

SPEECH BY SENATOR GORDON D. McINTOSH  
TO THE FOURTH COMMITTEE ON DE-COLONISATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

"EAST TIMOR"

8TH NOVEMBER, 1982

MR. CHAIRMAN

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

I WISH TO THANK THE FOURTH COMMITTEE FOR GRANTING ME THIS HEARING ON THE QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR.

TODAY I SPEAK, NOT IN MY CAPACITY AS A SENATOR OF THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT, BUT RATHER AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN AND ADVOCATE OF THOUSANDS OF AUSTRALIANS WHO BELIEVE THAT THE PEOPLE OF EAST TIMOR HAVE THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN DESTINY.

I ALSO CARRY A PETITION FROM 96% OF MY PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY COLLEAGUES WHICH EXPRESSES THEIR CONCERN AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR AND REQUESTS SUPPORT IN THE UNITED NATIONS TO UPHOLD THE RIGHT OF THE EAST TIMORESE PEOPLE TO A GENUINE ACT OF SELF DETERMINATION.

I ALSO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF MY SPONSORS, THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR OVERSEAS AID, TIMORESE COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA/EAST TIMOR ASSOCIATION AND R.A.F.T.

IN ABOUT FOUR WEEKS IT WILL BE EXACTLY SEVEN YEARS SINCE INDONESIAN FORCES LAUNCHED A MAJOR ASSAULT ON DILI, THE CAPITAL OF THE PORTUGUESE COLONY OF EAST TIMOR. THAT ATTACK WAS FOLLOWED BY YEARS OF BITTER FIGHTING AS THE TIMORESE PEOPLE, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FRETELIN MOVEMENT, WHO ALONE TRIED DESPERATELY TO PREVENT AN ACT OF ANNEXATION WHICH WAS TO OCCUR IN BLATANT DENIAL OF BASIC PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER.

FROM THE MOUNTING EVIDENCE WHICH HAS EMERGED FROM EAST TIMOR DURING THE PAST YEARS, INDONESIA'S MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE TIMORESE PEOPLE, IN ORDER TO FORCE THEM TO ACCEPT INTEGRATION, HAVE COST SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 100,000 AND 200,000 LIVES,.... ALL THIS OUT OF A POPULATION OF ABOUT 600,000.

THEREFORE, THIS QUESTION WHICH IS AGAIN BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS NOT JUST ANOTHER DENIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS, IT IS A TRAGEDY OF CATASTROPHIC PROPORTIONS INVOLVING THE RIGHTS OF A PEOPLE, WHICH, IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, SHOULD NOT BE ABANDONED BY THIS WORLD ORGANISATION,

BEFORE TURNING TO THE CURRENT SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR, AND TO THE EVENTS SINCE THE INVASION, I SHOULD LIKE TO REFER BRIEFLY TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH INDONESIA BEGAN HER ACT OF AGGRESSION. AS A MEMBER OF A GROUP OF FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARIANS WHO VISITED EAST TIMOR EARLY IN 1975, I WAS ABLE TO STUDY THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND, AND TO SATISFY MYSELF THAT THE TIMORESE PEOPLE, APART FROM A TINY GROUP OF SUPPORTERS OF THE PRO-INTEGRATION PARTY, APODETI, WERE TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE IDEA OF BEING INCORPORATED INTO INDONESIA,

IT WAS CLEAR TO THOSE OF US WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE MISSION WHICH HELD TALKS WITH ALL POLITICAL PARTIES AND WITH THE PORTUGUESE OFFICIALS THEMSELVES, THAT ULTIMATE INDEPENDENCE WAS THE GOAL OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF TIMORESE,

THIS MANIFESTED ITSELF TO US IN THE PUBLIC MEETINGS THAT OUR DELEGATION HELD IN DILI, WHERE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TURNED OUT INTO THE SQUARE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND PROUDLY SHOW THE WORK THAT THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES WERE UNDERTAKING TOWARDS

THE WHOLE PROCESS OF DE-COLONISATION.

