

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

October 6, 1980

The Honorable Edmund S. Muskie
Secretary of State
State Department
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We have all been greatly concerned about the situation in East Timor. As you know, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has provided emergency food and medical assistance over the past year which has saved the lives of tens of thousands of East Timorese.

We were greatly encouraged to recently learn that the Government of Indonesia has decided to allow the ICRC to remain in East Timor beyond October. The efforts of the Department of State to ensure the continuation of these relief operations deserve commendation. We believe, however, that the ICRC should be allowed greater access to East Timor. To date, the ICRC has been unable to operate with more than a skeleton staff on the island. We strongly urge you to take action to encourage the Government of Indonesia to permit the ICRC to increase the number of its personnel in East Timor. The Department of State has recently acknowledged that serious medical problems continue to exist in East Timor. An expanded ICRC staff could provide this needed medical assistance.

In addition, we note that the ICRC has not been permitted to enter prisons in East Timor. Prison visitations are a part of the ICRC's traditional mandate, and the organization has had access to prisons in Indonesia in the past. The importance of such visits in East Timor has increased, in light of recent reports of renewed fighting and the incarceration of large numbers of political prisoners. Our concerns over prison conditions have been intensified by Amnesty International's recent report to Congress on human rights in East Timor. Mr. Secretary, we ask you to take appropriate steps to ensure that the ICRC be allowed to begin prison visitations.

Finally, we are disturbed by the fact that families who were separated during the conflict in East Timor have been unable to be reunited. Many thousands of East Timorese desire to join their relatives living abroad, and the Governments of Portugal and Australia have indicated their willingness to accept refugees; yet very few people have been able to leave. The ICRC should be allowed to facilitate these family reunions as this is one of its internationally sanctioned humanitarian functions.

Mr. Secretary, we believe that the Department of State should encourage the Indonesian Government to permit free emigration from East Timor and allow these families to be reunited. Specifically, we would like to know what steps the Department of State is taking to encourage Indonesia to permit the departure of the people whose names are enclosed. We ask that the ICRC be given the full support of the United States Government in its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of East Timor.

We appreciate your assistance.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Tsongas
PAUL E. TSONGAS

Max Baucus
MAX BAUCUS

Carl Levin
CARL LEVIN

John Heinz
JOHN HEINZ

Howard M. Metzenbaum
HOWARD M. METZENBAUM

DENNIS DECONCINI

Mark O. Hatfield
MARK O. HATFIELD

Claiborne Pell
CLAIBORNE PELL

Edward Zorinsky
EDWARD ZORINSKY

John H. Chafee
JOHN H. CHAFEE

Edward Kennedy

Addendum

Listed below are the names of the family members we are concerned about.

The following people can be contacted through Um Soi Line at the Tropical Hotel in Dili

Um Soi Line
Ao Seu Si
Ao Seu Hin and son
Ma Tu Kum (and wife and two children)
Um Sui Sion (and wife and two children)
Um Sui In
Um Sui Nhi

The following people are located at Rua 15 De Outubro Dili-Audian

Lay Chung Kong
Cu Tsin Moe
Fernando Lay Sun Sim
Lay Tsiuk Sing
Lay Kiang Sing
Lay Lie Sing
Lay Sing Sing
Lai Fu Hiang
Lay Moe Sing (and two children)

The following people can be located at the Hotel Dili, Dili

Lucio Encarnacao
Aquilina Encarnacao
Didy Encarnacao

The following people can be located in Bidau, Dili

Rosa da Costa Cabral
Joaquim Gusmao
Raquel Sarmento Gusmao (and 3 children)

The following people can be located in Santa Cruz, Dili

Engracia Cabral
Maria de Fatima Cabral (and another niece)
Filomemo Cabral Fernandes
Judith Pimentel Fernandes (and 2 children)



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

October 21, 1980

Dear Senator Chafee:

Secretary Muskie has asked me to provide an interim reply to your letter of October 6 concerning the situation in East Timor.

We share your concern about the humanitarian situation in East Timor and the importance of the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in meeting the humanitarian needs of the Timorese people. The United States Government has provided \$14 million in cash and commodities for the relief effort in East Timor conducted by the ICRC and the Catholic Relief Service (CRS). This has resulted in a major improvement in the welfare of the people of East Timor. Emphasis is now beginning to shift to longer range development programs for the province. The Agency for International Development (AID) has approved a three-year \$3.6 million malaria control project for East Timor, and other projects are being considered. The Indonesian Government has also launched a substantial development effort.

