

The East Timor *Estafeta*

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Voice of the East Timor Action Network/U.S.

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Congress Bars Use of U.S.-Supplied Weapons in East Timor

by Charles Scheiner

The US Congress voted on November 13, 1997 to block the use of US weapons in occupied East Timor, placing an unprecedented restriction on US arms sales to Indonesia. The legislation was signed into law by President Clinton on November 26.

The vote came as the White House was offering a financial bailout for Indonesia, and on the eve of extensive discussions between high US officials and General Suharto, Indonesia's long-standing dictator.

It deals a severe blow to Suharto and his embattled regime, and may endanger all future weapons deals between Washington and Jakarta. According to US Embassy sources in Jakarta, there have been no sales or proposed sales in the four months since the bill was passed. "Perhaps we should put one through to see what happens," they joked.

The new legislation, included in the FY 1998 Foreign Operations Appropriations Law requires that any contract to sell lethal equipment to Indonesia "state that the United States expects that the items will not be used in East Timor."

The Indonesian government has stated repeatedly that it will not accept conditions on weapons sales, particularly conditions tied to its record on human rights. Last June, Suharto canceled a pending F-16 fighter plane deal because

members of Congress were talking about attaching human rights conditions.

The bar, sponsored by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), was crafted in House-Senate Conference Committee with unanimous bipartisan support. Senator Russell Feingold (D-WI) and Representatives Nita Lowey (D-NY), Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Frank Wolf (R-VA) played key roles in passage of the East Timor related language in the bill. ETAN mounted an extensive grassroots campaign on behalf of the legislation.

This new law puts Jakarta on the spot. From now on, every time they sign a deal to acquire weapons from the United States, they will essentially have to agree not to use those arms in occupied East Timor. The bill is a political milestone because Congress implicitly recognizes that, despite the Suharto regime's claims, East Timor is distinct from Indonesia.

The East Timor weapons ban is the latest in a series of tightening restrictions imposed by the US Congress on the sale of arms to Indonesia. Public and Congressional pressure blocked a transfer of F-5 fighters in 1993, and under similar
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Pentagon Documents Show Indonesian Military Training Continues Despite Congressional Ban

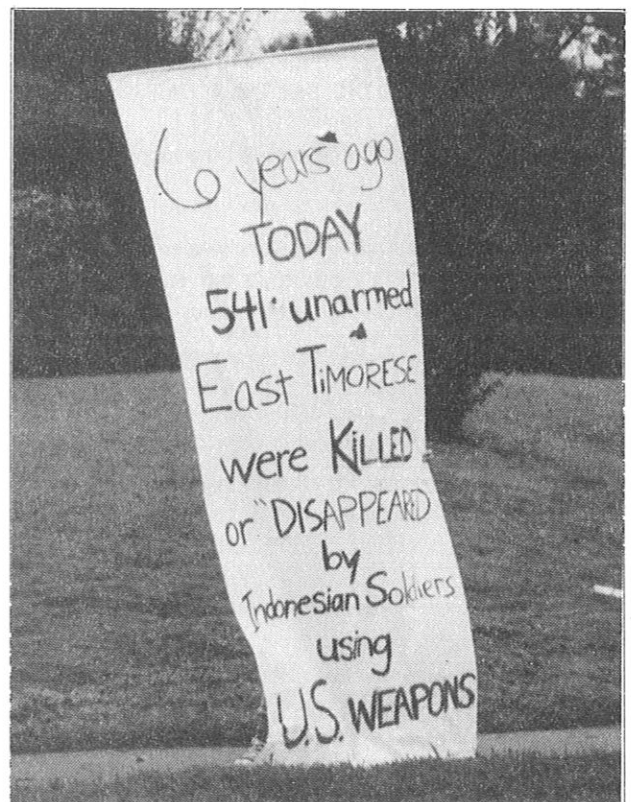
by Kyle Perkins and Charles Scheiner

On March 17, veteran journalist and ETAN activist Allan Nairn, in Jakarta, Indonesia, released newly acquired Pentagon documents revealing ongoing US training of the Indonesian KOPASSUS and other Indonesian military forces responsible for severe human rights abuses. The Pentagon programs described in these documents, including Air Assaults, Urban Warfare, PSYOPS, Demolitions, and Advanced Sniper Techniques have been provided some 36 times from 1992-1997 without Congressional knowledge and despite Congressional bans on similar training. They are called Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET). The documents were obtained from the Pentagon by Congressman Lane Evans (D-IL) in response to a request from ETAN, which had suspected ongoing training.

Nairn, whom the Suharto regime tagged a "threat to national security" was later arrested and deported. During Nairn's interrogation he was shown the order barring him from Indonesia and threatened with imprisonment should he violate the order again. He was also told that he could be imprisoned for 5 years for practicing journalism without permission.

In the March 30 edition of *The Nation* magazine, Nairn wrote: "Newly obtained Pentagon documents and interviews with key US officials indicate

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About East Timor and the East Timor Action Network

Estafeta is the Portuguese word for messenger. In East Timor, it is used for the young people who, with great courage and ingenuity, carry messages throughout the resistance and civilian underground.

East Timor is a half-island the size of Massachusetts located 400 miles northwest of Australia. It was a Portuguese colony for four centuries, and its 600,000 people briefly tasted independence following the anti-fascist Portuguese revolution in 1974. But peace and nationhood was short-lived.

On December 7, 1975, Indonesia invaded East Timor after getting the "green light" from President Ford and Secretary Kissinger. Indonesian armed forces still occupy East Timor, with essential military and diplomatic support provided by the United States.

More than 200,000 East Timorese people (one-third of the pre-invasion population) have been killed by massacre, forced starvation and disease. But the people of East Timor continue to struggle for their legal and moral right to self-determination.

Systematic campaigns of rape, murder, torture and arbitrary arrest have terrorized the population, and natural resources (including oil, coffee and marble) were pillaged by Indonesian dictator Suharto's military-business complex. Massive human rights violations persist: during 1997, the East Timor Human Rights Centre documented 771 arbitrary arrests, 52 deaths, and 155 incidents of torture, in spite of increased attention following the award of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize to two East Timorese leaders.

Heightened international awareness of the horror of East Timor arose after November 12, 1991, when Indonesian soldiers acting under high-level orders killed more than 270 nonviolent demonstrators at Santa Cruz Cemetery in Dili, East Timor. Unlike many previous such massacres, this one was witnessed by foreign journalists, whose video footage and photographs documented the incredible courage of the youthful demonstrators – and the horrific inhumanity of the Indonesian army.

The East Timor Action Network was created in response to the Dili massacre. ETAN is a grassroots movement of more than 7,000 members, with local chapters in 18 cities and states. We work for

human rights and political self-determination for the people of East Timor. Changing US government policy is key to ending Indonesia's occupation. We in the US have the freedom to engage in peaceful protest with (to say the least) much less risk than East Timorese and Indonesians; it's a privilege we shouldn't take for granted.