THE EAST TIMORESE CLAIMED AT THAT TIME, THAT IT WOULD TAKE FIVE TO SEVEN YEARS TO COMPLETE THIS PROCESS, WHEREAS THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNOR PIRES, WITH WHOM WE ALSO HAD DISCUSSIONS, SAID THAT TWO TO THREE YEARS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT BUT, IF THE PARTIES REQUIRED MORE TIME, THEN THERE WOULD CERTAINLY BE A REVIEW OF THE TIMING.

THE ENTHUSIASM AND THE EXCITEMENT AMONGST THE PORTUGUESE AND THE TIMORESE PEOPLE FOR A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT WAS VERY OBVIOUS TO US, NOT ONLY IN DILI, BUT ALSO IN THE VILLAGES THAT EACH MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION VISITED.

IT WAS ALSO CLEAR THAT, AS EARLY AS THE TIME OF OUR VISIT, INDONESIAN SUBVERSIVE FORCES WERE IN ACTION, WITH THE OBVIOUS AIM OF DESTABILISING THE SITUATION IN ORDER TO PROMOTE QUITE ILLEGALLY AND IMPROPERLY, A JUSTIFICATION FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION.

BASED ON MY PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS, AS WELL AS MY EXPERIENCE AS A MEMBER OF AN AUSTRALIAN SENATE COMMITTEE WHICH IS CURRENTLY ENQUIRING INTO THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR, I SHOULD LIKE TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE GENERAL SITUATION AT THAT TIME, ESPECIALLY IN THE LIGHT OF ATTEMPTS TO COMPARE LIFE UNDER THE LAST YEARS OF PORTUGUESE RULE UNFAVOURABLY WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION.

THE PORTUGUESE COLONIAL SYSTEM MAY HAVE HAD LITTLE TO COMMEND

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IT, BUT BY EARLY 1975 THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IN EAST TIMOR HAD CHANGED QUITE RADICALLY. THE TRADITIONAL COLONIAL RESTRAINTS ON POLITICAL FREEDOM, HAD LONG BEEN REMOVED AND THE TIMORESE WERE ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENGAGING IN FREE POLITICAL ACTIVITY.

I SHOULD ALSO LIKE TO MAKE THE POINT THAT, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN UDT AND FRETELIN, BOTH OF THESE PARTIES SHARED THE COMMON GOAL OF ULTIMATE INDEPENDENCE. INDEED, IF INDONESIA HAD NOT CARRIED OUT A CONSTANT CAMPAIGN OF MEDDLING AND SUBVERSION, A COMMON PROGRAMME ON THE QUESTION OF DE-COLONISATION AND INDEPENDENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE, AND THE UDT COUP AND THE CIVIL WAR COULD HAVE BEEN AVERTED.

BRIEFLY, I SHOULD LIKE TO EMPHASISE THAT THERE WAS NEVER ANY BASIS TO INDONESIA'S CLAIM THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE TIMORESE PEOPLE DESIRED INTEGRATION.

NOTHING COULD HAVE BEEN FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH, AS THE SUBSEQUENT BITTER OPPOSITION TO INDONESIA'S ANNEXATION OF THE COLONY HAS DEMONSTRATED. NOR WAS THERE EVER ANY BASIS FOR INDONESIA'S ALLEGED FEARS THAT EAST TIMOR WOULD PROVE A THREAT TO HER SECURITY.

THERE WAS NO SOVIET, CHINESE, VIETNAMESE, OR AMERICAN INTERVENTION, OR EVEN INTEREST IN EAST TIMOR. IRONICALLY, EAST TIMOR WAS TOO UNIMPORTANT, TOO REMOTE, TO ATTRACT THE INTERESTS OF OUTSIDE POWERS.

LET ME NOW TURN TO THE EVENTS SINCE THE INVASION.

THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO THE SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR HAS NOW COMPLETED ITS HEARINGS, AND WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HEAR THE ACCOUNTS AND TESTIMONY OF A WIDE RANGE OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING MANY

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TIMORESE WHO HAVE HAD EXPERIENCE OF THE INDONESIAN INVASION AND OCCUPATION.

SUBMISSIONS IN SUPPORT OF SELF DETERMINATION CAME FROM SUCH AUGUST BODIES AS THE AUSTRALIAN SECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS... THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA... THE APEX CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA... AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL... THE WATERSIDE WORKERS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA... THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM... JUST TO NAME A FEW.

THE COMMITTEE RECEIVED A TOTAL OF TWO HUNDRED AND NINETEEN SUBMISSIONS FROM AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS, WE HEARD EVIDENCE FROM THIRTEEN INDIVIDUALS AND FOURTEEN ORGANISATIONS, IN PUBLIC, AND THIRTY NINE INDIVIDUALS AND FOUR ORGANISATIONS IN-CAMERA.

THE EVENTS OF THE PAST SEVEN YEARS REVEAL VERY CLEARLY THAT THE INCORPORATION OF EAST TIMOR BY INDONESIA WAS IN VIOLATION OF A NUMBER OF PRINCIPLES WHICH ARE OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE TO CIVILISED RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES AT THIS TIME IN WORLD HISTORY.

I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED THAT THE SEIZURE OF EAST TIMOR BY FORCE WAS TOTALLY WITHOUT JUSTIFICATION. IT WAS ALSO COMPLETELY ILLEGAL, AS HAS REPEATEDLY BEEN STATED TO THIS COMMITTEE, BY PETITIONERS, INCLUDING DISTINGUISHED INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS LIKE PROFESSOR ROGER CLARK, HAVING ATTACKED EAST TIMOR WITH ITS ARMED FORCES, AND COMPLETELY WITHOUT PROVOCATION, THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEFY THE SECURITY COUNCIL, AND TO IGNORE THE ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS, WHICH HAVE AGAIN AND AGAIN REAFFIRMED THE RIGHTS OF THE TIMORESE TO SELF DETERMINATION.

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INDONESIA HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN THIS ATTITUDE OF DEFIANCE BECAUSE OF THE COMPLIANT ATTITUDES OF GOVERNMENTS OF NATIONS LIKE THE UNITED STATES, JAPAN AND AUSTRALIA, AND THE LACK OF INTEREST IN THE SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR WHICH CONTINUES TO PREVAIL IN MOST OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. SINCE THE INVASION, NO DOUBT ENCOURAGED BY THE FAILURE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD TO BRING REAL PRESSURE TO BEAR, INDONESIA HAS PERSISTED WITH A DISTORTED AND FALSE PRESENTATION OF THE SITUATION WITHIN THE TERRITORY.

FOR EXAMPLE, ACCORDING TO SOME OF THE TIMORESE WHO PARTICIPATED IN IT, THE SO-CALLED ACT OF INTEGRATION WAS NOTHING LESS THAN AN ACT OF DECEPTION, A DEVICE IMPOSED ON THE TIMORESE PEOPLE WHICH, IN TERMS OF THEIR REAL FEELINGS, WAS QUITE MEANINGLESS.

FOR YEARS AFTER INDONESIA'S INVASION, EAST TIMOR WAS THE SCENE OF INTENSE MILITARY OPERATIONS WHICH WERE DESIGNED TO CRUSH THE BITTER RESISTANCE TO INTEGRATION. THESE MILITARY OPERATIONS CONTINUED IN LARGE SCALE UNTIL THE END OF 1979 WHEN FRETELIN'S MILITARY POWER WAS CONSIDERABLY WEAKENED, FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF THEIR DETERMINED LEADER NICOLAU LOBATO.