We plan to explore in depth your suggestions for an expanded ICRC staff in East Timor, the beginning of a program of prison visitations and freer emigration for the Timorese people. We have requested the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta and the U.S. Mission in Geneva (the headquarters of the ICRC) to comment on these suggestions and will address your concerns in greater detail after receiving their responses. In the interim, we would like to offer the following comments.

In response to your concern that the ICRC staff in East Timor is inadequate to meet current needs, it is important to note that the ICRC relief effort is a joint program with the Indonesian Red Cross. The Indonesian Red Cross provides the majority of the personnel involved in the relief effort with the ICRC expatriate staff serving

The Honorable

John H. Chafee,

United States Senate,

Washington, D.C.

in an advisory capacity. The latest ICRC status report on the effort indicates that there are 267 persons working with the relief program including 12 doctors and 18 nurses, all but one of whom are Indonesian. The ICRC believes this arrangement has been quite satisfactory in meeting the health needs of the approximately 90,000 Timorese served by the ICRC program. In their latest status report on the situation in East Timor (dated August 25), the ICRC described the program as "going on in the best of conditions, cooperation between Indonesian Red Cross personnel and ICRC delegates being excellent." An earlier report said the program "is continuing under excellent conditions thanks to the remarkable work carried out by the numerous staff of the national society (Indonesian Red Cross) in the field." The ICRC is satisfied that the Indonesian Red Cross personnel are fully capable of performing the relief work with only limited supervision by the three person ICRC staff and the Department of State has no reason to question that judgment.

I wish to reserve comment on your suggestions regarding prison visitation until we have the opportunity to discuss this matter with our Embassy in Jakarta and the ICRC representatives in Indonesia and Geneva.

On the subject of emigration, we have informed the Portuguese Government of our willingness to try to help with emigration and other humanitarian issues of interest to Portugal, and we are in the process of considering means for accomplishing this. The situation is greatly complicated by the absence of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Indonesia, and their differences over the political status of East Timor, which have so far prevented direct discussions between them. This makes progress difficult despite the expressed willingness of both sides to allow freer emigration. We will try to do what we can to resolve this issue.

I hope the above information has been useful to you. As I noted previously, this is an interim response and I will be responding further after a thorough investigation of the issues raised in your letter.

Sincerely,

J. Brian Atwood
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

Hannu Reime
Merimiehentienkatu 32 B 39
00150 Helsinki 15
Finland

July 25 1980

July 25,
1980

The Editor
U.S. News & World Report
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir,

In your report on Mozambique (July 14, 1980) you suggest that one of the reasons for the lack of US aid to the country might be human rights violations by the FRELIMO government (re-education camps, crackdown on church).

I think this explanation is not true.

East Timor is another former Portuguese colony, situated in the Far East. Since December 1975 there have been massive violations of human rights in that country committed by neighboring Indonesia in its attempt to annex the territory. According to various sources at least 100 000 people, one sixth of the population, have been killed in the course of a direct and unprovoked aggression. During all this time Indonesia has received from the United States not only political and diplomatic support but also direct material and military aid, which has been crucial in the crushing of the independence movement FRETILIN.

Comparison of US attitudes to Mozambique and East Timor shows quite clearly that human rights considerations are far from crucial factors in foreign aid decisions and foreign policy ~~in general~~ of the US in general. If they play any role at all, the most important criterion seems to be not the extent of human rights violations but who is responsible for them. Atrocities, real or imagined, are denounced by the United States, if they are committed by a Third World nationalist movement like FRELIMO. If the violator is an ally of the West like Indonesia, the most brutal crimes are surrounded with a veil of silence, and those who are responsible for them, are supported with unlimited aid, military included.

Sincerely,

Hannu Reime

Hannu Reime

journalist
Finnish Broadcasting Company

July 7, 1980.

Dear Arnold,

Enclosed you will find a copy of a letter that I have sent to Le Nouvel Observateur in Paris. Claude Roy's attack on Noam is simply disgraceful, I think, and calls for a protest. Please read Roy's article if you have not seen it ~~xxx~~ already. I think that you should write too, if you have a chance. It is not easy being up against the NO. We will see if they will publish any of it.

Best,

Torben

Torben Retbøll.

July 7, 1980.

The Editor,
Le Nouvel Observateur,
11 Rue D'Aboukir,
F-75081 Paris, Cedex 02,
France.

