

~~TIMOR-LESTE~~
EAST TIMOR
 news

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MONTHLY MEMO No. 4/89
 (Information received during April 1989)

1. EAST TIMOR

a. The Bishop of Timor appeals for the intervention of the General Secretary of the United Nations and denounces torture in East Timor

(1) Mgr Belo sent a letter to the Bishop of Setubal, Dom Manuel Martins, requesting him to ensure the handing-in to Perez de Cuellar of a letter addressed to him. These two letters are dated February 6 but have only now arrived in our hands.

He appeals to the General Secretary of the United Nations not to "allow the process of decolonization of Portuguese Timor, which still has not been resolved by the United Nations, to be forgotten". He states that "up to now the people have not been consulted... It is Indonesia which says that the people of Timor have chosen integration but the people themselves have never said this. Portugal wishes to let time resolve the problem. We, however, are dying as a People and as a Nation.(...) there is no more democratic way of knowing the supreme will of the Timorese people than the holding of a referendum."

In Sidney the leaders of the Nationalist Convergence, João Carrascalão and José Ramos Horta, commented on this letter: "it is curious that, from the time that he became the apostolic administrator of Dili up to now, this is the first time that Mgr Belo has come out in public as showing a concern for the holding of a referendum". They regard his appeal as a positive one, but consider the attack on Portugal unwarranted and unjust: "especially in the last few years, there has been a notable involvement on the part of the Lisbon authorities with the UN, the Common Market countries and others in an attempt to resolve the problem."

ET 191/89

ET 192/89

Europeu, April 16 1989

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- (2) In another letter addressed to the Apostolic Nuncio in Jakarta, Mgr Belo states that "we live under the psychological pressure of the dictatorship and <the military> are now training and paying former prisoners from the Yayasan of St. Anthony to keep watch on parish priests."

The Bishop continues "we have witnessed these selfsame abuses every year. We speak to the authorities but the result is always the same. It is the people that suffer. Because of this the holding of a referendum is urgent so that the population can be asked if they accept integration."

Mgr Belo condemns the secret character of the Association of St. Anthony, which is led by Ananias do Carmo. This organization merged, in 1988, with a so-called clandestine party having as its objective the assassination of President Suharto during a visit by him to Timor.

Also enclosed with the letter is a list of 36 individuals belonging to the Association of St. Anthony who were tortured.

ET 193/89

Europeu, April 17 1989

(c.f. SM 18)

b. List of documents received during the period

- (1) Letter from Mgr Belo to the General Secretary of the UN. Dili Diocese, Dili, Feb 6 1989, 1p. (Portuguese)
ET 191/89
- (2) Letter from Mgr Belo to the Bishop of Setubal. Dili Diocese, Dili, Feb 6 1989, 1p. (Portuguese)
ET 192/89
- (3) Letter from Mgr Belo to the Apostolic Nuncio in Jakarta. Dili Diocese, Dili, Feb 16 1989 2p. (Portuguese)

(Enclosed with the letter is a list of the members of the Yayasan of St. Anthony in prison)

ET 193/89

- (4) Pastoral letter from Mgr Belo on the Pope's visit to East Timor. Dili, April 15 1989 3p. (Portuguese)
ET 194/89

2. ADMINISTRATING POWER: PORTUGAL

- a) Debate on Timor under the initiative of the Rector of the University of Porto

A debate took place on the theme "East Timor: the identity of its people and perspectives for the future", at the University

Club in Porto. Among those present were the chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on East Timor Affairs, members of parliament from various parties, FRETILIN and UDT leaders, Brigadier Mário Lemos Pires the ex-governor of East Timor, and Timorese refugees.

There were various sub-themes discussed: "the identity of the Maubere people", "East Timor, origins of the tragedy: Portuguese and international responsibility" and "perspectives for a solution and Portugal's role".

Diário de Lisboa, April 27 1989

b) Statements by Mario Soares in an RTP interview

The President of the Republic, interviewed by RTP on the night of April 25, affirmed his hopes for "a democratic change" in the Indonesian regime, an event which could contribute to a resolution of the East Timor issue. The replacement of President Suharto would make possible a dialogue which could guarantee self-determination by the Maubere people.

Europeu, April 27 1989

c) East Timor in the parliamentary session to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the 25th of April

In the course of his speech, the president of the Assembly of the Republic, Vitor Crespo, stated the "determination on the part of the Assembly to make it possible to give the people of Timor the means for self-determination, to affirm its identity and to choose its own destiny."

The president of the Peoples National Assembly of Guinea-Bissau Carmen Pereira, for her part, said that "a curtain of silence still hangs over East Timor, which continues to be beyond the reach of the positive current of dialogue and agreement which, in recent years, has led to progress in the attainment of peoples' rights to their own sovereignty." She further recalled that the five African countries having Portuguese as their official language have shown their appreciation for the firm position taken by Portugal in relation to the territory, and encouraged it to continue along this path.

Diário de Notícias April 26 1989

d) Interview with Abílio Araújo

In an interview in the magazine "Sabado" at the end of April Abílio Araújo, the Fretilin representative in Portugal, made certain statements which express a faith in the future of East Timor.

