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PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA · THE SENATE

GORDON D. McINTOSH
SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENT OFFICES
ST. MARTIN'S CENTRE
44 ST. GEORGE'S TERRACE
PERTH, W.A. 6000
(G.P.O. BOX B58, PERTH, W.A. 6001)
TELEPHONE 3254116

30.1.1986

Prime Minister,
Anibal Cavaco Silva,
Palacio de Sao Bento,
LISBON. PORTUGAL.

Dear Prime Minister,

We, as Federal Parliamentarians of the Australian Labor Party, would like to inform your Government of our continuing interest and concern about the question of East Timor.

We were pleased to learn of the comments of President Eanes at the United Nations, on October 24th, 1985, in which he declared Portugal would act to guarantee the rights of the East Timorese until they actually exercise the right of self-determination.

Similarly, we were encouraged by media reports that the new Portuguese Parliament unanimously endorsed, on December 6th, 1985, a pledge to support increased Portuguese diplomacy directed towards "a just settlement in line with the norms of international law and the Portuguese Constitution."

We feel very strongly that it is only through your Government's continued active and positive diplomacy that the rights of the East Timorese will remain on the international agenda. As 1986 will be a crucial year for East Timor in terms of international diplomacy, we are anxious to learn of your Government's proposed initiatives on the matter.

Specifically, we would be very interested to hear your Government's views on the following:-

A. The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Mochtar, reportedly told an Indonesian Parliamentary Committee on November 14th that Portugal was moving towards recognising Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.

While Dr. Mochtar's claim contradicts our knowledge of Portugal's position, we are not aware of a specific response from Lisbon to his statement.

2.

B. Dr. Mochtar was also reported to have said that Portugal was opposed to Fretilin participation in talks under UN auspices.

As we see it, there can be no just and lasting solution if it does not reflect the views and aspirations of the East Timorese themselves. We feel very strongly that East Timorese should participate in the UN talks process.

On the specific question of Fretilin, as referred to by Dr. Mochtar, it is our understanding that Fretilin does not claim to be the sole representative of the Timorese and, indeed, the resistance organisation includes nationalists with different views. However, Fretilin has clearly played the major role in organised resistance to the annexation and therefore should be part of any East Timorese representation at international talks concerned with East Timor's future.

C. We are aware that the Indonesian Government has devoted many resources over the years to persuade other countries to withdraw their support for East Timorese self-determination at the United Nations.

We would be pleased to learn whether your Government has considered approaching other Governments, especially in the European and Asian regions, which have consistently supported the principle of self-determination, and asking them to take a higher profile in support of the United Nations talk process?

D. You will be aware that our Labor Party policy calls on the Australian Labor Government to give active support to international initiatives that have the aim of achieving a settlement of the Timor problem and says, specifically, the Government should support the efforts of the UN Secretary-General to bring about a solution.

A statement by your Government indicating positive moves that other Governments could take to support the United Nations talk process, would certainly assist us in formulating requests for action to our Government in line with our Party's policy on the issue.

3.

We are aware of the difficulties confronting attempts by your Government to defend the basic right of the East Timorese to genuine self-determination. Please be assured that we will give every assistance we can to ensure a positive Australian contribution to any international diplomacy concerned with the future of the East Timorese.

This letter has been endorsed by:

Senator Gordon McIntosh, Senator for Western Australia
Senator Olive Zakharov, Senator for Victoria
Mr. Peter Milton, Member for La Trobe, Victoria
Senator Nick Bolkus, Senator for South Australia
Mr. Tony Lamb, Member for Streeton, Victoria
Senator Ted Robertson, Senator for the Northern Territory
Hon. Peter Duncan, Member for Makin, South Australia
Senator George Georges, Senator for Queensland
Senator Bruce Childs, Senator for New South Wales
Ms. Wendy Fatin, Member for Brand, Western Australia
Mr. John Langmore, Member for Fraser, A.C.T.
Mr. Peter Staples, Member for Jagajaga, Victoria
Senator Jim McKiernan, Senator for Western Australia
Dr. Andrew Theophanous, Member for Calwell, Victoria
Mr. Allen Blanchard, Member for Moore, Western Australia
Senator Ruth Coleman, Senator for Western Australia
Mr. John Scott, Member for Hindmarsh, South Australia
Senator Margaret Reynolds, Senator for Queensland
Mr. Lewis Kent, Member for Hotham, Victoria
Mr. Graeme Campbell, Member for Kalgoorlie, Western Australia
Mrs. Carolyn Jakobsen, Member for Cowan, Western Australia
Mr. Peter Baldwin, Member for Sydney, New South Wales
Mr. Colin Hollis, Member for Throsby, New South Wales
Mr. John Saunderson, Member for Aston, Victoria
Senator Barney Cooney, Senator for Victoria
Senator Ray Devlin, Senator for Tasmania
Senator John Coates, Senator for Tasmania
Senator Patricia Giles, Senator for Western Australia
Senator Michael Tate, Senator for Tasmania
Mr. Robert Tickner, Member for Hughes, New South Wales
Ms. Jeannette McHugh, Member for Phillip, New South Wales
Mr. Jim Snow, Member for Eden-Monaro, New South Wales
Mr. Gerry Hand, Member for Melbourne, Victoria.