Dear Sir,

In Le Nouvel Observateur no. 815 of June 21, Claude Roy launched a sharp attack on Noam Chomsky. Claude Roy's main point is his accusation that Chomsky ignores the differences between Western democracies -- however imperfect they may be -- and the totalitarian states of the East.

This accusation is false.

In his latest book, co-authored with Edward Herman, Chomsky explicitly stresses that "the difference between a society with official censorship (e.g. the Soviet Union) and one without (the United States) is real and significant," adding that "the extent and specially the policy consequences of such differences are often overrated." And again: "The value of being able to protest relatively unmolested is certainly real, but it should not lead to a disregard of the fact that established institutions,, tend to line up in support of any state foreign venture, no matter how immoral (until the cost becomes too high)." Quoted from The Political Economy of Human Rights, South End Press: Boston 1979, vol. 1, pp. 2 and 23-24. Many more examples could be cited.

For us in the West, it is quite easy to protest human rights violations in the East, and naturally Soviet dissidents have our sympathy. But the effect is not likely to be very great when we protest. The opposite is true with regard to the Western sphere of influence. And therefore it is, perhaps, more important for us to protest the crimes for which the West is responsible, such as Indonesia's invasion and ongoing occupation of East Timor -- to give just one example that has been largely ignored by the media (including Le Nouvel Observateur).

One of the important differences between East and West is precisely that in a democracy the people's voice is heard and has to be taken into account, a fact often stressed by Chomsky. In the West, it is legal, and sometimes even possible, to build a popular mass movement which goes against official state policy, such as the movement against the Vietnam war. Many of Chomsky's political writings contain a call for such a popular movement in order to restrain or bring to a halt the crimes committed by the Western democracies.

To claim, as Claude Roy does, that Chomsky equates East and West is outlandish. And a correction is certainly in order.

Torben Retbøll
lecturer in history at Århus Katedralskole
Falstersgade 3-2 TH
DK-8000 Århus C
Danemark.

Sincerely,

Torben Retbøll

August 23, 1980.

Dear Arnold,

Thanks very much for the latest packet of material that you have sent me. I think that I sent you copies of two letters that I wrote to The Times in London and to Newsweek, but it seems that none of them appeared. Pity. But it was worth a try.

I have ^{been} more succesful here in Denmark. Politiken is a big national and liberal newspaper. I have been suggesting for several ~~xxxx~~ months to them that they should write an editorial on Timor, and finally, in July, they came round to it. They demand aid for Timor, but there is no clear call for a withdrawal of the Indonesian troops. They printed a comment of mine a few days after in which I add this latter demand.

Socialistisk Daagblad is a small left-wing daily which printed a large article of mine summarizing developments during the last six months. They have, generally, been quite willing to publish my things.

Finally, I had a piece in Børsen which corresponds more or less to your Wall Street Journal or Business Week. There was an interview with Adam Malik which was nothing but Indonesian government propaganda. I got angry and wrote a long letter which they eventually printed after I had cut out one third. A few days ago, a businessman who has lived in Indonesia protested against my article. I have not yet had, to answer, but I hope to do so as soon as possible.

Even~~x~~ though you cannot read Danish, I sent you copies of all this, so that you can see what is going on here. A bit, at least. There are about ten members of the Danish Timor group, but ~~mostxoxvkvkavkivm x~~ it is mostly a paper organization, and often I feel that I am the only ~~xxxx~~ member! I have circulated the invitation to the Timor conference in Holland here in Denmark and -- surprise -- it seems that we will be five or six people coming to Holland from Denmark.

Hope to see you there. And hope that all is well with you. Enclosed is a book review which you may not have seen.

Best,

Torben

Torben Retbøll.

P.S. Could you possibly write a review of my book in the U.S. if you

Torben Retbøll,
Svendborgvej 15,
DK-5762 Vester Skerninge,
DENMARK.

June 18, 1979.

The Washington Post,
1150 15th Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20071, USA.

Dear Ms. Greenfield,

I would like to comment on your editorial on East Timor which appeared on May 30.

You say that what you term "supporters of East Timor" claim the Indonesians have killed 100,000 people, a sixth of the population, but this is not quite accurate. In fact, similar figures are given out by independent or even official Indonesian sources. In April 1977, for example, the then foreign minister of Indonesia, Adam Malik, admitted that the Indonesian invasion and take-over had cost maybe 80,000 lives. Since then, the resistance has continued, and today the figure is probably even higher. Thus, regardless of whether you are a "supporter of East Timor" or not, the evidence is clear that the East Timorese people have been denied the right of self-determination and that human rights are being ~~violated~~ grossly violated by the invading forces.

