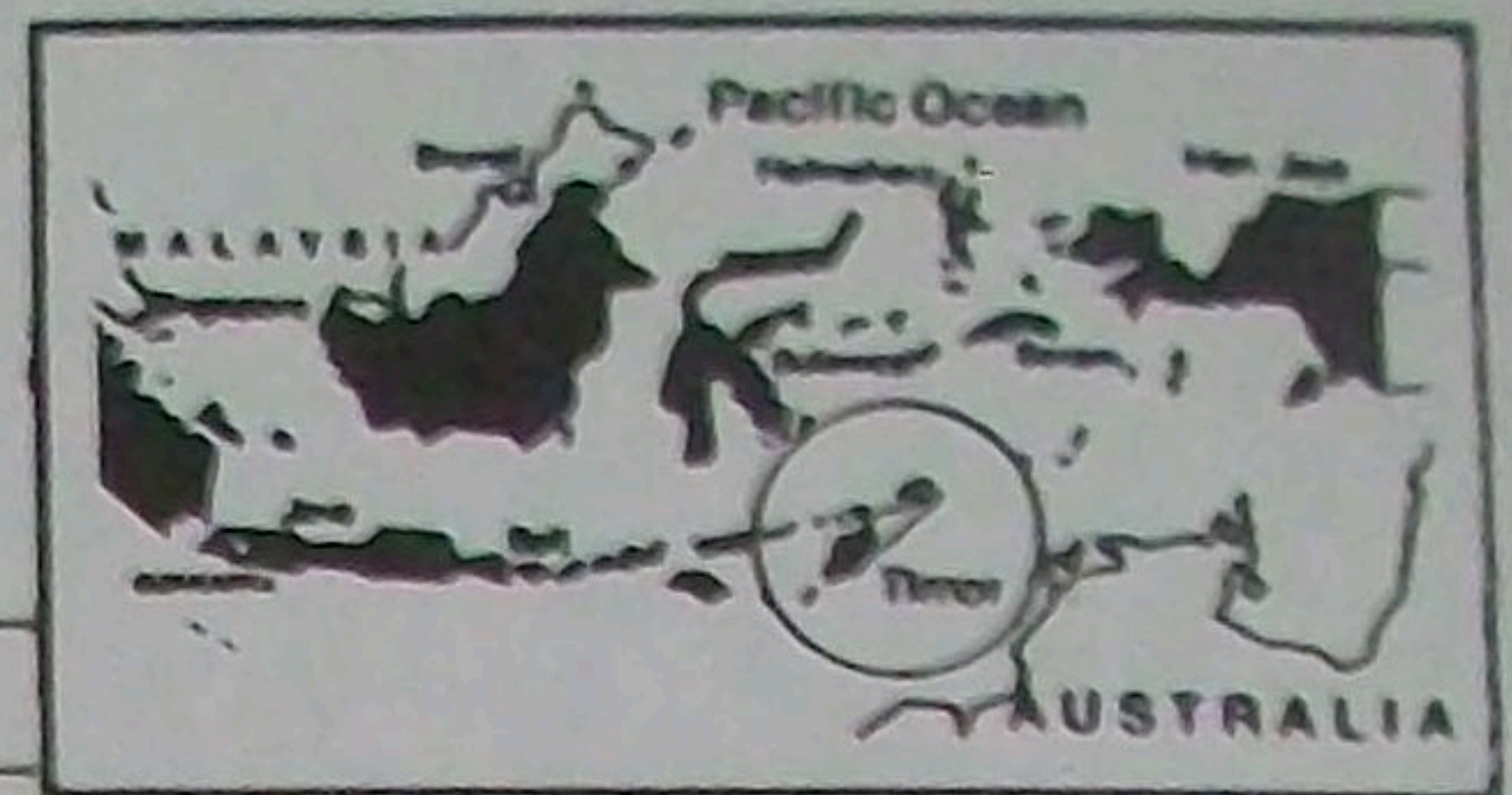


EAST TIMOR UPDATE

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"Law and order" regime brings new terror to East Timor