THESE WERE YEARS OF GREAT SUFFERING AS INTERNATIONAL AID WORKERS WERE TO DISCOVER WHEN THEY MANAGED TO VISIT EAST TIMOR AT THE END OF THIS PERIOD. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT CONDITIONS WERE DESCRIBED IN TERMS COMPARABLE WITH THOSE EXISTING AT THAT TIME IN KAMPUCHEA, AND IN PARTS OF THE SAHEL IN AFRICA WHERE INTENSE FAMINE WAS DECIMATING THE POPULATION.

IN TIMOR THE POPULATION HAD ALREADY BEEN DECIMATED, WITH, AS I HAVE ALREADY POINTED OUT, BETWEEN 100,000 AND 200,000 PEOPLE HAVING

PERISHED AS A DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF INDONESIA'S ARMED AGGRESSION. THIS LOSS OF LIFE IN ITSELF, EVEN IF ONE TAKES THE LOWEST ESTIMATE ACCEPTED BY RESPONSIBLE OUTSIDE OBSERVERS, IS IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE THAT INDONESIA'S ACTION AGAINST EAST TIMOR CONSTITUTES ONE OF THE GRAVEST CONTRAVENTIONS OF THE U.N. CHARTER, AND HUMAN RIGHTS GENERALLY, THAT HAS OCCURRED IN POST WORLD WAR II HISTORY.

BUT THE SUFFERING OF THE TIMORESE PEOPLE HAS BY NO MEANS BEEN CONFINED TO LOSS OF LIFE. THERE IS MOUNTING EVIDENCE THAT THE TIMORESE HAVE SUFFERED, AND ARE CONTINUING TO SUFFER, REPRESSION IN VARIOUS FORMS. MANY MEN HAVE BEEN TORTURED OR BEATEN, WHILE THEIR WOMEN FOLK HAVE BEEN RAPED. THOUSANDS HAVE BEEN CONSIGNED TO PRISONS WITHOUT TRIAL, A NEW ADDITION TO THE UGLY PHENOMENON OF "DISAPPEARED PERSONS".

THIS LEADS US TO THE PRESENT SITUATION ABOUT WHICH THERE ARE QUITE CONTRADICTORY REPORTS. IN ASSESSING WHAT CONDITIONS ARE LIKE NOW, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS.

FIRSTLY, ALTHOUGH INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE ALLOWED VERY FEW FOREIGN VISITORS INTO EAST TIMOR SINCE THE END OF 1979, IT MUST BE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS TRICKLE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE FREE ACCESS TO THE TERRITORY. INDEED, MOST OF THE VISITORS HAVE CLEARLY BEEN IDENTIFIED AS PERSONS SYMPATHETIC TO INDONESIA'S INTEGRATION OF EAST TIMOR. ALSO, THE INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES SEEM TO HAVE BEEN WILLING TO ALLOW IN FOREIGN DIPLOMATS FROM SELECTED COUNTRIES; FROM COUNTRIES MOSTLY SELECTED ON THE BASIS OF THEIR SUPPORT IN THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INDONESIA'S POSITION ON EAST TIMOR.



IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT MOST OF THE VIEWS THAT HAVE EMERGED FROM THESE SOURCES HAVE EMPHASISED THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE SITUATION FROM INDONESIA'S POINT OF VIEW, AND HAVE IGNORED, PLAYED DOWN, OR EVEN DISTORTED, ASPECTS WHICH MIGHT PROVOKE INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM.

THE RESULT, IN MY ASSESSMENT, IS A VERY SUPERFICIAL AND INACCURATE PICTURE OF WHAT CONDITIONS ARE LIKE IN EAST TIMOR TODAY, CONCEALING THE TRUE NATURE OF INDONESIA'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE HAD MANY REPORTS FROM SOURCES OF THIS KIND, SUGGESTING THAT FAMINE CONDITIONS ARE NO LONGER PRESENT IN EAST TIMOR. WE ARE TOLD THAT THERE ARE NOW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SEVERAL PARTS OF THE TERRITORY, INCLUDING AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES, EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND NEW ROAD-BUILDING PROJECTS.