You also say that "Indonesia had the power" and East Timor did not, which is quite correct, but you fail to point out that Indonesia's power is ~~not~~ based on a continuous and massive flow of arms from the United States, France, Britain and several other Western countries. Thus, the West has a clear responsibility for Indonesia's actions in East Timor.

Furthermore, you say that "most people have never heard of [East Timor] and could not locate [it] on a map if their lives depended on it." This too is quite correct, but again you fail to give the obvious explanation, which is that the Western press has virtually censored the Indonesian massacres out of existence:

When the former government of Kampuchea -- an enemy of the US -- ~~was~~ was accused of killing thousands of its own people, the case was eagerly taken up by the media which willingly seized upon any scrap of evidence, however tarnished, that might be used to demonstrate communist atrocities. In April 1977, for example, your paper published a series of photographs purportedly showing forced labor under communism, in spite of the fact that the pictures had been exposed a year earlier as fabrications of Thai intelligence, and even refusing to publish a letter giving the documented facts. But when Indonesia -- a friend of the United States -- is accused of a similar crime, there is a veil of silence in the media.

There are exceptions, of course, such as your editorial, but your conclusion merits close attention. You say that "the question of statehood for East Timor may be on the shelf," but what you are saying is, in effect, that we should accept the Indonesian integration after all.

The free press need not support the governments that allow all this to happen. It ~~can~~ can demand that the flow of arms to Indonesia be halted, so that the invading forces will be forced to cease their attack, and so that the people of East Timor will finally be allowed to determine their own destiny. Perhaps it is not too late to prevent what Shepherd Forman -- an anthropologist who worked in Timor -- described in Congressional Hearings as the "annihilation of simple mountain people."

Sincerely,

Torben Retbøll.

Torben Retbøll,
Svendborgvej 15,
DK-5762 Vester Skerninge,
DENMARK.

June 18, 1979.

International Herald Tribune,
179-181 Avenue Charles de Gaulle,
F-92521 Neuilly-Sur-Seine,
France.

Dear Sir,

I would like to comment on your editorial on East Timor which appeared on May 31.

When the former government of Kampuchea -- an enemy of the US -- was accused of killing thousands of its own people, the case was eagerly taken up by the media which willingly seized upon any scrap of evidence, however tarnished, that might be used to demonstrate communist atrocities. In April 1977, for example, the Washington Post devoted half a page to a series of photographs purportedly showing forced labor under communism, in spite of the fact that the pictures had been exposed a year earlier as fabrications of Thai intelligence, and even refusing to publish a letter giving the documented facts. But when Indonesia -- a friend of the US -- is accused of a similar crime, there is a veil of silence.

There are exceptions, of course, such as your editorial, but your conclusion merits close attention. You say that "the question of statehood for East Timor may be on the shelf," but what you are saying is, in effect, that we should accept the Indonesian integration after all.

The free press need not support the governments that continue to supply the Indonesian generals with military and diplomatic assistance. It can demand that the flow of arms to Indonesia be halted, so that the invading forces will be forced to cease their attack, and so that the people of East Timor will finally be allowed to determine their own destiny. Perhaps it is not too late to prevent what Shepherd Forman -- an anthropologist who worked in Timor -- described in Congressional Hearings as the "annihilation of simple mountain people."

I hope you will feel that these facts are relevant and that they should not be kept from your readers, given your reference to this issue.

Sincerely,

Torben Retbøll.

Torben Retbøll,
Svendsborgvej 15,
DK-5762 Vester Skerninge,
DENMARK.

June 18, 1979.

The Editor, The Economist,
25 St. James Street,
London SW1A 1HG,
England.

Dear Sir,

As one of those who participated in the recent Lisbon conference on East Timor I would like to comment on your article "Remember Us?" in your issue of May 26.

Your correspondent says that "one reason for scant coverage of the East Timor conflict is Indonesia's refusal to allow journalists or other observers like Amnesty or the Red Cross to visit the territory." This explanation is not at all true, a fact which clearly emerges if one compares the coverage of East Timor with that of Kampuchea.