Many Canadians heard of East Timor for the first time when CBC's *The Journal* broadcast scenes from last Nov. 12, when Indonesian soldiers gunned down as many as 200 unarmed Timorese in cold blood at the Santa Cruz cemetery. The massacre, however, was just the beginning of a vicious crackdown in East Timor. This issue of *East Timor Update* is devoted to an account of the new "reign of terror". The article is an edited version of one published in the latest issue of the *Tapol Bulletin* (available in full from ETAN, 104-2120 West 44th, Vancouver BC, V6M 2G2).

While President Suharto in Jakarta and Foreign Minister Ali Alatas around the world have been engaged in "damage limitation" to convince other governments that the Nov. 12 Santa Cruz massacre was a "regrettable incident", the situation in East Timor has deteriorated. A reign of terror has eclipsed the occupied island. In particular the role of the hawkish Brig. General Theo Syaefi, the new army commander in East Timor, shows how "law and order" is being implemented.

Brig. General Theo Syaefi has made it a matter of prestige and a personal crusade to maintain "law and order" in East Timor. Ever since becoming army commander, he has repeatedly made it clear that he will not pursue the "soft" approach of his predecessor. General Theo, an old Timor hand, has put the clock back to the late seventies and early eighties, when military rule was virtually absolute. The "opening up" of the last three years is now on the way out; every measure taken by General Theo reinforces this.

From the moment he was appointed commander in January, Theo has made it clear that he is in charge. The press has published one warlike statement after another from the new commander, who makes no secret of his belligerent approach. Here are some examples (quotes from Indonesian press reports):

On the Santa Cruz killings:

...Thus, as I have said, if something similar to the 12 November event were to happen under my leadership, the number of victims would probably be higher.

On running East Timor:

Q: You have served in East Timor for nine years. What are the issues in Timorese society? Why do incidents occur so often?

TS: The crux of the matter is that in many cases we have not been decisive enough and have lacked consistency. Besides there are still factors which make East Timor unstable. We need to be more consistent.

Q: Why then do demonstrations still occur?

TS: It's like this. We thought that by showing love to the people, it would work both ways, but it didn't turn out like that on that day [the day of Santa Cruz bloodbath]. Our love was taken as being a sign of indecision and weakness. In the villages our programme functions well and is accepted. But in the city where things have been "polluted", it was interpreted as indecision, an attitude of wait-and-see. Moreover, there is fertile soil for agitation and propaganda with an estimated 8,000 people unemployed in Dili.

Q: About people's attitudes, what happens if they adopt an anti-Indonesia stance?

TS: That is impossible. This is the territory of the Republic of Indonesia.

Q: In the post 12 November period, it seems the security approach has been stepped up?

TS: I'm only restoring ABRI standards.

Demonstrations don't exist according to Indonesian law.

Tough words backed by tough measures

Syaefi's tough language has been backed by tough measures. East Timor, a little more relaxed in the period of "opening up", has now moved in the opposite direction, comparable to the early years after the invasion.

Neither the visit of United Nations special envoy Amos Wako nor the high-profile journey of the Peace Mission by the *Lusitania Expresso* led to demonstrations in Dili. The reason is clear: Theo left nothing to chance in his determination to forestall any disturbance.

From crack of dawn on the day of Wako's arrival, row upon row of troops were spread across the fields and in between the trees surrounding Comoro airport. The troops were stationed there from five in the morning and remained in place even in during a heavy

commanders, Sintong Panjaitan and Rudy Warouw, the thrust of Operasi Morris Diak [Operation Good Life] under Theo Syaefi has taken a different direction. Previously, the hearts-and-minds strategy of Morris Diak was implemented partly through persuasion. Theo Syaefi is now openly critical of his predecessor. Asked how his strategy differed from Brig. Gen. Warouw's, he said:

"The position and policy of ABRI [Indonesian armed forces] never change. Our mission is to bring stability in East Timor. In a technical sense our approaches are different. Pak Warouw had his love and caring approach. But as I see it, because of a different culture, his approach came to be seen as indecision. Some regard the soft approach as a weakness. I only want to stress the importance of restoring ABRI's credibility and to make sure that softness is by no means weakness. This is the position I want to put across. And indeed, this

possible to speak about a low intensity conflict in East Timor. All the ingredients are there: separating the guerrillas from the population, focusing on control of the population, combining military duties with civic duties and using all kinds of intelligence operations.