SOME OF THESE SOURCES HAVE SOUGHT TO DISCREDIT THE ACTING BISHOP OF DILI, MONSIEUR MARTINHO DA COSTA LOPES, WHO HAS, ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, TRIED TO ATTRACT INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION TO THE REAL SITUATION IN THE TERRITORY.

HOWEVER, IF THESE REPORTS ARE STUDIED CAREFULLY, IN CONJUNCTION WITH INFORMATION FROM A FEW PERCEPTIVE JOURNALISTS LIKE ROD NORDLAND, WHO MANAGED TO MAKE A LENGTHY VISIT TO EAST TIMOR EARLIER THIS YEAR, FROM LETTERS FROM TIMORESE STILL IN EAST TIMOR AND INFORMATION FROM TIMORESE WHO HAVE RECENTLY MANAGED TO LEAVE THE TERRITORY FOR AUSTRALIA OR PORTUGAL, THE PICTURE IS A VERY DIFFERENT ONE. ACCORDING TO THESE VIEWS, LIFE IN EAST TIMOR IS FAR FROM EASY.

WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE FOOD SITUATION IN THE TERRITORY IS NOW NOT AS SERIOUS AS IT WAS IN 1979, BUT THEN IT WOULD NEED TO HAVE IMPROVED, BECAUSE, AT THAT TIME, IT WAS QUITE DESPERATE.

HOWEVER, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT THE IMPROVEMENTS, SUCH AS THEY ARE, HAVE LARGELY BEEN BROUGHT ABOUT BY FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES SENT INTO EAST TIMOR, NOT BECAUSE OF A CHANGE OF HEART IN DJAKARTA, BUT THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES WHICH DJAKARTA FINALLY ALLOWED TO ENTER THE TERRITORY, AS A RELUCTANT CONCESSION TO INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE.

BUT, IF FAMINE CONDITIONS NO LONGER EXIST THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY, THERE IS PERSISTENT EVIDENCE FROM TIMORESE SOURCES THAT SERIOUS FOOD SHORTAGES, AND MALNUTRITION CONTINUE TO BE EXPERIENCED IN SEVERAL PARTS OF EAST TIMOR, PARTLY BECAUSE OF A SERIOUS DECLINE IN FOOD PRODUCTION.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN RECENT MONTHS WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT GRAIN PRODUCTION IN THE IMPORTANT BAUCAU-LAGA AREA HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY REDUCED BECAUSE THE INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES HAD FORCED TIMORESE FARMERS TO PARTICIPATE IN GRUELLING OPERATIONS AGAINST FRETELIN GUERRILLAS IN THE MOUNTAINS, CAUSING THEM TO NEGLECT THEIR CROPS.

THE FORCED RESETTLEMENT OF TIMORESE HAS ALSO DISRUPTED THEIR TRADITIONAL ECONOMY. TRUE, SOME AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS HAVE BEEN BEGUN, BUT ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS, THESE MAY IN FACT BE DESIGNED FOR MIGRANTS FROM JAVA AND NOT FOR THE IMPOVERISHED TIMORESE.

A SECOND CONSIDERATION IS THAT THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM IN

EAST TIMOR IS NOTHING TO DO WITH FOOD. MOST PEOPLE WILL AGREE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE FOOD SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA IS MUCH BETTER THAN IN MANY OF THE LESS-DEVELOPED AFRICAN STATES, BUT THE SUPPLY OF FOOD AND THE LEVEL OF MATERIAL WEALTH IS NOT WHAT THE APARTHEID PROBLEM IS ABOUT.

IN TIMOR THE CRUCIAL ISSUE, WHICH HAS BEEN BROUGHT HOME TO US AGAIN AND AGAIN BY TIMORESE WITNESSES, IS THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE TERRITORY ARE ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY OPPOSED TO FORCED INTEGRATION, WHICH THEY REGARD AS OCCUPATION BY INDONESIA, AND A FORM OF RECOLONIZATION.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNOR OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PROVINCE IS A TIMORESE, AND THAT MANY OF THE OFFICIALS IN THE TERRITORY ARE ALSO TIMORESE, REAL POWER IN EAST TIMOR IS NOT IN THE HANDS OF THE TIMORESE AT ALL, BUT IN THE HANDS OF THE INDONESIAN ARMY.