East Timor is not essential to Indonesia - Foreign Minister Ali Alatas has called it "a pebble in our shoe." ETAN embraces tactics from public education to protest, lobbying to local organizing, resource production to media work. We helped stop US military training aid to

Indonesia in 1992, and have maintained limitations on such aid ever since. Our grassroots pressure led to cancellation of several major weapons sales to Indonesia, including F-5 and F-16 warplanes, and helped to achieve a prohibition on US exports to Indonesia of small arms, riot control equipment, armored vehicles and helicopter-mounted equipment. Last November, we pushed into law an effective ban on the use of US weapons in East Timor, and we are now working to stop all US military

support for the Indonesian army.

More and more Indonesians are working to replace Suharto with a democratic government, and many in that movement endorse self-determination for the East Timorese. ETAN works closely with such Indonesians and others struggling against the Jakarta regime.

Since ETAN's formation in 1991, Indonesia has spent many times our budget for lobbying and public relations. But we have what their money can't buy - the support of people who believe in basic human values. We maintain an office in Washington, where staffer Lynn Fredriksson educates politicians and increases awareness of East Timor in the Capitol. Kristin Sundell, our full-time field organizer, travels the country, training activists, starting new ETAN chapters and sparking grassroots pressure on elected representatives and corporations.

ETAN is made up of people like you who contact their representatives in Washington, protest, and educate others about the situation in East Timor. We survive on your generous donations of time, talent and money. Please join us, and thank you. ■



The East Timor *Estafeta* is the quarterly publication of the East Timor Action Network of the United States. We welcome your comments and suggestions aimed at improving the newsletter.

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U.S. Should Help East Timor

by Lynn Fredriksson, ETAN Washington representative

I traveled to East Timor last November to witness the devastating results of two decades of occupation, of 200,000 deaths, first hand.

Many of the inhabitants are destitute and malnourished. Military repression is severe; 40,000 Indonesian troops control a population of 800,000. Soldiers are everywhere—marching on the streets, quartered in the capital city, and standing guard in outposts between towns. East Timor is like a large prison.

On November 12, I watched hundreds of courageous university student protesters hold a peaceful candlelight vigil, commemorating those who died in the massacre in 1991, when the Indonesian military fired on unarmed demonstrators at Dili's Santa Cruz cemetery, killing more than 250. Afterwards, the military hunted down and killed hundreds of the survivors. At this year's protest, scores of Indonesian police in riot gear lined up opposite the demonstrators. Many held rifles at hip level, trained on the students. The atmosphere was painfully tense.

I witnessed no shooting. But after I left the university, Indonesian police arrested me, and interrogated me for more than ten hours. They expelled me from Indonesia the following day for alleged "illegal journalistic activities."

I was lucky; I'm an American. Indonesia depends on US largesse

to maintain its occupation. If I had been East Timorese, things could have been much different: torture, beatings, and extrajudicial executions are commonplace in Indonesian-occupied East Timor.

Two days after the vigil I saw, Indonesian soldiers entered the university and, provoking an incident, shot at least six students and arrested many more. No one died, but the wounded were taken to a military hospital where they faced further danger. Three who disappeared that day are still missing. Recently, six of the students have gone on trial on Orwellian charges of "torturing" three members of the armed forces that day.

Ironically, while Indonesian forces were arresting East Timorese students and detaining me in Dili, our Congress voted to bar the use of US weapons in East Timor. This new law acknowledges the separateness of East Timor from Indonesia as well as the military's ongoing human rights abuses. This is an important step. But it's not enough.

The East Timorese want an internationally-supervised referendum on self-determination. No other human right will be secure until this one is realized. The Clinton administration could help to unlock the prison that is East Timor simply by actively supporting a referendum.

Given the long, shameful role five US administrations have played in backing this brutal occupation, we owe the people of East Timor no less. ■

Youth Resistance in East Timor

by Sonya Hurston, ETAN Northern California

On July 17, 1976, Indonesia officially "integrated" East Timor as its newest province. While I was in East Timor last July, I went to an artificial, ill-attended ceremony celebrating this anniversary, where an East Timorese college student befriended me. As we listened to official speeches about development, she said, "Indonesia has built more schools, but no one teaches or learns inside these schools. There are more roads to tote military troops from one end of the island to the other. This is not development. This is an illegal occupation." Before we parted company, this young woman gave me a message to carry to the US stating "Viva Xanana" (the jailed leader of the Timorese resistance), "Viva Ramos-Horta," "Viva Bishop Belo" and "Support a UN referendum for East Timor."

Later, in the crammed public bus in Dili, my ears adjust to the electronic pop music. "Are you from Australia?" a young East Timorese asks me. "I'm from the US." "Are you a journalist?" "I am a tourist," I say, knowing that journalists were recently expelled from East Timor. "Yes, well, no one can speak the truth here," he says so softly I must strain to hear. The song on the radio is in Tetum, the indigenous language of East Timor. The hip hop beat masks the sorrow of the words: "I went to town with hope, but came home to great sorrow. All of the men in my town have been killed; the women sit crying for their pain and loss. East Timor is our home, but it has been taken from us. With good faith in the Lord, we will find peace; we will find justice."

The 1996 Nobel Peace Prize for Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and resistance leader José Ramos-Horta raised East Timor's

international profile. But inside East Timor, the level of killings, rapes and torture is, according to Church officials and human rights observers, worse than it has been for five years. Arbitrary arrests and disappearances have increased dramatically. One priest in Baucau told me that "the military often arrest youth late at night. They take them from their homes without any information given to their parents. They interrogate them for hours, sometimes days, boys and girls as young as 10 years old."

I didn't have to ask many questions. Local people were anxious to expose me to what I couldn't see. Anywhere away from the eyes and ears of Indonesian Intelligence there were disturbing stories. Every East Timorese I met had lost some family member to the occupation. A taxi driver told me how his parents were both killed in front of him and his sister raped by Indonesian soldiers. A woman in Dili told me of the hundreds of dead bodies thrown into this port by the Indonesian military. On a mountain overlooking Dili, a group of young women told me how East Timorese women are sterilized against their will. A young man in Dili told me that he will not marry because he knows that if he is caught doing resistance work, his wife will be raped and tortured.

There is a desperate sense of urgency in East Timor. Young people constantly renew their commitment to resistance, but they depend on international awareness and support. "All we ask for is self-determination," one man told me. "This is a basic human right."

As I left East Timor, my thoughts returned to the upbeat song with the heart-breaking lyrics that I heard throughout Dili. I couldn't help but be overwhelmed by the senselessness of the suffering this tough, resilient people experiences on a daily basis. ■

Even before Indonesia's current economic/political crisis, ETAN identified the economic aspects of the US-Indonesia relationship as one of the most important and sensitive elements in Washington's support for Suharto. We are developing a national campaign around state and local legislation to limit taxpayer money going to companies complicit in the Jakarta regime's continuing brutal occupation of East Timor. A bill has already been introduced in Massachusetts,

and several more are expected in the next few weeks. This fall, we hope to have such legislation under consideration in cities and states across the US. Please read the following articles, and think about what you can do in your own community. If you want to join ETAN's Economic Campaign Task Force to further develop the campaign, contact Kristin Sundell or Mulaika Hijjas, 397 Cabot Mail Centre, Cambridge, MA 02138; 617-493-6135 or hijjas@husc.harvard.edu.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: ETAN's Selective Purchasing and Divestment Campaign

by Simon Doolittle, ETAN/Boston

What would these ETAN-initiated selective purchasing and divestment bills do?