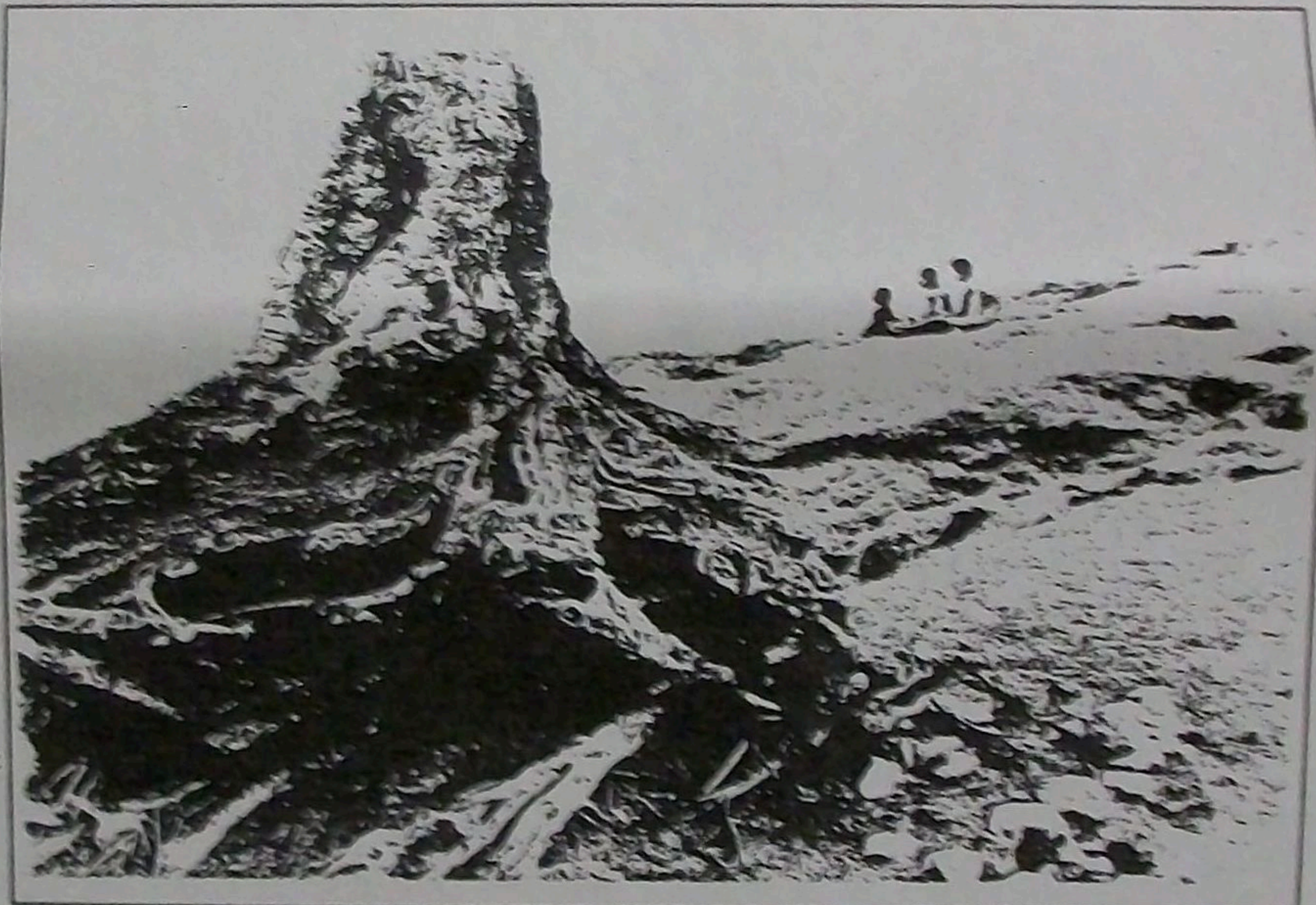
Nobody talks about "opening up" East Timor any more; the slender margins of the last three years have disappeared. It is back to the grim reality of absolute military rule in East Timor. Theo Syaefi, the archetype of a hardliner, clearly enjoys his new job. He wants to be known as a tough guy and his reign of terror is rampaging all over East Timor.

Terror confirmed by visitors

People who have visited East Timor since Santa Cruz confirm that brutality is a daily occurrence, with an atmosphere of fear and the military displaying their arrogance. The US journalist Peter Goodman, a freelancer based

"They go from house to house, warning people not to make trouble. The soldiers come and beat people up. Many are taken away for questioning and often disappear. The military has killed many in the last few months (since the Nov. 12 massacre)."

— unnamed Timorese man, Feb. 1992



downpour, to await the arrival of Wako.

During Wako's brief visit, General Syaefi personally inspected the town throughout the day. In the afternoon, drenched by the rain, he watched a local football match between two kampungs, to make sure it was only a football match. He spent the night in the room next to Wako's in Hotel Mahkota.

Theo Syaefi's overhaul

In the brief period since becoming commander, Syaefi has conducted a major overhaul of the structure. Although continuing the territorial operation of the two former

position has been accepted by many."

Syaefi's approach is fully backed by army headquarters in Jakarta. For Dili alone the Morris Diak territorial operation has been allotted 2.3 billion rupiahs (more than one million US dollars). This amounts to 88 million rupiahs for each of the 26 neighbourhoods in Dili. The objective is to drive the "anti-integrationists" into an impossible position. A special territorial battalion, Battalion "Red Bear"/641 from West Kalimantan, has been assigned for the job in Dili. It will stay for one year, with units in every one of the 26 neighbourhoods.

On average, 30 soldiers have been stationed in each neighbourhood in addition to the existing structures of military subdistrict, police subdistrict and para-military forces. As Timorese in Dili whisper: "Before, they were everywhere in the streets, now they have entered our bedrooms."

Under Warouw, there was still a grey area of people not openly expressing anti-integration feelings. But Theo Syaefi will only tolerate people being "with us or against us". There can be no "floating mass". People must either accept Indonesian domination or join the guerrillas. In El Salvador and the Philippines, the hearts-and-minds strategy came to be known as low intensity conflict; it is now

in Jakarta, visited East Timor in February and was told to leave because he did not possess a travel permit. He has given a graphic account of the situation in Dili:

"Dili is dominated by fear, the streets devoid of activity throughout much of the day. On one recent morning, virtually everyone had a quick look about to see who else might be in the area before saying so much as good morning to a foreigner. At least 10,000 Indonesian troops remain in East Timor and Dili has the air of a city under siege... While none of the dozen or so soldiers at ease on the sides of the field cared to say where the men were going, several East Timorese said troops have been entering villages frequently of late."

"They go from house to house, warning people not to make trouble," said an elderly East Timorese as he sat beneath an enormous banyan tree on the edge of the crumbling broadwalk that fronts the harbour. "The soldiers come and beat people up. Many are taken away for questioning and often disappear. The military has killed many in the last few months."

Life in East Timor under Indonesian occupation has always been wretched but under the hawkish Brig. Gen. Theo Syaefi, the situation is ten times worse.

Action of the Month

Bata Shoes, one of the top two Canadian companies investing in Indonesia (along with Inco), will be opening its new Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto this May (date to be announced). East Timor activists will be at the official opening of the museum to protest against Bata's appalling human rights practices in Indonesia and other countries around the world. Contact 416-531-6154.