	Australian coffee planter, Portuguese Timor
Talboys, Brian Edward	New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Overseas Trade, from 1975
Tang Ming-chao	Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonisation, United Nations, from 1974
Tange, Sir Arthur Harold	Department of Defence: Secretary, from 2 March 1970; formerly Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 1954–1965
Taolin, Luis (Louis)	OPSUS; Assistant to the Governor of Nusa Tenggara Timur
Tasning Daeng Toro, Lieutenant General H. Chaeruddin	Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, 29 May 1973 – May 1976
Taylor, Allan Robert	DFA: First Secretary, later Counsellor, Jakarta, 6 December 1974 – 21 December 1976
Teles, José Manuel Galvão	Portuguese Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York, 1975–1977
Tjan, Harry	Centre for Strategic & International Studies, Jakarta
Tomodok, Elias	Indonesian Consul, Dili

Tun Razak	<i>see</i> Abdul Razak bin Hussein, Tun Haji
Villas Boas	Deputy of Political Affairs, Portuguese Foreign Ministry
Waldheim, Dr Kurt	United Nations Secretary-General, from 1972
Wemans, Dr Carlos A. Empis	Portuguese Ambassador to Australia, 1969–1974
Whitlam, (Edward) Gough	Prime Minister of Australia, 2 December 1972 – 11 November 1975; Minister for Foreign Affairs, 2 December 1972 – 6 November 1973; Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, 5–16 March 1974, 20–26 September 1974, 31 October – 17 November 1974, 23 February – 14 March 1975, 24 March – 2 April 1975, 21–22 April 1975, and 22 August – 29 September 1975
Widodo, Lieutenant General	Commander, Military Area II, Indonesia; Soeharto's interpreter
Wilenski, Peter	Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of Australia, 1972–1974
Willesee, Don	Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 6 November 1973 – 11 November 1975
Williams, Mack Geoffrey Dennis	DFA: Head, Post Liaison and Guidance Section, 1974–1975; Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1975–1976; Assistant Secretary, Defence Policy Branch, from 1976
Winspeare Guicciardi, Vittorio	Director-General, UN Office, Geneva; Special Representative to Portuguese Timor of the UN Secretary-General, 1975–1976
Woolcott, Richard Arthur	DFA: First Assistant Secretary, South Asia Division, 1973–1974; Deputy Secretary, 1974–1975; Ambassador, Jakarta, from 3 March 1975
Xavier, Francisco	<i>see</i> Amaral, Francisco Xavier do
Yoga (Sugama)	<i>see</i> Sugama, Lieutenant General Yoga
Zaiton, Ibrahim bin Ahmad	Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia

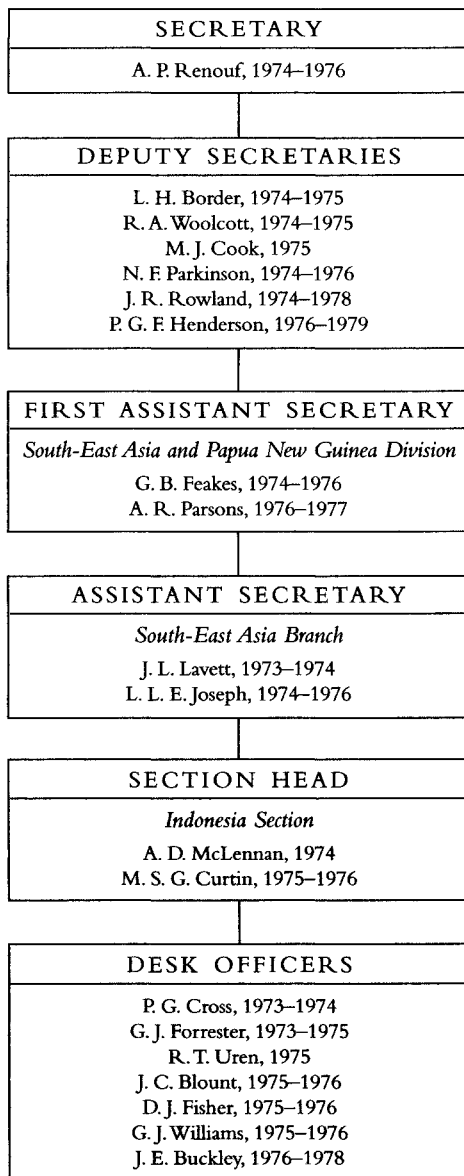
APPENDIX II

Organisational Charts

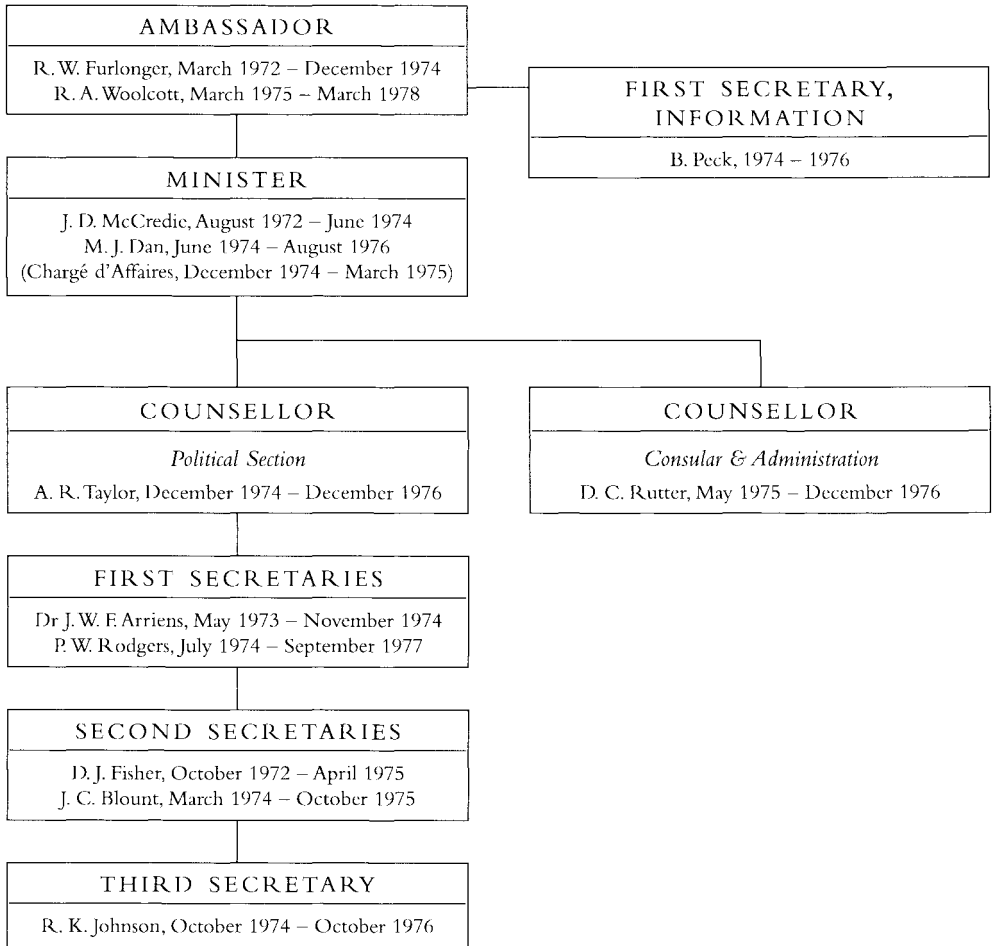
Department of Foreign Affairs, 1975



*Responsibility for Indonesia Policy, Department of Foreign Affairs,
Canberra 1974–1976*