These bills are intended for use at the city and state level. At minimum, they would restrict the city or state from doing business with companies that fall into the following three categories:

(a) Companies doing business directly with the Indonesian dictatorship.

(b) Companies selling arms to the regime.

(c) Companies drilling for oil in the East Timorese part of the Timor Gap under illegal agreements with the Indonesian dictatorship (according to international law and 10 United Nations resolutions, Indonesia has no legal jurisdiction over East Timor or its oil).

These bills would also restrict the state or city from investing funds in the above companies or doing business with banks which have outstanding loans used to finance the activities listed above.

How exactly will these bills help?

These bills confront the Indonesian regime in the language it understands best: money. Large corporations, including many based in the US, provide the economic support the Suharto regime needs to maintain its hold on Indonesia and East Timor.

A small circle of elites connected to the Indonesian dictator Suharto and his family controls a vast portion of the country's wealth.

Historically, the incredible wealth and natural resources controlled by the Suharto family has translated into overwhelming military, political, and diplomatic support for the regime from countries like the United States.

Targeting these economic ties is one of the most powerful tactics available to struggle for human rights and self-determination for East Timor. Selective purchasing and divestment bills are the first steps.

Can one city or state have an impact?

YES! Similar local initiatives were very effective against apartheid in South Africa. In the 80s, twenty-five states and 150 cities passed South Africa sanctions bills. This was part of the popular groundswell of conscience which eventually led to federal action and contributed significantly to the downfall of apartheid. It's true, one city or state alone cannot force a change in Indonesia's deadly practices in East Timor. But a nationwide coordinated effort, like the one ETAN is undertaking, can be very effective.

Shouldn't international issues be left to the federal government?

A similar initiative for East Timor will never begin at the federal level because the US government is concerned with maintaining corporate interests in Indonesia. Five American presidents and their

administrations have refused to take a stand on East Timor, and only recently has Congress taken action. State and city action is necessary to provide the momentum, which may force the federal government to respond (as it did with apartheid).

Won't these bills be bad for local governments?

All of the bills have clauses stating that if there are no other options available or the restrictions cause an undue financial burden the state may do business with companies falling into the proscribed categories. Further, although the bills deny state contracts for some companies, they do not restrict these companies from conducting private business in the city or state.

Won't these bills hurt the people of East Timor?

Very few (if any) of the companies affected by the legislation benefit the East Timorese people through their business dealings with the Indonesian government. And the other two categories of targeted corporations – those stealing Timorese oil or supplying occupation forces with weaponry – contribute greatly to the suffering of the East Timorese people.

Right now the Indonesian people are suffering from an economic crisis. Wouldn't these bills "kick them while they're down"?

These bills are highly unlikely to damage Indonesia economically. Instead, they would pressure companies to push the Indonesian government to end its brutal occupation of East Timor. A strong message will be sent by local governments which refuse to support the Indonesian dictatorship. The economic interests of most companies in Indonesia are so great that they are very unlikely to completely withdraw from the country. But the Indonesian regime is extremely sensitive to messages it receives from both business partners and city or state governments. Members of the regime have begun to ask whether the occupation of East Timor is worth the costs.

Because the current economic crisis has put so much pressure on Indonesian officials, now is the perfect time to send this important message. In addition, the narrow focus of these legislative initiatives (see the list in the first question above) ensures that any economic impact on average Indonesians would be minimal to nonexistent. Even if some companies eventually stop doing business with Indonesia (which, as mentioned above, is an unlikely possibility), the focus of the bills on a select few categories of companies means that this campaign will primarily be felt by the ruling elites.

The targeted nature of these bills prevents them from resulting in the extreme destruction and civilian suffering that all out American embargoes or sanctions entail.

For more information, please contact Kristin Sundell or Mulaika Hijjas. ■

Divestment and Selective Purchasing Laws: A How To Guide

Adapted from "Selective Purchasing Laws: A How-to Guide" by Simon Billenness, Franklin Research and Development

Commitment

A selective purchasing campaign requires a significant commitment of time. A campaign at the city level requires more than 6 months of hard work. Statewide legislation takes longer than a year. A campaign will include educating and organizing state and city legislators, their aides, and their staff as well as building political support for the legislation. However, keep in mind that simply getting a selective purchasing and divestment measure introduced and scheduling a public hearing for the bill can be enormously effective, even if the bill itself never passes. These initial steps can be achieved quite easily with the help and support of a friendly state or city legislator. ETAN National will gladly help to organize and provide people to testify at a public hearing. For more information, contact Kristin Sundell.

Learn the "System"

The first step is to learn both the process and politics of the city council or the state legislature. You will need to know what steps a piece of legislation must go through before becoming law. More importantly, you need a thorough understanding of the political make-up of the council. What are their politics and how do they work together? Who are your natural supporters and who might oppose the legislation?

Find Allies & Build A Coalition

You will need to seek out resource people to help you get the information you need. Have divestment or selective purchasing bills been introduced on other issues in your state or city (i.e. South Africa, Burma, or Nigeria)? If so, talk to the folks who worked on these bills.

You will also want to talk with potential organizational allies (i.e. labor rights activists, church organizations, folks working for democracy in Indonesia, groups with a broad human rights focus). Some of these activists will also have experience with state/city politics in your area. You will need to use your best judgement to put together a bill which is both enforceable and has broad-based support in your area. Bills will vary from state to state and city to city, but as a general rule bills

should not target all corporations doing business in Indonesia. We suggest that bills focus on specific categories of corporations:

1) Corporations involved in manufacturing and selling weapons to Indonesia.

2) Corporations drilling for oil and gas in the Timor Gap.

3) Corporations doing business with the Suharto dictatorship

These bills should not be linked to or reference bills pertaining to Burma. Instead, bills may be based on and make reference to divestment and selective purchasing laws which were passed on South Africa. This is a far stronger comparison as it links the Indonesia bills to a completed and successful campaign rather than to an unfinished and ongoing struggle.

Find a Sponsor

Once you understand the procedures and personalities that make up your city council or state legislature, you need to pick a sponsor or sponsors for the bill. It is better to choose a legislator who is moderate or a consensus builder. Since the issue of human rights in East Timor cuts across political and party lines, work to attract varied, bipartisan sponsors.

Work with Staff

Unless you win over the city or state staff responsible for purchasing, the law may not be implemented properly. Meet with the appropriate staff people and explain the importance of Indonesia/East Timor selective purchasing laws. Work with the staff to ensure that the bill will be both effective and relatively easy for them to implement when it becomes law. Research the impact of the law in your state/city. Reference the list of corporations impacted by the sample legislation (contact ETAN/US for a copy of the list). Ask the city/state purchasing staff for a report on the dollar amount of contracts that the city/state currently has with the targeted companies. You will want to concentrate your energies on educating yourselves about corporations that your particular city/state does a lot of business with or corporations that have their headquarters or factories located in your city/state.