IT IS PEOPLE LIKE BRIGADIER-GENERAL DADING KALBUADI, THE REGIONAL COMMANDER, AND COLONELS SINAGA AND KALANGI, WHO EXERCISE REAL POWER IN THE FORMER PORTUGUESE COLONY.

THUS, THE TIMORESE HAVE NOT ONLY BEEN DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE A GENUINE ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION; THEIR LOT TODAY IS WORSE THAN IT WAS IN THE WORST DAYS OF PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM. IN SHORT, EAST TIMOR IS ONCE AGAIN A COLONY, AND THIS-TIME THE COLONIAL POWER IS INDONESIA.

ONE IMPORTANT, AND VERY SERIOUS, DENIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS BEING COMMITTED BY THE INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES, IS THE QUITE DELIBERATE OBSTRUCTION OF THE FAMILY REUNION PROGRAMME WHICH WAS SET UP UNDER

AN AGREEMENT WITH AUSTRALIA MORE THAN FOUR YEARS AGO,

THE AGREEMENT ENVISAGED 611 TIMORESE COMING TO AUSTRALIA TO REJOIN THEIR NEXT OF KIN,... BUT FOUR YEARS LATER ONLY A LITTLE MORE THAN HALF OF THIS NUMBER HAVE MANAGED TO GET OUT AND, IN NEARLY ALL CASES, THEY HAVE HAD TO PAY VERY HEAVY 'BRIBES' FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF LEAVING THEIR COUNTRY,

UNTIL JULY THIS YEAR, THERE WAS A THIN TRICKLE OF DEPARTURES, BUT SINCE THAT TIME, THE TRICKLE HAS STOPPED ALTOGETHER, AND CLEARLY THE RIGHTS OF THE TIMORESE IN THIS CASE ARE BEING HELD AT RANSOM SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE ATTEMPTS BY PORTUGAL AND OTHER COUNTRIES TO KEEP THE QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS,

EAST TIMOR PRESENTS THE UNITED NATIONS WITH A SPECIAL CHALLENGE,

PERHAPS THE GREATEST SUCCESS FOR THE WORLD BODY SINCE ITS INCEPTION HAS BEEN ITS DETERMINATION TO UPHOLD THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLES WHO HAD BEEN UNDER COLONIAL RULE OF ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, PEOPLES WHOSE GOVERNMENTS NOW MAKE UP A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THIS ORGANISATION,

THE EAST TIMORESE PEOPLE, TOO, HAVE THAT RIGHT,

THEY HAVE THE SAME RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE AS THE INDONESIAN PEOPLE THEMSELVES HAD BACK IN THE YEARS FOLLOWING WORLD WAR 11. THE FACT THAT THAT RIGHT OF SELF DETERMINATION HAS NOT BEEN EXERCISED BY THE TIMORESE PEOPLE, AND THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE SUFFERED CRUELLY AT THE HANDS OF AN AGGRESSOR AND ARE NOW ONCE AGAIN VIRTUALLY IN COLONIAL STATUS, MAKES THE TIMOR QUESTION PERHAPS THE MOST SERIOUS OF ITS KIND FOR THIS BODY AT THE PRESENT TIME.

IT ALSO MIGHT BE POINTED OUT THAT THE TRAGIC SITUATION  
FACED BY THE TIMORESE PEOPLE BELONGS TO A SPECIAL CATEGORY....  
IT CONCERNS SMALL STATES... AND SMALL PEOPLES... THE WEAK...  
AND THE VULNERABLE... WHOM WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO PROTECT  
AGAINST THE AGGRESSIVE DESIGNS OR INCONSIDERATE POLICIES  
OF LARGER POWERS.

