

INDONESIA

# Canada could lift sanctions

By Louise Crosby  
Citizen foreign affairs writer

Canada may soon lift sanctions imposed on Indonesia when troops from that country killed dozens of people in East Timor last November, External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall said Monday.

Following a meeting with Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, McDougall said Canada is encouraged by Indonesia's efforts to "come to grips with the situation" by setting up an inquiry into the killings.

The inquiry commission's interim report "is evidence of the commitment of the Indonesian government to ensure that the perpetrators among the military and civilians will be brought to justice," she told reporters.

"There has been considerable progress in the attitude of the government of Indonesia. I can see a time when we would alter the policy we have taken regarding aid. We'll be looking for the follow-through on the interim report."

On Nov. 12, up to 150 unarmed, pro-independence demonstrators were killed by Indonesian troops in Dili, the capital of East Timor. Following protests by human rights groups, Canada suspended \$30 million in proposed aid projects to Indonesia.



—Rod MacIvor, Citizen

## McDougall listens as Alatas defends reaction to killings

The interim report by Indonesia's government-appointed commission put the number of dead at only 50 and called it a "spontaneous reaction (by) the security personnel to defend themselves." It said the incident "does not reflect the policy of the government or the armed forces."

Two generals have been replaced but no charges have been laid. The report does not contain any recommendations to prevent similar violence

by the army in the future.

Alatas is touring western capitals to defend the commission's findings. "What is important is for people and governments abroad to evaluate the (Indonesian) government's response, to judge us by what we are doing to overcome this incident," he said.

According to Amnesty International, the mandate and methods of the commission were "fatally flawed and its findings are unac-

ceptable." Since the incident, more than 60 Timorese have been imprisoned in connection with the incident, and some or all of may be prisoners of conscience, Amnesty says.

Allan Nairn, a writer for *New Yorker* magazine who witnessed the massacre, said Monday the interim report is a "lie" and McDougall "is letting herself be deceived or is knowingly overlooking the facts."

Nairn, who this month testified before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, said it is Indonesian government policy to crack down on anyone who engages in free speech and public assembly.

Nairn said Alatas is on a "damage-control tour because the world has condemned the massacre." Suspension of aid by donor countries would pressure Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor, which it has occupied since 1975, he said.

Indonesia receives about \$46 million a year in direct government-to-government assistance, making it Canada's second-largest recipient of bilateral aid. That assistance was left intact when Canada imposed aid sanctions.

Indonesia is also one of Canada's biggest trading partners in Southeast Asia, with two-way trade totaling about \$500 million last year.

# Withholding aid isn't the way to

**A**li Alatas is the skilled and admired foreign minister for a very bad government. But that's not why his visit to Ottawa was bound to make this a complicated Monday for Barbara McDougall.

Alatas is a professional diplomat of integrity and achievement. He was a useful ambassador at the United Nations; he helped organize the peace in Cambodia; he is a clever and valued interlocutor for Canada in the turbulence of Southeast Asia.

He works for the government of Indonesia, a thuggish machine guarded by generals and greased with graft. In 1975 the Indonesian government invaded the former Portuguese colony of East Timor, and has since enforced its occupation with episodes of slaughter.

Last Nov. 12, in a cemetery in East Timor, Indonesian soldiers opened fire into a crowd. More than 100 people were killed, eye-witnesses said.

McDougall, like other foreign ministers, expressed official outrage. This month Alatas has been visiting world capitals to put the best gloss on the event and its aftermath — and reassure aid-givers of his government's good intentions in the protection of human rights.



**JOHN  
HAY**

Citizen  
staff

## CANADA'S WORLD

But Indonesia's bad government is not what complicates McDougall's day. Her problem is her own bad strategy: the attempt to use Canadian foreign aid to compel Indonesia's good behavior.

On Dec. 9 the external affairs minister announced the suspension of three new aid projects in Indonesia, deferring approvals worth \$30 million over an unspecified number of years. (There was no interruption of schemes already under way, this year worth \$46 million.)

It was a natural response to the popular outcry in Canada against the Suharto regime. But it was singularly unlikely to do much good in Indonesia.

"This was a most inappropriate place to use

## persuade nations to protect rights

aid as a weapon," one Canadian official quietly conceded last week. "It is a place where we have our own interests to protect, and virtually no leverage."

He was right. Canada's interests — economic, political, security — lie with developing extensive relations with Indonesia, a huge and growing regional power of 180 million people. But the leverage of aid is wispy-thin; Canada's \$46 million comes to less than one per cent of the \$5 billion in aid Indonesia will get this year.

Still another complication in the McDougall strategy: Even if it works, how could we tell? Without clear standards of human-rights performance, manipulating aid can scarcely have any measurable influence. But what standards?

Today, for instance, McDougall was briefed to quiz Alatas on his government's corrective actions after the cemetery massacre. She wanted to know about prosecutions, and about transparency and verifiability in the processes of reform.

Alatas, in turn, arrived with answers ready. Generals removed. Prosecutors at work. And President Suharto (an ex-general) terribly, terribly sorry for the soldiers' misconduct.