Writing Legislation

Insist on a binding ordinance that requires the city or state to avoid buying from the targeted corporations. Try not to settle for

a non-binding resolution. To prevent adverse impact on the city or state, you may want to include procedures that allow the city/state to waive the purchasing restrictions if it cannot find an alternative vendor without incurring a "substantial" financial burden. ETAN will have a "model bill" you can start with.

Selective purchasing and divestment bills are one of the best methods available for activists to act locally in solidarity with the people of East Timor. These bills cut the lines of economic support to the Suharto regime and corporations directly involved in the suffering of the East Timorese people by preventing targeted corporations from receiving government contracts and preventing particular cities or states from investing public funds in targeted corporations. These bills provide an excellent vehicle for educating local legislators about East Timor and generating press coverage on the issue. They also provide a valuable opportunity to energize (or create) a local chapter, involve new activists, and build coalitions with human rights, environmental, religious, and labor organizations.

ETAN strongly encourages local activists to work with their state, city, or county legislators to get these bills introduced and passed. Working on these local bills is one of the most important things we can do to build on our continuing efforts to change U.S. policy towards East Timor. For sample legislation & more information, contact Kristin Sundell at etanfield@igc.apc.org or 617-868-6600 x319.

Build Support

Passing legislation is a continual struggle. Your most important task after getting the measure introduced is to generate a constant stream of support for it. Ask your sponsors to send regular "dear colleague" letters to the other city council members, providing information and asking for their support. Obtain letters of support from local, national and international organizations (such as Human Rights Watch, Peace Action, and organizations of Timorese living in exile). You should also generate a steady flow of letters from local organizations.

Most importantly, encourage as many people as possible to write and call their local city council member or state legislator. Sometimes it just takes one letter from a constituent to make a difference. ■

ACTION ALERT UPDATE

Torture and Fear of Torture Actualized

by Charles Scheiner

Many hundreds of East Timorese people have been arbitrarily arrested, disappeared, or killed by the Indonesian military over the past year, as documented in the 1997 "Annual Report of Human Rights Violations" just published by the East Timor Human Rights Centre (available from ETAN for \$5).

But rather than cite cold statistics, I thought it better to update *Estafeta* readers on two specific cases that we described in our last two issues: João Guterres and José Antonio Belo. Both are men in their 20s who were arrested in separate incidents in East Timor in May and June 1997. There have been no charges brought against them, neither has had legal counsel, and neither has been seen since by anyone other than their captors, including the International Committee of the Red Cross. Belo's case was most recently highlighted as "fear of torture" by Amnesty International in an alert distributed on March

19, 1998 (case 189/97), along with four men arrested with him (Guilherme dos Santos, Manuel, Cesario or Mario da Costa and Gil da Costa).

When our delegation was in Indonesia and East Timor in early March, we inquired about Belo and Guterres through indirect but reliable, confidential channels. The first reply, "they're both alive," was only slightly reassuring. Further explorations indicated that both were in very bad shape, held inside East Timor by Indonesian military forces. (Amnesty believes that Belo is in Baucau.) Both have apparently been subjected to extensive torture and prevented from having any contact with the outside world.

José and João are still alive only because the Indonesian army knows that concerned people around the world know that their lives are in ABRI's hands. To keep them alive – and to end the torture – we need to communicate our concerns more strongly. ■

APCET III Meets in Bangkok

by Charles Scheiner

In early March, I represented ETAN as an observer at the third Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor, held in Bangkok, Thailand. The first two APCET conferences, in the Philippines and Malaysia, were crippled by deportations and harassment by the governments of their hosting countries – weak democracies which caved in to pressure from their huge neighbor to the south. Although Indonesia also leaned on Thailand (and the Thai Prime Minister visited Suharto as we met in Bangkok), Thai civil liberties were somewhat preserved. In spite of continual obtrusive police surveillance, incessant negotiations and occasional threats, nobody was deported and a full day of productive, private discussions was held. Equally importantly, all the East Timorese and Indonesian activists who attended with Indonesian passports returned safely home to Suharto's dominion.

Although holding the conference was in itself a victory, we accomplished much

more. Increased attention will be given to issues and outreach relating to women, Muslims, and Indonesia itself. We initiated a campaign against joint exercises with the Indonesian army, to complement campaigns in Europe and North America against arms sales and military training. In addition to reaffirming support for East Timorese self-determination and the CNRM peace plan, APCET proposed a number of specific UN and international actions which can increase the participation of the East Timorese people in resolving the situation. Finally, APCET clarified that countries on the east side of the Pacific are eligible to join – so ETAN now has a decision to make.

For further information, contact the ETAN National office. APCET has a quarterly newsletter (also called *Estafeta*); for more information, contact them at iidmnl@skynet.net or Unit 15-D-15, 2nd floor, Casal Bldg., Anonas Road, Project 3, Quezon City, 1102 Philippines. Phone/fax 632-432-2900. ■

Communicate your concern to these authorities:

- urging them to clarify the whereabouts of José Antonio Belo and João Guterres, and the precise charges against them;
- seeking assurances that they be given access to members of their family, medical care and independent legal advisors;
- seeking assurances that neither of them will be subjected to further torture or ill-treatment.

SEND APPEALS TO:

Col. Slamet Sidabutar (military commander of East Timor)
Markas KOREM 164/Wiradharma
Dili, East Timor (via Indonesia)
Telegrams: Col. Sidabutar, Markas KOREM, Dili, East Timor
Fax: +62 390 21 624

Colonel Atok Rismanto (Chief of Police for East Timor)
Kapolda Timor Timur
Dili, East Timor via Indonesia
Telegrams: Kapolda, Dili, East Timor

PLEASE SEND COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright
US Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520
202-647-4000, fax 202-647-6434

Ambassador Dr. Dorodjatun Kuntjoro-Yakti
Indonesian Embassy to the United States
2020 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-775-5200, fax 202-775-5365

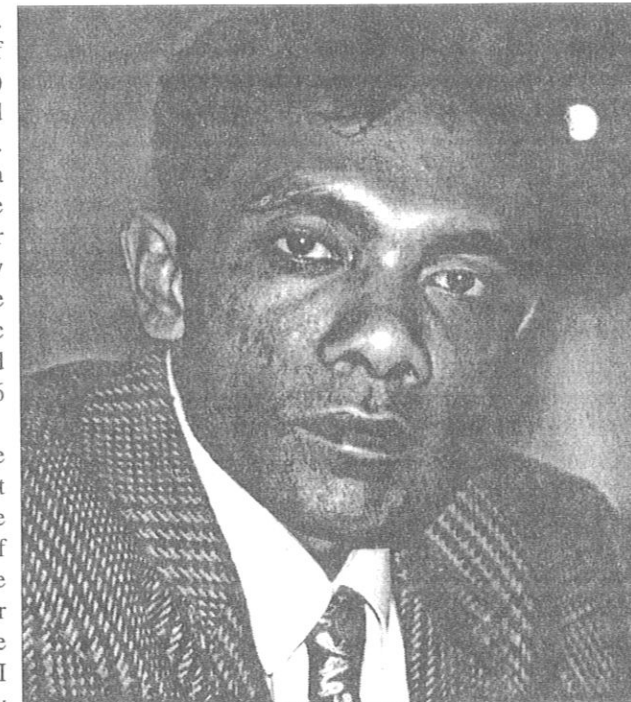
Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Alatas
SH Menteri Luar Negeri
Jl. Medan Taman Pejambon No 6
Jakarta, Indonesia
Fax: +62 21 36 0517

Constâncio Pinto joins ETAN Staff

My name is Constâncio Pinto. I am the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) representative to the United Nations and the United States. CNRM is the umbrella organization of East Timorese resistance groups. Its leader Xanana Gusmão is serving twenty years in prison in Jakarta. Since 1993, the CNRM's diplomatic mission abroad has been headed by José Ramos Horta, the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize co-winner.