FOR THE UNITED NATIONS TO ALLOW THE QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR  
TO BE REMOVED FROM ITS AGENDA WOULD BE A VERY SERIOUS  
ABNEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY... AND A BLOW TO FUNDAMENTALLY  
IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

FOR THE TIMORESE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN THE VICTIMS OF SO MUCH  
INJUSTICE AND SUFFERING, IT WOULD BE AN EVEN MORE SERIOUS  
STEP... IT WOULD MEAN CONSIGNING THEM TO A GRIM FUTURE OF  
COLONIAL SERVITUDE... POLITICAL SUPPRESSION... AND PLAIN DESPAIR.

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IN CONCLUSION, I WOULD LIKE YOU TO LISTEN TO A SHORT EXTRACT FROM A RECORDING MADE BY GREG SHACKLETON,,, ONE OF THE FIVE AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS WHO WERE KILLED ON THE 16TH OCTOBER, 1975, AT BALIBO IN EAST TIMOR,,, JUST TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO THE OFFICIAL INDONESIAN INVASION OF EAST TIMOR. EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THEY DIED AT THE HANDS OF THE INDONESIANS.

THIS RECORDING WAS MADE THE NIGHT BEFORE THEY WERE KILLED,,,, THE MESSAGE IS SPOKEN WITH DEEP CONVICTION AND IS VERY PROPHETIC,,, IT EXPRESSES IN TWO MINUTES WHAT VOLUMES OF WRITTEN WORDS OF EVIDENCE EXPECTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

TAPE      TRANSCRIPT      ATTACHED

DELEGATES, I ASK, DOES THE UNITED NATIONS CARE?

MR CHAIRMAN,

THE PETITION REFERRED TO READS:

"WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY OF AUSTRALIA, WISH TO EXPRESS OUR CONTINUING CONCERN AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR AND RE-AFFIRM OUR SUPPORT FOR MOVES IN THE UNITED NATIONS TO UPHOLD THE RIGHT OF THE EAST TIMORESE PEOPLE TO A GENUINE ACT OF SELF DETERMINATION.

THIS SITUATION IS PRESENTLY THE SUBJECT OF AN INQUIRY IN THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT BY THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE.

THE VIEWS SET OUT ABOVE ARE CLEARLY EXPRESSED IN THE PLATFORM OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY AND WERE PASSED BY 48 VOTES TO 1 VOTE AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE PARTY IN 1977, AND RE-AFFIRMED AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCES IN 1979 AND 1982".

INDEED ANY CHANGES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE OVER THE YEARS HAVE HAD THE EFFECT OF STRENGTHENING THE RESOLUTION. IN REPLY TO YOUR QUESTION I WISH TO STATE FIRST AND FOREMOST I AM NOT IN THE POSITION TO DELIVER VOTES TO ANYONE AS A FORM OF QUID PRO QUO THE PETITION WAS PASSED AROUND FROM MEMBER TO MEMBER IN THE SENATE CLUB ROOM AND CHAMBER IT WAS ALSO PASSED AROUND THE CAUCUS ROOM. IT CONTAINS 72 SIGNATURES FROM A PARLIAMENTARY PARTY OF 79. TWO PEOPLE NEVER SIGN ANY PETITIONS AT ANY TIME. ONE OF THEM BEING THE LEADER OF THE PARTY MR HAYDEN, THE REMAINING MEMBERS WERE ABSENT. AMONG THE SIGNATURES ARE THE DEPUTY LEADER REFERRED TO BY MR WHITLAM AS THE FOREIGN MINISTER DESIGNATE AND THE LEADER AND THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE PARTY IN THE SENATE, A TOTAL OF 14 SHADOW MINISTERS AND APPARENTLY ALL BUT BILL HAYDEN OF THE 8 FORMER MINISTERS WHO WERE IN THE MINISTRY DURING MR WHITLAM'S LEADERSHIP AND ARE STILL IN THE PARLIAMENT. 6 OF THE LATTER ARE NOT SHADOW MINISTERS AND ARE MOST UNLIKELY TO SEEK ENTRY INTO THE MINISTRY BY SIGNING SOMETHING THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IN. MR CHAIRMAN, I DO NOT CONSIDER THIS QUESTION AS PERTINENT TO THIS COMMITTEE AND I AM SURE DISTINGUISHED DELEGATIONS WILL AGREE.