He believes, for example, that the departure of the Indonesians will come about - "I believe in this more today than I did some time ago (...) Firstly because our resistance

has strengthened, today it is something which is lodged within the awareness of our people(...) The generations which have been born since the invasion(...) are those who just recently demonstrated in Dili against discrimination and for the necessity of introducing material into our educational syllabi which relates to our own national identity (...) Furthermore, our university students, who nowadays are being educated in Indonesia, are the bearers of a great nationalistic spirit."

He thinks it possible that something like INTIFADA could come about in Timor, "It all depends on the opening up of Timor. The Indonesians say that they are going to open up the territory, we challenge them to do this. If this does not take place, then they are going to be accused of not doing it for fear of the world coming to know what is really going on in East Timor. If they do open it up, then the population will have an opportunity to express itself, to be heard, to see its struggle have repercussions in the outside world."

When urged to comment on Portugal's role in this issue, he said: "Portugal, in fact, has legal and moral force on its side (...) It has its allies (...) Portugal has one powerful argument, which is the fact that it is allied with the West and with the United States..."

The question of US agreement to the Indonesian invasion having been posed he commented "However, I think that nowadays, 15 years later, the US has a different strategy. This is because the Suharto regime does not offer any guarantees either in the medium or in the long term."

He considers that what Portugal has been doing up to now "still has not come up to Portugal's full potential. Further, I would say to the Portuguese government that, in the medium term, independence for Timor would bring great advantages for Portugal." Clarifying these advantages he added: "This is an argument that I do not like to use very much. But look here, we are a Pacific country and, as you know, the world's financial-economic axis is transferring itself to that zone. We speak Portuguese and, without doubt, we are going to need Portugal. This is not to mention East Timor's petroleum resources."

When a journalist observed that these resources represent one more factor for Indonesia not easily abandoning East Timor he replied: "They do not have the technology for the exploitation of these reserves either. Obviously we do not, but we are prepared to negotiate with those powers who do have the technology." With regard to the fact of not being able to negotiate what they do not control he stated: "The day that we succeed, the agreements which Indonesia has made will automatically be considered null and void..."

Sabado, April 29 1989

3. INDONESIA

- a. The Vice-President of the United States discusses Human Rights in East Timor, in Jakarta

Mr Dan Quayle, the North-American vice-president, visited Jakarta for talks with President Suharto and Vice-President Sudharmono. According to the official newsagency Antara, the Jakarta authorities briefed Dan, during his visit, on the human rights situation in Indonesia.

The Indonesian ambassador in Washington, Abdul Ramly, said that he had an interview with Mr Sudharmono in Jakarta to discuss the issue, and he stressed that the subject "will not have a relevant importance" on the North-American vice-president's agenda.

A group of 30 US congressmen have appealed to Mr Quayle to question the Jakarta authorities about the destiny of 400 political prisoners in Indonesia and regarding alleged human rights violations in East Timor.

According to the US press-agency Associated Press, the subject was raised by the North-American vice-president in discussions with President Suharto. He focussed particularly on the problem of political prisoners and on repressive practices in the Timorese territory.

The Indonesian Secretary of State, Murdiono, denied, according to Antara, the official news-agency in Jakarta, that the subject had been discussed between the two leaders.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ali Alatas, said for his part that he had made "a brief mention" of the East Timor problem in the meeting that he had with Dan Quayle with the aim of "drawing the attention of the Washington Government to the lack of comprehension regarding the issue on the part of the US Congress".

Human rights defence groups have condemned the fact that Indonesia has not explained the disappearance of thousands of people in the territory and that many have died in jail. Dan Quayle spoke with three local human rights activists on this issue, including Shamet Bratanata.

Diário Popular, April 26 1989

Diário de Lisboa April 26 and May 2 1989

4. INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

a. Timorese demonstrate in Melbourne

A group of Timorese resident in Australia, held a demonstration in front of the building when the Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ali Alatas, arrived for a lunch hosted by the Victoria government in Melbourne on the third of March.

The demonstrators shouted slogans calling for independence, waving placards saying "there's no peace without justice" and

"12 years" of terror". They displayed photographs which they said were "recent victims of Indonesian terror" in East Timor.

Members of Mr Alatas' party filmed the protestors with the intention of intimidating their relatives still in East Timor, complained John Sinnot, spokesman for the Australia-East Timor Association.

Niugini Nius, March 4 1989

b. The African countries having Portuguese as their official language salute the Portuguese action in support of East Timor

At the end of the 11th meeting of the Ministerial Commission which took place over two days in Bissau, the five African countries (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, St. Tomé and Prince and Mozambique) saluted the efforts made by Portugal towards the permitting to East Timor the free exercise of the right to self-determination and independence.

Diário de Notícias, April 7 1989

c. Anti-Timor campaign on the increase in Australia

The anti-Timor campaign in the Northern Australian Territory of Darwin intensified in the beginning of April according to information from Alfredo Ferreira, the Timorese Nationalist Convergence representative.

The Nationalist Party conservative senator, Grant Tambling, accused the Federal Government for having granted funds to Timorese communities and accused these of having demonstrated at the airport on the departure of a football team for Dili and of placing bombs in public buildings in Darwin. These accusations are the subject of an enquiry by the Minister for Justice, Senator Tate, and are denied by Alfredo Ferreira and by João Carrascalão, the Timorese Nationalist Convergence representatives in Sidney.

The Northern Territories senator further accused the Timorese of having taken advantage of the benevolence of Australian law to become citizens and of being merely a group of fanatics obsessed by their hatred of Indonesia.

Europeu, April 11 1989

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