In both cases we have a small third world country which has been very isolated from the outside world since 1975, and in both cases too it has been alleged that at least 100,000 people have been massacred. Moreover, the evidence is quite comparable. In the case of Kampuchea, stories of atrocities and repression have not only been eagerly seized upon by the media and offered ~~an~~ massive international publicity, but also embellished by substantial fabrication, a fact that is well-documented. In the case of Timor, however, the media have shown no interest in such accounts and apart from Australia, there has been near total silence. Moreover, there is very little that the West can do about the situation in Kampuchea -- whatever it may be now and may have been previously -- whereas the opposite is true about Indonesia.

It is obvious therefore that the amount of press coverage (and of protest) does not depend on the question of isolation or, for that matter, on the question of violation of human rights. Rather, it depends on who enforces the isolation and on who does the violation.

A communist regime such as the one in Kampuchea, which is an enemy of the Western democracies, can be easily and freely denounced for its alleged and real excesses. But turning to Indonesia, which is a friend, the standards are reversed, and instead the Indonesian generals are praised for their ~~progress~~ "progress" in the field of human rights. And this "progress" in turn becomes a justification for a continuous and massive flow of arms which enables the Indonesian government to conduct new offensives against the people of East Timor.

The media coverage of the Lisbon conference once again proved this point. The Portuguese press carried a few articles the first days after the meeting, but in the international press there was hardly anything, and the reports by the correspondents of the Manchester Guardian (May 21) and of your paper are virtually the only ones I have seen. By contrast, the International Cambodia Hearing held in Oslo in April 1978 was attended and covered by almost one hundred reporters from television, radio and the press.

The journalists and editors of the free Western press need not support the governments that allow all this to happen. But obviously most of them do.

I trust you will feel that these facts are relevant and deserve mention, given your reference to the issue.

Sincerely,

Torben Petball.

September 7, 1979.

Dear Arnold,

Thanks very much for all your letters and the material that you have been sending me these last few days. It was very good of you to dig out the old 1975 articles written by Stone. I find a very illustrative example. If you know of any other similar cases, please let me know.

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I have had to translate Stone's articles to my students, since they read English very slowly. As I expected, none of them had ever heard about Timor. I try to ask that question when I go to meetings and so on, and each time I seem to get the same response. A few x days ago, I was invited to a high school to speak on Vietnam-Kampuchea to a group which had especially been studying the Third World. Out of 25 people only 2 had ever heard the word Timor before. I presented the case, and I hope they will remember it.

I have been (and still am, in fact) quite busy preparing my classes, but I have had time to write some letters to the press drawing attention to the Chomsky-Herman book. Most of them were published, but not all, though.

Today, I am sending out a new series of letters to the press. We'll see what kind of response there will be. On Wednesday the 19th, I am invited to speak at a meeting on Timor in Copenhagen. I intend also to recommend your and John's new book. Have just received a copy of the ms. from London today and what I have read so far looks very good.

I guess that your Danish is not all that good (!), but if you like, I will be glad to send you copies of what I get published here in Denmark. Let me know about that.

I really try to draw as much attention to this matter as possible. But even though ~~xxxxxx~~ there now is a Danish Timor committee of ten people, it seems that the others are not doing very much writing. I have been sending them things -- but I get nothing from them. A bit frustrating, but I assume that you know all about that.

Hope that you saw the piece by Jill in the London Guardian of August 20. Not very much, but perhaps there is more to come from this witness?

Best,

Torben.

Torben Retbøll.

Torben Retbøll,
Svendborgvej 15,
DK-5762 Vester Skerninge,
Denmark.

April 11, 1979.

Cornell-Ithaca East Timor Defence Committee,
410 Stewart Avenue,
Ithaca, NY 14850,
USA.

Dear Arnold Cohen,

I have found your address in the pamphlet East Timor: The Hidden War by Richard W. Franke, and I understand that the US Timor committee is now publishing a newsbulletin. I would like to subscribe to this bulletin, if it is still in existence. How much is a one year sub, overseas, airmail? I am also interested in buying all the back numbers of the bulletin. How much would it cost you ~~xx~~ to send them to me via air mail? I send no money now but will do so when I have your offer.

I wonder if the address that I am using is correct. So many different addresses are given out in different publications and at different times. Is the committee constantly on the move, or are there several branches?

I have already tried writing to some of these American addresses, but although my letters are not returned, I have not received any answers from any of them. I hope to be more lucky this time.

I thank you in advance for your time and attention and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Torben Retbøll.