Would that satisfy McDougall? Should it? The

questions defied reliable answers — proving the disutility of the policy.

And there are other reasons to think aid is an unfit instrument of human-rights persuasion.

First, withholding aid (aid that really helps) frequently hurts the poor most. Far better to *increase* aid where governments are bad — and divert it to non-governmental deliverers.

Second, it is impossible in practice to calibrate aid to the general conditions of human rights, or to a government's fine intentions. Suspending aid will always tend to have too little effect, or too much.

And third, suspending aid fails as a symbolic gesture. The results are too ambiguous.

Following Indonesia's own inquiry into the cemetery massacre, for example, Denmark and the Netherlands are both resuming aid. Yet Amnesty International insists that abuses "have not stopped."

Did the Danes and Dutch get results? Or were they just too impatient and selfish? What does President Suharto think?

Complicated, eh? McDougall has no doubt tried to do right, and done wrong.

Feb. 25/92.

THE STAR  
(TORONTO)

WORLD

# McDougall may lift Indonesian sanctions

By Tim Harper  
TORONTO STAR

OTTAWA — External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall signalled yesterday she's prepared to restore aid to Indonesia, less than four months after its troops massacred a group of mourners at a funeral in occupied East Timor.

McDougall made the comments after a 90-minute meeting here with Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, on a tour of Western capitals his critics have dismissed as a "public relations tour."

Canada suspended \$30 million in promised funding for new projects in Indonesia last December to protest the shooting of the mourners, which, according to witnesses, claimed more than 100 lives.

Alatas has indicated only 19 people died and said soldiers were forced to fire in self-defence.

"I would hope there would come a time — if things work out like I expect them to — that we would alter this policy," McDougall said following the meeting.

She said she believes the Indonesian government has made "considerable progress in attitude."

"We have no reason to believe the government will not



**BARBARA McDOUGALL:**  
Cites Indonesia's "progress in attitude."

live up to its commitment and I would hope that we will be able to achieve a normal relationship in this area."

In the House of Commons, under questioning from NDP external affairs critic Svend Robinson, McDougall said the government does not necessarily accept an Amnesty International report on the Nov. 12 massacre.

Amnesty reported the government-appointed National Commission of Inquiry was "fatally-flawed and unacceptable" and that the government in Jakarta

has continued to execute and wrongfully imprison opponents in East Timor while pretending to investigate the shootings.

After the news conference, American writer Allan Nairn said: "I am a survivor of the massacre . . . and the Indonesian report is a lie."

"It seems Minister McDougall is either letting herself be deceived or is knowingly overlooking the facts."

The Liberals also said they cannot understand how McDougall is making her judgment.

"Nothing has changed over there. How can she say she doesn't agree with Amnesty International when we've got proof from eyewitnesses?" said Liberal human rights critic Beryl Gaffney.

Alatas told a news conference the massacre was "essentially a tragedy."

But he said there was a lot of exaggeration and anti-Indonesian campaigning under way by opponents who are trying to discredit his government.

Demonstrators staged a silent vigil outside the Indonesian consulate in downtown Toronto yesterday to protest human rights violations in East Timor, The Star's Cal Millar reports.

Members of the East Timor Alert Network and ACT for Disarmament organized the demonstration.

## Defending human rights

Your Feb. 9 editorial claims Canada is all talk and no action when it comes to human rights. I could not disagree more.

Promoting human rights involves a lot more than punishing dictators. It also involves increasing aid to countries that are improving human rights, helping them to establish democratic legal systems, and providing support for rights-abuse victims. On virtually every point, Canada's record is strong on action.

For example, we have helped with elections in Nicaragua, Zambia, Namibia, Haiti, and other countries. We helped establish units for democratic development in the OAS, the CSCE, the Commonwealth and La Francophonie. We have helped to fund ombudsmen, co-operatives and aid to families of prisoners in South Africa. We have also supported non-governmental organizations and others in promoting rights.

Our policy is not self-righteous. We recognize that no country has a perfect rights record. That is why we temper our criticisms with a willingness to help in pragmatic ways. We also recognize that no two countries are the same, and they are constantly changing. Should we cut off aid or trade with a country which may have a poor human rights record, but is making efforts to turn things around? What about a country with a relatively good record, where the situation is deteriorating? You surely wouldn't argue that the inability of Canada to solve these situations magically disqualifies us from expressing concern about rights violations.

One would hope your suggestion that the media no longer report on our human rights statements was tongue-in-cheek.

Barbara McDougall, Minister for External Affairs  
Ottawa

, Friday, February 28, 1992

## WORLD IN BRIEF

### Army officers fired

JAKARTA — Three Indonesian army officers have been fired and four others face trials for a massacre that left at least 140 anti-Indonesian protesters dead or missing in East Timor last fall, authorities said yesterday. The incident in the province's capital on Nov. 12 drew strong international criticism.