When I was still leading the civilian underground in East Timor, I helped organize the peaceful demonstration of November 12, 1991 where Indonesian troops massacred over 250 demonstrators in the presence of foreign journalists. Since I escaped a military manhunt by fleeing East Timor and Indonesia in 1992, I have been working with the East Timor Action Network (ETAN) and other peace organizations to educate people in the United States about US involvement in the bloody Indonesian invasion and illegal occupation of my country.

As one of the many victims of the war against the East Timorese, after three years in the jungle, many years in the underground, and brutal beatings in jail, I am grateful to see US public opinion regarding East Timor shifting to a better understanding of the nature of the conflict and the role of US foreign policy, never mind the ongoing occupation. With the support of grassroots activists and other peace



and justice organizations, ETAN has successfully banned IMET military training, blocked the sale of F-5 and F-16 jet fighters and banned the sale of small weapons to Indonesia.

But there is still much to be done. For 22 years, we East Timorese have striven for one thing – the right to self-determination. This right has not yet been achieved. The United States position on this very basic right is ambivalent: the US Department of State de facto recognises the Indonesian occupation, but acknowledges that no valid act of self-determination has taken place. Through grassroots pressure and with the help of allies in Congress, we must push the Clinton administration to do everything in its power to see that the East Timorese people are allowed to vote in a UN-sponsored referendum.

From January to September 1998, I will be working for ETAN. My job will be discussing East Timor with members of the

US Congress and the United Nations, and continuing to educate the American people about East Timor. I will describe my personal experiences, the direct consequence of an unjust war. I will explain why the East Timorese continue to resist and to seek a just and peaceful settlement to the conflict.

If you are interested in having me speak in your community, please contact ETAN. And if you'd like to read about my experiences, and the experiences of my people, you can purchase my memoir, "East Timor's Unfinished Struggle: Inside the Timorese Resistance" (co-written with Matthew Jardine) from ETAN for \$16. ■

Constâncio is now on a national speaking tour, organized by ETAN in cooperation with Global Exchange. He is accompanied by ETAN Field Organizer Kristin Sundell. Catch them in your neighborhood!

- 4/6. 6:30pm Stokes Auditorium, Haverford College
Haverford, PA. Kate Stephenson 610-645-0735
kstephen@haverford.edu
- 4/7. 6:30pm, Randolph Macon College, Ashland VA. Brian Turner 804-752-3743, bturner@rmc.edu
- 4/8. 8:00 pm. Villanova U., Villanova, PA. Joe Betz, 610-519-4708 or 610-519-4639
- 4/9. 7:30pm Williams College Williamstown, MA. Alison Booth 413-597-2786 Alison.A.Booth@williams.edu
- 4/13. 7:00pm Kennesaw State College, Marietta, GA. Alma Riggs 770-423-9491, ariggs@pigseye.kennesaw.edu
- 4/14. 7:00pm Memorial Union Rm. 212, Arizona State U., Tempe, AZ. Chris Lundry 602-967-3159 lundry@asu.edu
- 4/15. 7:00pm The Kline Library, Northern Ariz. U., Flagstaff, AZ. Trevor Deputy 520-226-8105
- 4/16. Stanford U. Stanford, CA. Rush Rehm 650-723-0485 mrehm@leland.stanford.edu

ETAN Welcomes New Chapters

Our national network of local activists continues to expand. Since the last issue of *Estafeta*, the following new ETAN Chapters have formed:

ETAN/Arizona Chris Lundry PO Box 419 Tempe, AZ 85280-0419 602-967-3159 lundry@asu.edu	ETAN/Indiana Lisa Yu Read-Landes 414, Indiana University Bloomington, IN 47406 812-857-5919 eyu@indiana.edu
ETAN/Houston Mike Phelps 4045 Lakewood #213 Houston, TX 77025 713-218-0350 mphelps@bayou.uh.edu	ETAN/St. Louis Tim Rakel 7928 Captain Conn Saint Louis, MO 63123 314-849-0512 ssrakel@aol.com

Observations in Indonesia: On the Verge of Change?

Summary report from delegation to Indonesia and East Timor. A more comprehensive version is available from ETAN.

From March 3-13, 1998, a three-person delegation from the East Timor Action Network (Charles Scheiner), Global Exchange (Matthew Jardine), and Justice for All (Sidhawati), visited Jakarta (Indonesia) and Dili (East Timor). We spoke with many people from a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and organizations.

The financial crisis in Indonesia has captured the attention of the international media. The basic facts of the crisis are now well-known: the whopping 500% depreciation of the Indonesian rupiah, skyrocketing prices of basic commodities, a precipitous fall in foreign investment, numerous companies going bankrupt. The showdown between President Suharto, determined to stick to crony capitalism, and the IMF, insistent upon liberalization of markets, has received only slightly less media coverage than Clinton's sex life.

The story that has received much less attention is the increasing conflict between the Indonesian people and the Indonesian regime. The military has already unleashed a wave of widespread repression—arresting over 1,400 people over the past two months on charges of civil disorder and killing five—and is steeling itself for much larger street battles against the country's citizens. As the economic crisis worsens, resistance will grow and repression will intensify.

At this crucial juncture, we must ask ourselves whether the United States government will be complicit in this repression or whether it will cut off all relations with the Indonesian military. The evidence of expanded training for the Indonesian military, especially the special forces (Kopassus), indicates that the US government is prepared to help the military fight urban warfare against the victims of this economic crisis.

According to estimates of a labor expert, more than 16 million people have lost their jobs in the past six months. The much-celebrated industrialization of the 1980s in textile, garment and shoe production has virtually collapsed overnight. Export processing zones around Jakarta have become eerily quiet. The urban construction boom has

gone bust: half-built skyscrapers litter the Jakarta landscape.

The nation is awash in unemployed people, and 100,000 migrant workers have returned from Malaysia, also hit by economic troubles. The unemployment portends to become much worse. Many industries will grind to a halt when their present inventory of imported raw materials is exhausted. Foreign labor-intensive corporations, alarmed by the newly perceived instability of the Suharto regime, are packing their bags, foregoing the minuscule wages of Indonesian workers (less than 50 cents per day in the shoe factories) for cheap labor elsewhere.