Australian Embassy, Jakarta
(Relevant Officers, Portuguese Timor) 1974–1976

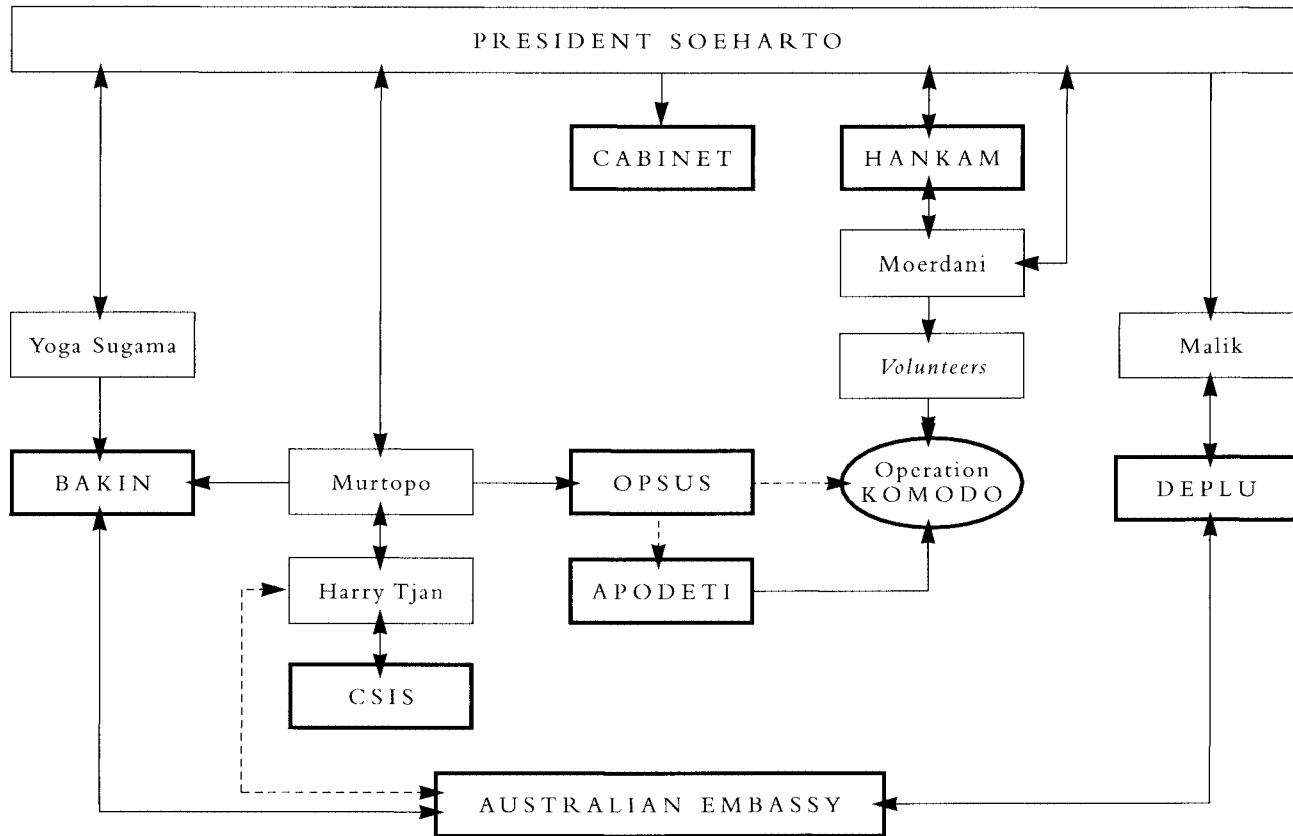


*Australian Mission to the UN, New York,
(Relevant Officers, Portuguese Timor) 1974–1976*

AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
Sir Laurence McIntyre, April 1970 – March 1975 R. L. Harry, May 1975 – July 1978
MINISTER & DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
A. D. Campbell, June 1973 – January 1976 R. D. Sturkey, August 1975 – March 1977
COUNSELLORS
L. L. E. Joseph, March 1971 – May 1974 H. C. Mott, October 1972 – September 1974 R. D. Sturkey, March 1974 – August 1975
FIRST SECRETARIES
J. B. Campbell, January 1973 – April 1976 M. S. G. Curtin, February 1973 – February 1975 G. J. Forrester, September 1975 – January 1978 A. R. Oxley, February 1976 – February 1979

Australian Embassy, Lisbon, 1974–1976

AMBASSADOR
K. T. Kelly, December 1970 – July 1974 E. B. Cooper, August 1974 – August 1977
FIRST SECRETARY
I. H. Cousins, July 1974 – April 1977
SECOND SECRETARY
S. J. D. Boyd, April 1972 – August 1974
THIRD SECRETARY
R. J. Mackay Sim, February 1974 – February 1977



KEY

→ Official lines of communication

- - -> Unofficial lines of communication

▭ Organisations

○ Individuals

APPENDIX III

The Written Records of the Department of Foreign Affairs

Official writing in the Department of Foreign Affairs occurs in various forms. The most common to be found on the files consulted in the preparation of this volume are cables, minutes, records of conversation, memorandums and submissions.

Cables

From 1943 almost all overseas telegraphic communications to and from Australian government departments were carried by the External (later Foreign) Affairs communications network. By 1975, outward messages were typed onto printed forms in preparation for delivery to the Communications Section in Canberra, or to communicators at overseas posts. Many of these original blue and pink forms remain on the policy files of posts. In Canberra the forms were retained and filed by the Communications Section. Canberra policy files may contain both earlier drafts and final teleprints from the communications system.

Cables carry identifying numbers. Before 1974 sequential numbers for all cables were allocated in Canberra, starting from number one at the beginning of each year, and prefixed by 'I' (Inwards) or 'O' (Outwards). In May 1974, with the introduction of partial computerisation, the system changed. All cables thereafter bore an 'O' prefix and a bigram denoting the transmitting post: O.CH for Canberra; O.JA for Jakarta; O.LB for Lisbon. Each post numbered its own cables sequentially as they were transmitted, no matter what the subject or destination. In June 1975 Jakarta numbers reached the limit possible with four digits and rolled back to zero; Lisbon numbers reached the limit of three digits in the same month and also rolled back. Canberra numbers continued steadily upwards through six digits.

In addition to the sequential number, cables carried a post serial number (PSN), a running number applied to cables between any two posts. In the Communications Section in Canberra copies of inwards and outwards cables were filed for each post in PSN order, allowing communicators to check easily whether all cables transmitted had been received. These volumes of cable runs have been consulted by the editors of this volume to ensure that all significant cable traffic has been located on subject files. The runs will not be included in the early release of file material associated with the publication of this volume, since only a tiny fraction of the file material therein relates to Timor. Indeed, the runs provide a salutary reminder of the volume and variety of matters routinely dealt with at overseas posts, and that the ordinary work of overseas representation goes on, no matter what difficult policy issues have to be tackled.

Computerised encoding and decoding systems became available to Canberra and to major overseas posts in 1974; they were installed in Lisbon at about the time of Cooper's arrival there as Ambassador. The new systems resulted in improved speed and accuracy of transmission. Relatively few cables required correction, and correcting cables were not numbered after 1974 as they had been previously.

Classification and priority levels were determined for each cable before transmission, and are shown on each document published in this volume. Documents were rarely classified 'Top Secret'; these, and the more common 'Secret' documents, required special filing and handling. An Immediate cable (indicated by 'II' on the cable form) would be transmitted before all other material in the queue, and out of hours if need be, while at the other end an officer of appropriate seniority would be informed immediately, no matter when the cable was

received. Priority cables ('PP') were transmitted ahead of Routine ('RR') messages, and were to be given to the appropriate officer 'on top of the pile', or first thing next working day if arriving out of hours.

Time of dispatch, using local time, is recorded on cable forms. Times of both dispatch and receipt are recorded on teleprints of the communication system. In most cases these times have not been given for cables published here as they do not necessarily provide a reliable indication of the time at which a cable came to the attention of policy officers. Exceptions have been made for cables transmitted on days when traffic was particularly heavy. Local time of dispatch has been added to these mainly to give the reader some idea of the atmosphere and pace of the situation.

As a result of normal work practices and time differences, cables tended to be sent overnight. The Embassy in Jakarta opened for business at about 7 a.m., in line with Indonesian practice, and closed at 2 p.m. Mornings were spent by political officers in making and receiving calls; all but the most urgent cables were written and dispatched after closing. Jakarta time is three hours behind AEST, so it was usual for Jakarta cables to reach Canberra in the evening. Cables from European posts, such as Lisbon, would arrive next morning. DFA officers in Canberra at the time recall that officers of the relevant units worked long hours, and would often still be at their desks when Jakarta cables arrived. As a matter of routine, communications staff in Canberra and overseas were on duty round the clock, and would contact a particular officer at home if a cable of significance arrived, whatever its formal priority.

Cables relating to the Timor issue were 'closely held' and not circulated widely between posts, within DFA or elsewhere in Canberra. The cable form provided for an address to 'Action' posts, and also for a list of other posts to which the message should be repeated for information. Cables published here are shown with the nominated 'Action' posts only, even when the text clearly instructs action to be taken by posts not so listed. Posts to which cables were to be repeated for information are not given in this volume. It can be assumed that all cables relating to Timor were seen in Canberra, Jakarta and Lisbon. Any wider distribution is usually obvious from the text.

An anomaly in the cable format was the Savingram, which was numbered as a cable, printed out in such a manner that it resembled a cable, but then carried in the diplomatic bag to posts. The format was used for long documents, mainly for information, and generally distributed to many posts. An example is published here as Document 13.

Minutes

A minute is a relatively informal communication from one officer to one or more others within the same organisation. Most commonly, but not necessarily, it goes from a more junior officer to a senior, and is handwritten or typed on a special form, which requires a subject heading, but no formal salutation. Replies and comments are usually written in the margin. Minutes are not numbered.

An anomaly is published here as Document 94. Although a communication from the head of JIO (within the Defence organisation) to the head of the Defence Department, it is addressed simultaneously to the acting head of DFA and to the Ambassador-designate to Jakarta. All copies, however, were typed on Defence Department minute paper, in minute format.

Memorandums

A memorandum is a formal communication between organisations, that is between one government department and another, or between entities within a department, for example between overseas posts and DFA Central Office in Canberra. They are delivered in the latter

case via diplomatic bags. Memorandums are typed on special paper and have a subject heading and no formal salutation. Memorandums in DFA in the period covered by this volume are numbered with a two-tier system like cables, but not always with the same care, and reference to memorandum numbers tends to be spasmodic. Separate runs were not kept, and specific memorandums referred to can be hard to locate. For these reasons, memorandum numbers have not been given in this volume.

Memorandums deal with less urgent material, and are often used as cover notes when transmitting foreign documents obtained or as a means of adding detail to matter already summarised in cables.

Submissions

Advice from departments to Ministers, whether for information or requesting decision, is presented in the form of a submission. Submissions were not numbered in the period covered by this volume. It is usual to make several copies and these may occur on policy files, as well as in separate runs on specific submission files. Submissions are expected to be limited in length (although there are some notable exceptions in this volume), but attachments are common. Separate files of ministerial submissions consulted in preparation for this volume are not in particularly good order. Attachments are not always present, and precise dates may be difficult to establish.

Submissions carry the signature of a senior officer, but usually represent the work, possibly over quite a long period, of several officers within the unit led by that officer, and sometimes by others outside it as well. The long submission of which sections are published as Documents 61 and 67, for example, was worked over at length, and was the subject of wide discussion, some of which is recorded in Documents 64 and 66.

Responses by Ministers are usually in the form of brief marginal notes on a copy of the submission itself, but could also be given verbally. It can be difficult to locate the particular copy which carries the response. Responses noted in this volume occur on the cited copy unless a footnote indicates otherwise.

Submissions are also made to Cabinet. The terms of the directive for this project preclude publication of the only DFA Cabinet submission relevant to this volume.

Briefs

A brief is a longer and more wide-ranging form of advice to Ministers, given in preparation for meetings and visits. Briefs for a particular purpose may be provided by more than one department, and from more than one source within a department. Briefs are not numbered.

Dispatches

Dispatches are occasional formal communications from Heads of Mission addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In fact these are usually dealt with by the Department (see note 1 to Document 152). Dispatches provide longer, more considered views, and range widely in subject matter. Copies of dispatches do occur on policy files, but are also kept in separate runs which constitute a separate archival series (CRS A4231). Dispatches from each post are numbered, beginning afresh from the number one each year.

Records of conversation

Accounts of meetings between Australian Ministers and/or officials with their foreign counterparts are usually recorded formally in the form of a dialogue, specifying who said what. Document 83, somewhat unusually, records a discussion between Feakes, Joseph and their Minister, Willesee.

Records of conversation are not numbered and can be written up on a form for that purpose, or, if sufficiently urgent, as a cable, as is common here with ambassadorial conversations in both Jakarta and Lisbon. It should be noted that records of all but formal high level conversations (where a designated recorder would be present) are usually made after the meeting, since note taking could inhibit discussion. A little-recognised diplomatic skill is that of recollecting and recording accurately long and complex discussions.

Letters

Formal correspondence between Ministers is always in the form of a letter.

Several personal letters between DFA officers have also been published in this volume. It is not uncommon to find, on DFA files, examples of significant discussion of public policy being carried out by means of private correspondence. These communications demonstrate the camaraderie, the common purpose and shared experiences of DFA officers.

APPENDIX IV

A Guide to Files Used in Preparation of this Volume

All files of the Department of Foreign Affairs and of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet cited or used to any significant extent in the preparation of this volume will become available to researchers in the National Archives of Australia shortly after publication of this volume. This guide is not an exhaustive list of relevant files, but an indication of those which are most useful.

Each file held by the NAA is identified by three distinct elements. The first element is the Commonwealth Record Series (CRS) number. File series created by a Commonwealth agency are allocated a CRS number of which the prefix letter indicates the state or territory of acquisition (A standing for Australian Capital Territory).

A second element is the file number. File numbers may vary in type, including the single numbers seen here in the small CRS A11443, annual single numbers as in CRS A1209, and the complex multiple numbers of CRS A1838.

The third element is the part number. Most files used in this volume run to very many parts, and part numbers are given in citations as small roman numerals.

Files have been grouped here first by series, and then, if applicable, by the unit within DFA responsible for their creation and number. An indication of the file title has been given in all cases, but readers should note that pressure of space has frequently dictated the use of abbreviations and the omission of some words. It should also be noted that titles can vary slightly from one part of the file to another. Date ranges, where given, are only approximate.

All file references should be checked against NAA databases before requesting access. The databases can be accessed through <http://www.naa.gov.au> (the NAA public website).

Files of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

CRS A1209. Correspondence files of the Prime Minister's Department, annual single number series (series date range 1957–; actual contents range 1950–)

Prime Minister's visit to Indonesia

73/6855 Sep. 1973 – Apr. 1977

74/7005 Aug. 1974 – Apr. 1977

Policy on future of Portuguese Timor

74/7573 Sep. 1974 – Feb. 1975

75/346 Feb. 1975 – Mar. 1975

75/1856 Aug. 1975 – Oct. 1975

75/1967 Sep. 1975

75/2681 Nov. 1975

76/55 Dec. 1975 – Aug. 1976 parts i–vi

Humanitarian assistance to Portuguese Timor

75/1953 Aug. 1975 – Oct. 1975

76/132 Oct. 1975 – Feb. 1978 parts i–ii

Australian journalists

75/2257 Sep. 1975 – Mar. 1976

76/564 Mar. 1976 – May 1976

Australian citizens: involvement in political or military activities

75/2258 Aug. 1975 – Sep. 1977

Files of the Department of Foreign Affairs

Most DFA files created in the period covered by this volume were given subject-classified multiple numbers. The first number indicates the main subject; subsequent numbers indicate subdivisions of that subject. These subject-related numbers generally also indicate which part of the department was responsible for particular files.

CRS A1838: Correspondence files of the Departments of External Affairs and Foreign Affairs, multiple number series (series date range 1948–1989; actual contents date range 1914–1993)

West Europe Section

49/1/3	Portugal: relations with Australia	parts v–vi
49/2/1/1	Portugal: foreign policy: Portuguese Timor (PT)	parts ii–ix

Defence Policy Branch

696/2/2/1	Defence co-operation with Indonesia	parts x–xii
696/5	Regional defence: Pacific, East and S-E Asia	parts ii–iv

UN General Section

906/30/14	UNGA 30: 4th Committee: May–Dec. 1975	part i
906/30/14/3	UNGA 30: 4th Committee: Portuguese Territories/Timor	parts i–ii
935/17/3	Anti-colonialism: PT	parts ii–iii,
xii–xix		

International Legal Branch

1490/6/36	Legal enquiries: death of Australian journalists	part i
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Protocol and Consular Branch

1520/54/1/2	Protection: PT: missing Australian journalists	parts i–iv
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South-East Asia Branch

3006/4/3	Indonesia: relations with PT	parts iv–xxi
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Indonesia Section

3034/10/1/8	Indonesia: relations with Australia	parts iv–v
3034/10/6/9	Australian representation in Indonesia: dispatches	part i
3034/10/11/24	Visit to Indonesia by Prime Minister	parts ii–iii

South-East Asia Branch

3038/1/1	PT: general	parts i–iii
3038/2/1	PT: political: general	parts iv–xvii
3038/7/1	PT: external relations	parts i–xv
3038/9/1	PT: relations with United Nations	part ii
3038/9/1/1	PT: relations with UN: Security Council	part i
3038/10/1	PT: relations with and policy towards	parts iA, v–xx, xxvii–xlvi*

TS3038/10/1	PT: relations with and policy towards	
3038/10/1/2	Submissions to Ministers and briefs on PT	parts i–v

* Parts xxi, xxii, xxv and xxvi of this file are missing. See Introduction, p. 12.

3038/10/1/7	East Timor: Prime Ministerial letters to President Soeharto	part i
3038/10/12/4	Australian interests in Timor: Australian journalists	parts i–v
3038/10/15	Australian aid to PT	parts i–ii, iv
3038/11/64	PT: cables from Lisbon	annex
3038/13/2/1 [†]	Indonesia/PT: political: general	parts i, xii–xiv
TS3038/13/2/1	Indonesia/PT: political: general	part i
3038/13/10/14	PT: relations with Australia: aid	part i
3038/13/12/4	PT: relations with Australia: missing Australian journalists	parts i–ii

CRS A2539: Master set of departmental briefs for, and reports on, international official talks, ministerial visits etc., annual single number series with 'B' [Brief] prefix (series date and contents range 1920–)

Background papers and briefing notes for Australian visits to Indonesia

B74/68	September 1974
B74/69	September 1974
B74/70	September 1974
B74/76	December 1974
B75/66	March 1975
B76/70	April 1976

CRS A10005: Correspondence files, multiple number series (first uniform post system) (Lisbon) (series date range 1970–1974; actual contents range 1969–1982)

Portuguese Timor: negotiations and constitutional developments

TS202/1/1	Annex 1A, 1B, 2,3,4
202/1/3	parts i–xxi, xxiii, xxviii, xxx–xxxi, xxxiii, xli–xliii, xlvi [‡]

CRS A10463: Correspondence files, multiple number series (second uniform post system) (Djakarta/Jakarta) (series date range 1975–; actual contents range 1971–)

East Timor

801/13/11/1	parts i–xxv
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Balibo affair

801/13/11/5	parts i–ii
-------------	------------

Whitlam visit to Indonesia

828/4/1	part ii
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CRS A11443: Papers kept loose, presumably by the South-East Asia Branch

[1]	Portuguese Timor: July–September 1974
[2]	PM's discussions with President Soeharto: September 1974
[3]	PM's discussions with President Soeharto: April 1975
[5]	Discussion with Almeida Santos: September 1975
[6]	R. A. Woolcott: personal letters, 1975
[10]	Private letters on East Timor (Mr Feakes and Mr Parsons): 1974–1978
[11]	Policy, special documents, cables and correspondence
[14]	Timor: caveat material: 1974–1976

[†] Files numbered 3038/13/. . . were created as 'temporary' files by the registry in Canberra when the South-East Asia Branch ceased placing Timor material on regular files. See Introduction, p. 12.