AP

## INDONESIA

# Canada accepts explanation of East Timor massacre

By Dave Todd

Southam News for the Citizen

GENEVA — Canada told the United Nations Human Rights Commission on Tuesday that it supports Indonesia's explanation of a massacre committed by its troops in East Timor in November.

Many of the world's leading human rights organizations consider the Indonesian government's report a travesty of justice, and say the inquiry it produced failed to meet even minimum UN standards for investigation of such atrocities.

Dozens of Timorese pro-democracy demonstrators were shot dead in the former Portuguese colony's capital of Dili Nov. 12. The incident occurred during a funeral procession for a slain supporter. The event was televised around the world because of the presence of a British camera crew filming a documentary.

"The interim report of the Indonesian commission of inquiry and the prompt response of the Indonesian government are very encouraging," said Anne Park, Canada's chief delegate to the UNHRC's annual session in Geneva.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian government has announced further efforts to shield East Timor from outside scrutiny, closing the island to foreign journalists "indefinitely," the British Broadcasting Corp. reported today.

Amnesty International said Feb. 6 that the official Indonesian report on what happened, now praised by Canada, contains a "most shocking" conclusion that unarmed demonstrators were responsible for provoking Indonesian soldiers into committing the killings.

The Canadian government's statement Tuesday raises no concerns about any of the contents of the official Indonesian version, noting only "we shall await with strong interest the actual implementation of this report, and the assurance that the military personnel responsible will be brought to justice."

Indonesia's conclusion that the Dili massacre was the result of Indonesian troops flaring out of control, as opposed to a planned attack, is sharply disputed by surviving victims of the shooting, backed up by what foreign journalists' cameras recorded.

Globe & Mail  
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## Indonesia rejects aid idea

BY JEFF SALLOT  
Parliamentary Bureau

OTTAWA — Indonesian foreign minister Ali Alatas, whose government has been severely criticized by international human-rights groups, yesterday rejected the Canadian government's idea that foreign aid to his country should be linked to its record on human rights.

Canada froze \$30-million in new foreign-aid projects to Indonesia after the massacre of scores of civilians in East Timor by Indonesian security forces last November, but kept in place existing programs valued at about \$46-million a year.

Ottawa is reconsidering whether to go ahead with the new projects. External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall strongly suggested after a meeting with Mr. Alatas here yesterday that the Canadian government will base its decision on whether the officials and soldiers responsible for the massacre are brought to justice.

But Mr. Alatas flatly rejected the idea that foreign development assistance should have "strings attached."

In an interview at a federal government guest house, Mr. Alatas said: "While we understand the political context and principles adhered to by the Canadian government, the question of aid and linking it to questions of human rights we do not feel is either very productive or a very rational thing to do."

The foreign minister also said "development aid being mixed with political strings, we cannot accept it. We have never accepted it and I don't think we'll accept it in the future."

Mr. Alatas said that while the \$30-million in new foreign aid programs would be welcomed, it is relatively small in terms of the almost \$5-billion Indonesia receives in aid from other countries.

Canada and Indonesia have a growing trade relationship that has been to Canada's benefit. Canada exports plastics, cereals and some chemical products to Indonesia and imports woollens, cloth and rubber products. Canada enjoyed a \$105-million trade surplus with Indonesia in 1990.

## Ottawa ponders easing sanctions on Indonesia

WARREN CARAGATA  
CANADIAN PRESS

OTTAWA — Canada is leaning toward lifting sanctions against Indonesia, applied last year after a massacre in East Timor, External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall said yesterday after meeting for more than an hour with Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas.

"I can see a time where we would alter the policy that we have taken regarding aid," McDougall said.

The Canadian government suspended three new aid projects worth about \$30 million but did not touch the bulk of its aid effort, worth \$46 million this year.

McDougall accepted assurances from Alatas that Indonesia aims to bring to justice those involved when soldiers opened fire on 3,500 mourners at a funeral in the East Timor capital of Dili. More than 100 people were killed.

"There has been considerable progress," McDougall said. "We believe that the government of Indonesia is very strongly attempting to come to grips with the situation."

She said she does not necessarily agree with an assessment by Amnesty International, a human-rights

group, that the massacre was part of a pattern of human-rights abuses in East Timor.

Canadian officials point out that Canada has taken sterner measures than most countries and has left sanctions on longer.

But opposition critics said McDougall should get even tougher in supporting the rights of the East Timor people.

MP Christine Stewart, the Liberal Party's associate critic for human rights, said virtually all aid to Indonesia should be cancelled. Only projects that actually help reduce poverty should be continued.

Allan Nairn, a correspondent for the New Yorker magazine who witnessed the November massacre, said Indonesia is so dependent on foreign aid that it would change its East Timor policy in the face of a concerted Western protest.

East Timor, at the eastern edge of the Indonesian archipelago, was invaded by Indonesia in 1975. An independence movement has fought the Indonesian army for years.

Alatas said the purpose of his tour of foreign capitals is to explain Indonesia's actions since last November's killings in Dili.

He said he hopes foreign governments will take a "more balanced" view of the situation.

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