Popular protest thus far has been significant by Indonesian standards, small when compared with other countries, and less than it will take to create a dramatic change from below. While we were there, tens of thousands of university students staged daily protests at nearly every university in Java. Surrounded by massively armed police and troops, students were largely contained to campuses. Police and military brutally attacked students in places such as Surabaya where protests were spreading to nearby working class neighborhoods.

The Suharto regime does not tolerate even small-scale opposition. When prominent female university professors gathered in downtown Jakarta to protest the doubling of milk prices, police immediately arrested and jailed three of them. When some fifty people tried to hold a private discussion on Indonesia's political future at a north Jakarta resort, over a hundred police intervened and arrested eleven of the organizers. We met with a member of the government-appointed National Human Rights Commission and asked about NGO tabulations of 1,000 political arrests in the first six weeks of 1998. He thought the number was too low.

In the midst of the increasing material deprivation, the Indonesian army remains just as powerful. Neither Suharto, nor the IMF, nor the USA have proposed any lessening in the power of the military. Over the past 30 years, the military has been a law unto itself. It has troops stationed throughout the country who police the population with impunity. Recently, the military has demanded even more money from the government for "special operations," including warfare in "urban terrain." What the military does not get by

asking, it takes. Troops have been confiscating the goods of many merchants under the pretext of anti-hoarding regulations. They then sell those goods themselves at military-run markets and pocket the profits.

The human rights situation in East Timor remains atrocious despite the attention brought to the plight of the former Portuguese colony by the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize. According to Catholic Church sources, military repression of the territory's inhabitants is actually worse than it was in 1996. Indonesia's economic crisis has hit East Timor especially hard; it was already one of the poorest regions under Suharto's rule. A severe lack of rain in many areas of East Timor has brought increased hardship, and aid workers fear that the food situation along the north coast could reach crisis proportions in the next couple of months.

For many years, Washington has sent mixed signals to Jakarta. Congress (sometimes with State Department support) limits military training or arms sales to Indonesia. President Clinton decries human rights violations in East Timor when he meets with Suharto, and the US sponsors critical resolutions in the UN Human Rights Commission. But at the same time US soldiers are training Indonesia's special forces in urban warfare and sniper tactics. Suharto, a world-class expert in political ritual (his recent self-re-election is a classic example), has no problem decoding the message - the criticisms are intended to placate the American people and Congress, while the continued military support indicates US approval of his regime's ongoing repression.

Any aid to the Suharto regime, whether it be IMF loans or military training, supports continued suppression of the burgeoning popular movement in Indonesia and the illegal occupation of East Timor.

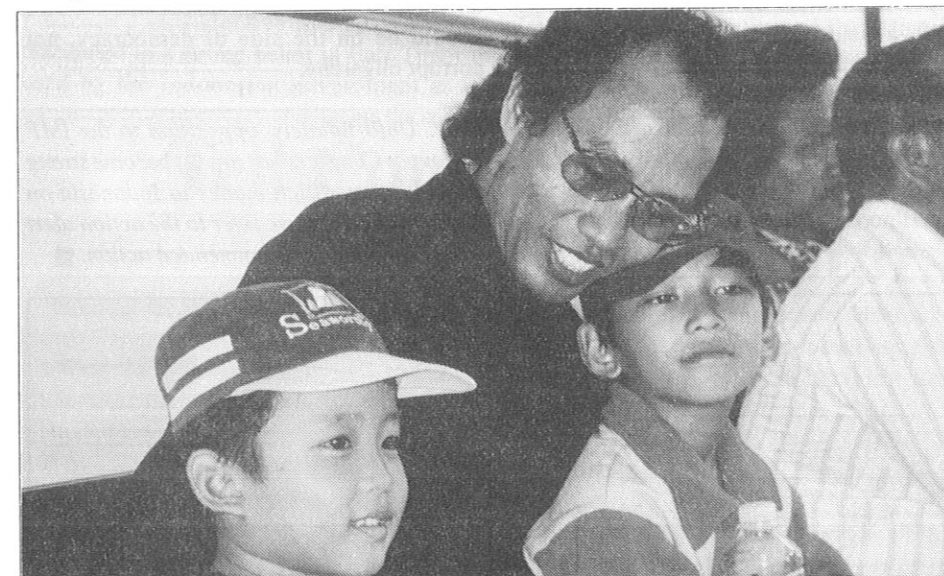
The solution to the present crisis will require more than just IMF bailouts, financial transparency, and the elimination of corruption. Since the Suharto family, its cronies and its military are attempting to push the costs of the crisis onto the people (instead of releasing their vast stores of stolen wealth), the only solution lies in ending institutional martial law and building a democratic system. The United States can play a positive role in this process by ending its partnership with Suharto and his military. ■

(Weapons Sales, cont. from page 1)

pressure in 1994, the State Department instituted a ban on the sale of small arms and crowd control equipment to Indonesia. The ban has since been expanded to include helicopter-mounted weapons and armored personnel carriers.

The Timor legislation (Sec 571 of PL 105-118) reads in full: "In any agreement for the sale, transfer, or licensing of any lethal equipment or helicopter for Indonesia entered into by the United States pursuant to the authority of this Act or any other Act, the agreement shall state that the United States expects that the items will not be used in East Timor: Provided, that nothing in this section shall be construed to limit Indonesia's inherent right to legitimate self-defense as recognized under the United Nations Charter and international law."

"The key phrase 'the United States expects that the items will not be used in East Timor' means that the US regards Indonesia as obligated to refrain from using the weapons in East Timor," said Roger Clark, Professor of International Law at Rutgers Law School, Camden, NJ. Professor Clark is widely viewed as the leading international scholar on the legal status of East Timor. ■



Father Sandyawan Sumardi, SJ of the Jakarta Social Institute, has been a consistent and persuasive advocate for the urban poor, including street children. This photo was taken as he awaited his 20th court appearance on charges of giving sanctuary to Indonesian pro-democracy activists who were leaders of the banned PRD. A week after our delegation returned to the US, Father Sandy and his brother were acquitted because the court decided that sheltering the PRD fugitives was in accordance with humanitarian mission of a Catholic priest. On March 22, Fr. Sandy eloquently described the hardships the current economic crisis creates for the urban poor, with rising prices and falling incomes. He concluded "We are convinced that however soft it may sound, the value of truth and the struggle of the victims will always live under the surface of development; even though the New Order tries hard to bury them, their screams will never disappear from the labyrinth of history."

(Pentagon Documents, cont. from page 1)

that, largely unknown to Congress and unremarked by the US press, the US military has been training ABRI [the Indonesian military] in a broad array of lethal tactics. This dwarfs IMET [International Military Education and Training] in size and scope, and is apparently being intensified as the Indonesia crisis deepens."

On the same day as Nairn's Jakarta press conference, ETAN held one in Washington. Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and others made strong statements. ETAN National Coordinator Charles Scheiner and Washington Representative Lynn Fredriksson detailed the Pentagon training and abuses committed by Indonesian forces receiving this training. Scheiner, just returned from Jakarta, witnessed increasing repression, just as the US Congress considers \$18 billion to reimburse the IMF bailout of the Suharto regime, and when Suharto has just re-elected himself and named a new cabinet filled with cronies.

In 1992 the US Congress first banned the IMET program, in protest over the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili, East Timor on November 12, 1991. The ban has been re-enacted every year since, although it was slightly weakened

in 1995 to cover only training in military subjects. The just-revealed Pentagon training is a direct violation of the spirit of this legislation.

According to the new documents, among the programs provided in 1997 alone are seven in which US Army and Air Force units trained the Indonesian elite Special Forces unit, KOPASSUS. High Church officials have noted that KOPASSUS picks up young East Timorese, tortures them to death and leaves their bodies, sometimes decapitated, in public as a warning to anyone sympathetic to the resistance.

The disclosure of the military training program was extensively covered by the *New York Times*, CNN, and many other media. Indonesian opposition leader Megawati Sukarno has written President Clinton, demanding an explanation. Many members of Congress are outraged.

On March 25, Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) asked her colleagues to co-sponsor a new International Military Training Accountability Act. We are working to support this legislation, which will prohibit all US training of Indonesian soldiers as long as Indonesia is barred from full participation in IMET. As Ms. Lowey said: "The Indonesian military has a long and atrocious record of human rights abuses. The United States should not be in the business of training an army that has been implicated in cases of torture, murder, and disappearances."

Please contact your Representatives in Congress and urge them to join this important effort. ■

ETAN/Boston was saddened by the death of David Paul on October 29, 1997. David Paul, a Watertown, MA resident, was a long-time human rights activist who worked for justice in East Timor. He was a founding member of the East Timor Action Committee (ETAC) in 1982/3 and helped organize important public forums and conferences. He also developed an annotated bibliography on East Timor. Working as a librarian in Government Documents at Harvard University, David assisted our local ETAN chapter.

Through colleagues at Harvard, an ETAN educational fund to promote greater public awareness about East Timor has been established in his name. Contributions may be directed to ETAN/Boston, 51 Marathon Street, Arlington MA 02174-6917. Our sympathies to his partner and friends worldwide.

U.S. and IMF Indonesian Bailout Unethical

by Diane Farsetta and Ben Terrall
(A version of this article was printed in the Madison Badger-Herald and circulated nationally by Today's U-WIRE.)

Prominent in the news recently are reports of the Asian economic crisis, and of US and International Monetary Fund (IMF) efforts to aid the afflicted countries.

Among these reeling, once proud Asian "tigers" is Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world.

Perhaps for no other country has the financial upheaval come at a more critical time, as the aging dictator Suharto prepares to begin his last term as president with no designated successor, in a country where the transfer of power has never been peaceful.

Suharto rose to power in 1965 in a bloodbath that left up to a million people dead. Since then, his regime has consolidated both political and economic power in the hands of his relatives and friends, leaving the majority of Indonesians near or below internationally recognized poverty levels.

The Suharto government has also been characterized by severe violations of the fundamental rights of both the citizens and the neighbors of Indonesia.

The 1975 invasion and subsequent ongoing occupation of the country of East Timor has resulted in the death of over 200,000 people, according to Amnesty International estimates - that is, one-third of the island's population.

Although the Indonesian occupation of East Timor has been condemned by 10 United Nations resolutions, successive US administrations have continued to place the "stability" offered by the Suharto regime (and its willingness to share profits from natural resources and cheap labor) above the democratic aspirations of the Indonesian and East Timorese people.

The brutal and repressive nature of the Suharto government, its corruption, cronyism, and obstruction of human, political, and workers' rights underlies the current financial crisis.

While those critical of Suharto are often imprisoned, the widespread hardship caused by the drop in the value of Indonesian currency led Muslim leader Amien Rais to state recently that, "the only way to turn the situation around is to break the status quo. And the only way to do that is to replace Suharto ... people will no longer put up with

another five years of Suharto repressing them."

Since the US and IMF \$40 billion bailout of Indonesia does not address these serious problems with any human rights, labor or environmental criteria, it will be at best a temporary fix.

Additionally, as Representative Bernie Sanders (D-VT) pointed out to the House Banking and Financial Services Committee, under the Sanders-Frank amendment, "the United States government cannot support any IMF or World Bank loans to Indonesia unless the loan proposal guarantees internationally recognized worker rights ... plain and simple, it is against the law for the United States and the Secretary of the Treasury to support this bailout."

The destabilization of Indonesian society from both the financial crisis and rumors of Suharto being seriously ill increase the possibility of a military crackdown similar to the tragic events of 1965.

On January 6, the commander of the Indonesian armed forces announced, after meeting with Suharto, that the military was prepared to "strike down" any group daring to take a stand against the regime. He bragged that Bakin, the Indonesian equivalent of the CIA, is closely monitoring all dissidents.

The repression in occupied East Timor has also worsened dramatically since the awarding of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize to East Timorese leaders Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and José Ramos-Horta.

Meanwhile, on January 11, US Secretary of Defense William Cohen said, "I am not going to give [Suharto] any guidance in terms of what he should or should not do in maintaining control of his own country."

Cohen also pledged to restore funds for military training aid to Indonesia and expand joint training with the Indonesian military.

Should this be the position of the US, the self-proclaimed world champion of democracy?

The East Timor Action Network/US, and Dr. George J. Aditjondro, an Indonesian academic dissident in self-imposed exile, have recently condemned the IMF bailout plan and called for the US government to stop all military support to Indonesia and support the pro-democracy movement in Indonesia.

Support for free and open societies in both Indonesia and East Timor is truly the only way the US can help create a lasting, peaceful solution to the current crisis.

With support from the international community, the dangerous upheaval could become an opportunity for a transition from murderous military dictatorship to freedom and self-determination. The United States should be on the side of democracy, not corrupt oligarchy.

Note: Unfortunately, opposition to the IMF bailout in Congress has not yet become strong enough to condition money to Indonesia on human rights. Please refer to the action alert (facing page) for recommended action. ■



Donated to ETAN by Kirk Anderson

Review: Women's Rights in East Timor

From One Day to Another: Violations of Women's Reproductive and Sexual Rights in East Timor by Miranda E. Sissons (East Timor Human Rights Centre, Melbourne, Australia. 1997.)

Review by Sonya Hurston, ETAN Northern California

Human rights abuses in East Timor are well-documented. Abuses affecting only women, however, have been left largely unresearched and under-reported. Miranda Sissons' "From One Day to Another: Violations of Women's Reproductive and Sexual Rights in East Timor" helps fill this serious gap.

In less than 50 pages, Sissons presents East Timorese women's voices, Indonesian and international human rights laws, and a clear overview of Indonesian reproductive health programs and policies. Her report not only unearths important data on Indonesia's human rights record in East Timor; it also provides information about women's rights and the Family Planning (KB) program in Indonesia. Most importantly, the report describes what women in East Timor must live through "from one day to another."

Sissons' book documents frequent reports of rape, cruel and degrading treatment, and sexual servitude to Indonesian soldiers in East Timor. Her primary focus is the role of the KB program in systematizing human rights abuses.

While this program has received international recognition (Suharto twice received the UN Population medal) for its "effectiveness," it has repeatedly been described as violating women's rights to information, contraceptive choice, and overall health.

