

# The New York Times

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## The Cemetery Called East Timor

Indonesia for the first time seems genuinely flustered by the world's protests over its invasion and long-term oppression of East Timor, a former Portuguese colony. But not enough to do anything about it.

Jakarta's 1975 conquest of 750,000 Timorese was just as heinous as the more recent and more highly publicized territorial grabs by Iraq and Serbia. And the evil continues. Last November foreign witnesses were present as Indonesian troops massacred from 50 to 100 nonviolent demonstrators who had gathered at a cemetery in Dili, East Timor's capital.

Yet there was no hint of contrition in yesterday's United Nations speech by President Suharto of Indonesia, leader of the 108-nation Nonaligned Movement. He castigated "policies of hegemony and domination" and gave unflinching support to the "inalienable right to self-determination, independence and sovereign statehood" — for Palestinians. But there was nary a peep about East Timor,

or what his officials term "the Nov. 12 incident."

Indonesia does not dispute that its troops ran amok (an Indonesian word) at that cemetery. Ten members of the security forces have been prosecuted for their role in the killings, and two generals have been removed from their jobs. But Jakarta continues to keep East Timor off limits to the foreign press, so that the world's attention will not focus on the punitive sentences (nine years to life) handed down against demonstrators at the November "incident."

Indonesia is a proud and important regional power; its 180 million people make it the world's largest Muslim nation. Yet with respect to tiny East Timor, Jakarta behaves more like a banana republic. It has rejected Portugal's proposal for a referendum in the former colony, and has stonewalled efforts to permit a U.N. presence in East Timor. All this while General Suharto ostentatiously demands the withdrawal of foreign troops from occupied territory — along the River Jordan.

1992

WASHINGTON, Oct 3, Reuter - U.S. congressional negotiators have approved a \$14 billion foreign operations appropriations bill that cuts off military training aid for Indonesia because of its involvement in a reported massacre in East Timor.

Last November, Indonesian troops opened fire on demonstrators in East Timor's capital, Dili. Indonesia says 50 died while eyewitnesses said up to 150 were killed.

The House-Senate conferees cut all \$2.4 million in international military education and training aid for Indonesia out of the bill.

"We cut it off," said Representative David Obey, a Wisconsin Democrat who is chairman of the House of Representatives' foreign operations appropriations subcommittee and a leader of the conference.

"They (Indonesia) invaded East Timor 17 years ago and they're still there," Obey said.

The House plans to approve the bill on Sunday and the Senate plans to complete Congress's approval on Monday and send it to President George Bush to be signed into law.

The bill would cut off the so-called IMET aid to Indonesia next year but Congress could resume it in the future.

# The Boston Globe

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## East Timor's captive leader

At some jail in occupied East Timor, or perhaps at a military base in Jakarta, Indonesian interrogators are working over Jose Alexandre Gusmao, the East Timorese resistance leader known to his people as Xanana. He was captured last Friday at the home of a Timorese family. The Indonesians are holding Xanana and seven members of the family, including a 74-year-old woman, Rufina Conceicao Araujo, incommunicado.

Because the Indonesian security forces have a record of torturing and murdering Timorese taken into custody, the detention of Xanana and the Araujas has induced Asia Watch and Amnesty International to issue urgent appeals, calling on the Indonesian authorities to allow the captives to be visited by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and to be represented at their interrogations by lawyers of their own choosing.

The military regime of Gen. Suharto, acting in a manner consistent with its history of thuggish behavior, has denied the appeals from the human rights organizations. A spokesman said Xanana was "undergoing intensive questioning" by military interrogators, and "for the time being" nobody would be permitted to see him.

This hint that Xanana's incommunicado detention might be ended — when the interrogators are finished with him — would be reassuring were it not for Jakarta's genocidal record in East Timor since Indonesian troops first invaded the territory in 1975.

Knowing that the Indonesians have been responsible for the killing of between 100,000 and 200,000 Timorese (as much as a third of the population that existed in 1975), Portugal's president, Mario Soares, appealed "to the conscience of the

world . . . to be alert and watchful so that Xanana Gusmao's life is not put at risk."

Although President Bush, like his predecessors, has given military and diplomatic support to the Suharto regime, it is rumored that the State Department has passed word to Jakarta that Xanana must not be murdered in captivity.

The warnings addressed to Jakarta by foreign leaders, whether conveyed in public or private, reflect the fact that Xanana's capture has a political as well as a human-rights dimension. He is regarded by most Timorese not merely as the political and military leader of their resistance struggle but as a beloved and respected symbol of their colonized nation.

Like Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Xanana would be the choice of his people to represent them in negotiations with the Indonesian rulers of their land. And if those negotiations resulted in internationally recognized self-determination for East Timor, Xanana could become his country's first elected head of government.

Indeed, representatives of Indonesia and Portugal are scheduled to resume talks about the future of East Timor on Dec. 17. These talks are being held under the auspices of UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has tried to transform them from an empty formality into substantive negotiations that will give a participatory role to a representative of the East Timorese people.

If the Indonesians were wise, they would release Xanana and allow him to go abroad. They would then invite him to represent his people in negotiations to end a colonial occupation that has caused unimaginable suffering for the Timorese and brought dishonor upon the colonialist power.