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TRANSCRIPT OF GREG SHACKELTON AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS  
REPORT 16th OCTOBER 1975 THE NIGHT BEFORE HE WAS  
KILLED

WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT INDONESIAN SOLDIERS ARE HEADING THIS WAY UP THE ROAD FROM BATUGADE AND WE LOOK LIKE BEING THE LAST PEOPLE LEFT IN THE TOWN AND WE WILL MAKE A DECISION VERY SHORTLY ON WHETHER WE TOO SHOULD PULL BACK. IN THE MEANTIME WE HAVE PAINTED OUR HOUSE WITH WORD AUSTRALIA IN RED AND THE AUSTRALIAN FLAG IN THE HOUSE WHERE WE SPENT THE NIGHT. WE ARE HOPING IT WILL AFFORD US SOME PROTECTION. WHAT HAPPENED HERE LAST NIGHT MOVED US VERY DEEPLY. IT WAS SO FAR OUTSIDE OUR EXPERIENCE AS AUSTRALIANS AND SO INEXPLICABLY IN THE WARMTH OF THE ATMOSPHERE OF THIS PLACE THAT WE FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO CONVEY TO YOU OUR LISTENERS IN THE AUSTRALIAN LIVING ROOM BUT WE WILL TRY. WE WERE BROUGHT TO THIS TINY NATIVE VILLAGE BECAUSE WE WERE TOLD THAT MALIANA WAS NOT SAFE AT NIGHT. WHEN WE ARRIVED THE SECOND IN CHARGE WHO SPEAKS VERY LITTLE ENGLISH CAME TO US IN AN URGENT WAY SAYING THE COMMANDER WANTED TO SPEAK TO US AND THEN THE NEXT HOUR, SITTING ON WOVEN MATS UNDER A THATCHED ROOF IN A HUT WITH NO WALLS WE WERE A TARGET OF THE BARRAGE OF QUESTIONING FROM MEN WHO KNOW THEY MAY DIE TOMORROW AND CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE REST OF THE WORLD DOES NOT CARE. WHY THEY ASK ARE THE INDONESIANS INVADING US, WHY THEY ASK IF THE INDONESIANS BELIEVE THAT FRETELIN IS COMMUNIST DON'T SEND A DELEGATION TO DILI FIND OUT, WHY THEY ASK ARE THE AUSTRALIANS NOT HELPING US WHEN THE JAPANESE INVADED THEY DID HELP US, WHY THEY ASK ARE THE PORTUGUESE NOT HELPING US WE ARE STILL A PORTUGUESE COLONY. WHO THEY ASK WILL PAY FOR THIS TERRIBLE DAMAGE TO OUR HOMES. MY MAIN ANSWER WAS THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD NOT SEND FORCES HERE THAT IMPOSSIBLE. HOWEVER IS SAID THAT WE COULD ASK THAT AUSTRALIA RAISE THIS FIGHTING AT THE UNITED NATIONS THAT WAS POSSIBLE. AT THAT THE SECOND IN CHARGE ROSE TO HIS FEET HE EXCLAIMED CAMARADA JOURNALIST HE SHOOK MY HAND THE REST SHOOK MY HAND AND WE WERE APPLAUDED BECAUSE WE ARE AUSTRALIANS. THAT IS ALL THEY WANT FOR THE UNITED NATIONS TO CARE ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE. THE EMOTION HERE LAST NIGHT WAS SO STRONG AND WE ALL THREE OF US HOPED WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO REACH OUT WITH THE WARM NIGHT AIR AND TOUCH IT. GREG SHACKELTON AT AN UNNAMED VILLAGE WHICH WE REMEMBER FOREVER IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR.