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EXDIS; FOR AMBASSADOR FROM HOLBROOKE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, SHUM, ID, PT, AS

SUBJECT: TIMOR

REF: STATE 61228

1. AS YOU KNOW FROM OUR REPORTING OF THE CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS (REFTEL), DUNN'S ALLEGATIONS OF INDONESIAN ATROCITIES IN EAST TIMOR ATTRACTED CONSIDERABLE CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC INTEREST HERE. AFTER CAREFUL REVIEW OF ALL INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US -- INCLUDING THOSE REPORTS PROVIDED BY THE AUSTRALIANS -- WE HAVE STATED PUBLICLY THAT DUNN'S ALLEGATION APPEAR HIGHLY EXAGGERATED. WE HAVE ALSO SAID THAT THE LEVEL OF HOSTILITIES IN TIMOR HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED, DURING PAST YEAR, LARGELY AS A RESULT OF INDONESIAN

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: DONALD A JOHNSTON
DATE/CASE ID: 15 DEC 2003 200301988

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RESTRAINT. WE HAVE AFFIRMED PUBLICLY OUR ACCEPTANCE OF GOI CONTROL OF TIMOR AND WE HVE EMPHASIZED TO CONGRESS OUR SUPPORT FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE (BOTH FMS AND MAP) TO INDONESIA THIS YEAR AT REQUESTED LEVELS.

2. THE POSITION WE HAVE TAKEN, BASED ON OUR PERCEPTION OF THE SITUATION, HAS BEEN HELPFUL TO THE INDONESIANS IN RESPONDING TO CRITICISM BASED ON DUNN'S ALLEGATIONS. WE BELIEVE IT IS NOW VERY IMPORTANT THAT INDONESIA NOW TAKE

INITIATIVES ON ITS OWN TO EASE THE TIMOR SITUATION AND TO IMPROVE ITS GENERAL INTERNATIONAL IMAGE REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS.

3. YOU SHOULD SEEK AN APPOINTMENT AT MOST EFFEC-TIVE LEVEL FOR DISCUSSION IN SOME DEPTH OF THE TIMOR PROBLEM IN THE WAKE OF THE CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS. YOU SHOULD STRESS THE HELPFUL STAND WE TOOK, NOTING THAT THIS STEMMED BOTH FROM OUR BELIEF THAT THE CHARGES AGAINST INDONESIA WERE EXAGGERATED AND FROM THE IMPOR-TANCE THE ADMINISTRATION PLACES ON GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA.

4. INDONESIAN EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE THE USE OF US EQUIP-MENT AND REDUCE THE LEVEL OF HOSTILITIES IN TIMOR HAVE BEEN HELPFUL IN PRESENTING OUR CASE FOR INDONESIAN SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO CONGRESS AND THE US PUBLIC. WHILE NOT ADVISING THE GOI HOW TO CONDUCT ITS MILITARY OPERATIONS IN TIMOR, IT SHOULD BE EVIDENT TO GOI THAT US AND WORLD OPINION HAVE OBVIOUSLY BEEN SENSITIZED TO THE TIMOR SITUATION AND A MAJOR FLARE-UP IN MILITARY ACTIVITY WOULD QUICKLY BECOME WIDELY KNOWN AND WOULD KINDLE STRONG CRITICISM OF GOI IN US AND ELSEWHERE. THIS COULD BE SERIOUSLY DETRIMENTAL TO OUR MILITARY AID PROGRAMS.

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5. YOU SHOULD SAY THAT WE BELIEVE THE GOI, AS A RE-SULT OF THE HEARINGS, HAS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO TURN FOREIGN PUBLIC OPINION AROUND ON THE TIMOR QUESTION AND IMPROVE ITS GENERAL IMAGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. AS SUHARTO AND OTHER TOP GOI OFFICIALS KNOW, THIS IS AN ISSUE ABOUT WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER PERSONALLY

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AND USG FEEL VERY STRONGLY. A PUBLIC INDONESIAN CALL NOW FOR A CEASE-FIRE IN TIMOR AND AN OFFER OF AMNESTY, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD BE ESPECIALLY WELL RECEIVED ABROAD. ALLOWING ICRC TO VISIT IS ANOTHER ACT WHICH WOULD BE WELL RECEIVED, AND ONE WHICH USG IS A RECORD WITH CONGRESS AS SUPPORTING. THIS COULD ALSO EASE PRESSURE FOR ANOTHER UN INVESTIGATION.

6. IN DISCUSSING THIS, YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT FOR MANY FOREIGNERS ONE OF DUNN'S MOST DISTURBING ALLEGATIONS WAS THE CHARGE THAT INDONESIAN FORCES DO NOT TAKE PRISONERS BUT KILL THEM ON THE SPOT WHEN THEY CAPTURE THEM. YOU MIGHT REMIND THEM THAT THE QUESTION OF TREATMENT OF POW'S IS ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE IN THE US BECAUSE OF OUR VIETNAM EXPERIENCE. WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO SAY AUTHORITATIVELY THAT IT IS NOT THE PRACTICE OR THE POLICY OF THE INDONESIAN FORCES TO KILL PRISONERS.

7. FINALLY, BOTH INDONESIAN EMBOFFS AND LIM BIAN KIE HAVE TOLD US THAT THE TWO COLONELS ON LOAN FROM MURDANI'S STAFF WHO ACCOMPANIED THE TIMORESE WITNESSES TO WASHINGTON WERE UPSET THAT USG WITNESSES ACKNOWLEDGED DURING THE HEARINGS THE OPEN INTERVENTION OF INDONESIAN TROOPS (INCLUDING PARATROOPERS) IN EAST TIMOR FROM DECEMBER 7, 1975. THEY REPORTEDLY COMPLAINED THAT WE WERE VIOLATING A CONFIDENCE FROM GENERAL MURDANI. WE HAVE TOLD INDONESIANS HERE THAT USG CANNOT DENY OVERT INDONESIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION. IT IS A FACT AND USG HAS ITS OWN INFORMATION TO THIS EFFECT. MOREOVER, SINCE

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DEPARTMENT'S LETTER OF DECEMBER 16, 1975 TO SENATOR HART WE HAVE BEEN ON RECORD AS CONFIRMING THAT BOTH INDONESIAN TROOPS AND US EQUIPMENT WERE USED IN THE DECEMBER 7 INTERVENTION. THAT IS WHY USG TOOK ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION TO DELAY NEW MILITARY ASSISTANCE BETWEEN DEC 75 AND JUNE 76. WE BELIEVE INDONESIA LOSES CREDIBILITY AND TIMORESE WITNESSES CONSIDERABLY UNDERCUT THEIR OWN TESTIMONY BY TRYING TO DENY THIS WIDELY KNOWN AND IRREFUTABLE FACT. WE RECOGNIZE THAT IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR GOI TO REVERSE PUBLICLY ITS POSITION BUT IT IS NOT ONE THAT WE COULD EVER CONSIDER BECAUSE THE FACTS ARE OTHERWISE.

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8. IN COURSE OF THIS DISCUSSION, YOU SHOULD ALSO INDICATE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO CONTINUED PROGRESS IN RELEASING THE PRISONERS REMAINING FROM THE 1965 COUP ATTEMPT. AT THE MINIMUM, WE HOPE ADMIRAL SUDOMO'S SCHEDULE WILL BE MET AND, IF POSSIBLE, EXCEEDED. IN BOTH THIS CONTEXT AND IN DISCUSSING TIMOR, YOU WILL WANT TO REMIND GOI OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S STRONG VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AS EXPRESSED IN HIS MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO.
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