Sissons' report describes how severe and systematic violations of women's reproductive and sexual rights in East Timor have contributed to a strong belief in East Timor that the KB program is "used by the Indonesian government as a politically-motivated instrument to deliberately undermine the survival of the East Timorese

as a national group."

Sissons explains that the same military which has killed hundreds of thousands of East Timorese since 1975 helps recruit for the KB program. "If we do not go, our fathers or brothers will be persecuted," one East Timorese woman explains. It is not just the military, however, that is distrusted.

Women in East Timor tell stories of friends and relatives losing babies in Indonesian-controlled hospitals or becoming sterile after receiving mysterious injections. Female high school students describe being injected with "vaccinations" that often stop menstruation.

"Fear of the KB program," Sissons writes, "has severely undermined the efficacy of the government health system in East Timor. According to statistics in the UN World Population Report (1996), the death rate in East Timor is double that in Indonesia and the worst in South-East Asia. Infant mortality in East Timor outstrips even that of Rwanda and Iraq. Yet women are unwilling to turn to the government health system for fear of covert injection or sterilisation."

"From One Day to Another" provides data that is well substantiated and staggering. This evidence shows the Indonesian government to be complicit in willful abuse of East Timorese women. Sissons speaks with the authority of international agreements, Indonesian law and with human concern. Sissons' research is impressive and her writing powerful.

Anyone who wishes to better understand the status of human rights in East Timor should read this report. And the credibility and effectiveness of those working in solidarity with the people of East Timor will only be strengthened by a better understanding of the daily lives of East Timorese women.

"From One Day to Another" is available from the ETAN National office for \$6 (postpaid). Its author, Miranda Sissons, is on the ETAN Executive Committee and currently lives in New York. ■

Tell Congress: No Bailouts for the Suharto Dictatorship!

Funding for the IMF is moving rapidly through Congress - the Senate already passed an \$18 billion appropriation to replenish the IMF for their Indonesia bailout. In the House, the process is complicated by unrelated issues. Both chambers have had several hearings on Indonesia, and will have more.

In discussions with your elected representatives, stress the following points:

- Urge Congress to attach human rights conditions to the funding for the IMF. Conditions should include the release of Indonesian and East Timorese political prisoners, a permanent international presence in East Timor, significant moves toward democracy in Indonesia, and direct Timorese (specifically Bishop Belo's and Xanana Gusmão's) participation in international negotiations on East Timor's political status.
- Despite legislated Congressional intent to

withhold US military training from Indonesia, the Pentagon has continued this training. Ask them to ban ALL military training and exercises for Indonesia, and to support Congresswoman Nita Lowey's (D-NY) International Military Training Accountability Act

- No military or economic aid should be going to Suharto family-controlled businesses or to prop up the regime.
- Support for legislation soon to be introduced affirming Congressional support for East Timor's right to self-determination.

Other articles in this *Estafeta* contain background information and facts to raise with your legislators.

Congress is recessed from April 2-20, and many members will be home in their states. It's an excellent time to make appointments to discuss these issues, as well as to encourage

Congresspeople to meet with Lynn, Constâncio, or ETAN Lobby Days participants after they return to Washington.

To reach your Senators and Representative in Washington, call the Congressional switchboard at 202-224-3121. Their local offices should be in your phone book. Write to Senator _____, US Senate, Washington, DC 20510 or Rep. _____, US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Send a copy of your letter/fax to: Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, US State Department 2201 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20520, fax: 1-202-647-6434.

Please let Lynn at ETAN's Washington office know the results of meetings or correspondence with Congress. Feel free to contact her if you have questions. ■

ETAN Lobby Days: April 26-28

by Lynn Fredriksson

East Timor's supporters from across the United States have traveled to Washington for an annual Spring pilgrimage for the past four years. We come not to bring offerings, but pressure and persuasion. It's educational, challenging, and even enjoyable.

JOIN US! This is it folks. Seize the day. The Suharto regime is floundering, pro-democracy activism in Jakarta is thriving, but the economic crisis and political crisis in Indonesia and East Timor continue to cause severe suffering and hardship. Recently, US training of Indonesian military units has been exposed, and this exposure has unleashed widespread protest in the US and Indonesia, protest that could lead to a complete ban on all military training to the Suharto regime. It's time to renew our call for self-determination in East Timor. We need your voices!

ETAN's annual Lobby Days will take place from April 26-28 (Sunday-Tuesday) from the ETAN office on Capitol Hill. We can extend another day or two of lobbying for those who can stay longer. On Sunday, we'll learn about the political situation and lobbying

techniques — you're welcome even if you've not yet spoken a word to a Congressperson!

If you can join this timely, concerted effort to educate our elected representatives about East Timor, please RSVP to Lynn Fredriksson or John Miller. Let us know when you'll arrive, whether or not you'll require ETAN accommodations, and if you have special needs. We may have some money available to help subsidize travel costs.

We are considering a demonstration at the White House, Indonesian Embassy or IMF on the afternoon of April 27 or 28. Your feedback will help us decide! Coincidentally, and happily, our lobby days will coincide with the School of the Americas Watch Congressional vigil and lobby days. This is a unique opportunity to join our energies.

The same week, ETAN will hold a national call-in and letter writing campaign to Congress. If you can't travel to DC, please call or write your Representative and Senators in support of human rights and self-determination in East Timor. Let us know of your interest, and we'll be sure to send you the most current action alerts.

We look forward to seeing you in Washington! ■

ETAN Hosts Regional Activist Training Conferences

by Kristin Sundell, ETAN Field Organizer

This Spring and Fall, ETAN will sponsor several regional training conferences for East Timor activists. Planning is underway for conferences in Chicago, Providence, Atlanta, San Francisco, and perhaps Texas.

This is a critical year for East Timor activism. Never in the 22-year history of the Indonesian occupation has Suharto's grip on Indonesia and East Timor looked more tenuous. As the Indonesian financial crisis deepens and the suffering of the East Timorese people continues, we must be prepared for any opportunity to take effective action on their behalf.

These conferences are geared toward helping grassroots activists deepen their

knowledge of East Timor and Indonesia. The political and economic crisis in Indonesia will be addressed, as well as the current situation in occupied East Timor, the status of international diplomatic efforts to bring about a solution for the Timorese people, the political climate in the US regarding East Timor, and the role of multi-national corporations in influencing US foreign policy.

The conferences will also develop organizing skills. A series of activist-training workshops will be offered, covering subjects such as planning a demonstration/civil disobedience, lobbying, giving a presentation on East Timor, introducing/passing a local divestment and sanctions bill, working with the media, fundraising, coalition building and strengthening local chapters.

There will be time for informal networking between East Timor activists, and time to strategize and plan coordinated regional actions and speaking tours.

If you are interested in hosting one of these events in your city, please contact Kristin Sundell at 617-441-5043 or etanfield@igc.apc.org. In addition to the Chicago conference April 3-5, you can contact:

San Francisco, CA: Ben Terrall 415-626-3703 or btterrall@igc.org
Providence, RI: Erin Hooks 401-863-4557 or erin_hooks@brown.edu
Atlanta, GA: David McBride 404-876-9135 or davidmcb@mindspring.com ■

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