[‡] Parts xxii, xxiv–xxvii, xxix, xxxii, xxxiv–xl, and xlv–xlv were destroyed in July 1993 on the grounds of duplication.

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S		6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24		31	3	10	17	24		7	14	21	28		
M		7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25			4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29	
Tu	1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26			5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23	30	
W	2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27			6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24		
Th	3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28			7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25		
F	4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22			1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26		
S	5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23			2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27		
MAY						JUNE						JULY						AUGUST					
S		5	12	19	26	30	2	9	16	23			7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25		
M		6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26		
Tu		7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27		
W	1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28		
Th	2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29		
F	3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23	30		
S	4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24	31		
SEPTEMBER						OCTOBER						NOVEMBER						DECEMBER					
S	1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27			3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29	
M	2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28			4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30	
Tu	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29			5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31	
W	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30			6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25		
Th	5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31			7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26		
F	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25			1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27		
S	7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26			2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28		

1975

JANUARY					FEBRUARY					MARCH					APRIL				
S	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	2	9	16	23	6	13	20	27		
M	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31	3	10	17	24	7	14	21	28		
Tu	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29		
W	1	8	15	22	5	12	19	26	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30		
Th	2	9	16	23	6	13	20	27	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24			
F	3	10	17	24	7	14	21	28	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25			
S	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	5	12	19	26			
MAY					JUNE					JULY					AUGUST				
S	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	31	3	10	17	24	
M	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25		
Tu	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26		
W	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27		
Th	1	8	15	22	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28		
F	2	9	16	23	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29	
S	3	10	17	24	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23	30	
SEPTEMBER					OCTOBER					NOVEMBER					DECEMBER				
S	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	30	2	9	16	23	7	14	21	28		
M	1	8	15	22	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22	29		
Tu	2	9	16	23	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30		
W	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31		
Th	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25			
F	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26			
S	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	6	13	20	27			

1976**JANUARY**

S 4 11 18 25
M 5 12 19 26
Tu 6 13 20 27
W 7 14 21 28
Th 1 8 15 22 29
F 2 9 16 23 30
S 3 10 17 24 31

MAY

S 30 2 9 16 23
M 31 3 10 17 24
Tu 4 11 18 25
W 5 12 19 26
Th 6 13 20 27
F 7 14 21 28
S 1 8 15 22 29

SEPTEMBER

S 5 12 19 26
M 6 13 20 27
Tu 7 14 21 28
W 1 8 15 22 29
Th 2 9 16 23 30
F 3 10 17 24
S 4 11 18 25

FEBRUARY

1 8 15 22 29
2 9 16 23
3 10 17 24
4 11 18 25
5 12 19 26
6 13 20 27
7 14 21 28

JUNE

6 13 20 27
7 14 21 28
1 8 15 22 29
2 9 16 23 30
3 10 17 24
4 11 18 25
5 12 19 26

OCTOBER

31 3 10 17 24
4 11 18 25
5 12 19 26
6 13 20 27
7 14 21 28
1 8 15 22 29
2 9 16 23 30

MARCH

7 14 21 28
1 8 15 22 29
2 9 16 23 30
3 10 17 24 31
4 11 18 25
5 12 19 26
6 13 20 27

JULY

4 11 18 25
5 12 19 26
6 13 20 27
7 14 21 28
1 8 15 22 29
2 9 16 23 30
3 10 17 24 31

NOVEMBER

7 14 21 28
1 8 15 22 29
2 9 16 23 30
3 10 17 24
4 11 18 25
5 12 19 26
6 13 20 27

APRIL

4 11 18 25
5 12 19 26
6 13 20 27
7 14 21 28
1 8 15 22 29
2 9 16 23 30
3 10 17 24

AUGUST

1 8 15 22 29
2 9 16 23 30
3 10 17 24 31
4 11 18 25
5 12 19 26
6 13 20 27
7 14 21 28

DECEMBER

5 12 19 26
6 13 20 27
7 14 21 28
1 8 15 22 29
2 9 16 23 30
3 10 17 24 31
4 11 18 25