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE ABOVENAMED,

GORDON D. McINTOSH.

**PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA · THE SENATE**

GORDON D. McINTOSH
SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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(G.P.O. BOX B58, PERTH, W.A. 6001)
TELEPHONE 3254116

5th May, 1986.

Dear Colleague,

Re: THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT AND EAST TIMOR.

Please find enclosed copy of a reply from the Portuguese Prime Minister to our letter of the 30th January, 1986, (copy attached).

The nature of the response leads me to believe the exercise was certainly worthwhile - the Government has clearly noted our interest and concern. I was particularly struck by part 'D' of the reply and draw it to your attention.

The question remains; what do we do with this exchange? You might recall that our Government claimed in the House and Senate on August 22nd last year that Australian recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor has not hindered the "Portuguese ability to seek a settlement of the problem".

I feel, that as this question will arise as a matter of public debate before and during the July National Conference, that the information of the Portuguese Government's response should be made public here. The simplest way to do this would be to release the text of the exchange to the media.

If you have any opposition to these ideas or further suggestions, I would be pleased if you could contact me.

Yours sincerely,

GORDON D. McINTOSH.
Senator for Western Australia.



PRESIDÊNCIA DO CONSELHO DE MINISTROS
Gabinete do Primeiro Ministro

Lisbon, March 19, 1986

Dear Senator McIntosh

I have the honour of acknowledging receipt of your letter dated the 30th of January 1986 on the question of East Timor. In this respect I would like to assure you that the Portuguese Government carries on with its efforts to achieve a just and dignified solution for this problem.

Perhaps I could quote the Programme of the Government in what concerns East Timor:

"As it is its duty, the Government will do everything with the view of finding a global solution to the problem of East Timor; namely by giving its full support to the mandate of the Secretary General of the United Nations and favouring the continuation of the ongoing contacts under his auspices.

The establishment of conditions allowing the timorese people to exercise its right to self-determination, the preservation of its specific ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity, and the improvement of the humanitarian situation in the territory, are objectives of the Government."

His Excellency
Senator for Western Australia
Gordon D. McIntosh



With reference to your questions I would like to inform you of the following:

- a) when the statements that you refer to, made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Prof. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, were known in Lisbon, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs issued the following press release on the 14th of November 1985:

"As it is known, the Portuguese authorities act within the framework of the United Nations, and within the scope of the specific mandate of its Secretary General. This action aims at the achievement of a global solution to the question of East Timor. For Portugal, the aspects relating to the respect for the right of the timorese people to a dignified and prosperous life are particularly sensitive.

Regarding this question it is appropriate to bear in mind the addresses recently made by His Excellency the President of the Republic and the Minister for Foreign Affairs before the General Assembly of the United Nations."

- b) Concerning the participation of Fretilin, it should be recalled that the ongoing talks in New York were the initiative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, to whom a mandate was given by the General Assembly, to seek avenues for a global solution to the problem of East Timor. Therefore, it is within the Secretary General's competence to decide which entities should participate in the ongoing talks in New York.



Gabinete do Primeiro Ministro

- c) The Portuguese Government has developed in the past years an intense diplomatic activity towards the solution to the problem of Timor, trying to interest in the matter all States and other entities that might, in some way, contribute to that solution. The Portuguese Government has been seeking in particular international supports for the ongoing negotiation process.
- d) We would like to thank the Labour Party for its efforts aimed at supporting the international initiatives that might contribute for a solution to the problem of Timor. However, we consider that the statements of Prime Minister Hawke affirming that Australia recognizes the sovereignty of Indonesia over East Timor, as well as the understanding between the Australian Government and Djakarta over the exploitation of "Timor Gap" oil, do not contribute at present to facilitate the resolution of this question.

I remain at your disposal for any other issues concerning the problem of Timor. In the meantime, I would like to assure you my highest consideration.

Aníbal A. Cavaco Silva
Prime Minister of Portugal