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FOR ASST SEC HOLBROOKE ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT JAKARTA 0021 ACTION SECSTATE JAN 3

QUOTE: S E C R E T JAKARTA 0021

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, ID
SUBJECT: GENERAL MURDANI'S VIEWS ON EAST TIMOR

1. DURING OUR JANUARY 2 MEETING (SEPTTEL), GENERAL BENNY MURDANI, ASSISTANT FOR INTELLIGENCE, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND SECURITY, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM EAST TIMOR, SAID THE SITUATION THERE IS IMPROVING SLOWLY, BUT CONSIDERABLE TIME WILL STILL BE REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE STABILITY. THERE REMAIN AN ESTIMATED 600 HARD CORE FRETILIN GUERRILLAS IN THE MOUNTAINS, AND THEY CONTROL SEVERAL THOUSAND CIVILIANS. SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND MORE, LARGELY APOLITICAL TRIBAL GROUPS IN REMOTE AREAS, ARE NOT UNDER CONTROL OF EITHER THE GOI OR FRETILIN.

(NOTE: [REDACTED] WHO
FOLLOWS DEVELOPMENTS IN EAST TIMOR CLOSELY, GENERALLY
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AGREED WITH THESE FIGURES BUT PUT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ROBERT H MILLER
DATE/CASE ID: 14 JAN 2004 200302282

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IN "NO MAN'S LAND" UP TO POSSIBLY HALF A MILLION)

2. MURDANI SAID THE INDONESIAN ARMY LACKS ADEQUATE MANPOWER, SUPPLIES AND EXPERTISE TO ROOT OUT THE REMAINING GUERRILLAS. THE ARMY HAS NOT ENGAGED IN COMBAT SINCE 1962 WHEN THE GOI TOOK OVER IRIAN JAYA, AND IT LACKS THE ABILITY TO FIGHT EFFECTIVELY IN THE ROUGH TERRAIN OF EAST TIMOR. ALTHOUGH 45,000 HAVE COME DOWN FROM THE HILLS AND ACCEPTED THE GOI'S OFFER OF AMNESTY, MURDANI ESTIMATED THAT RESOLVING THE PROBLEM BY MILITARY OFFENSIVE WOULD TAKE AT LEAST UNTIL APRIL OR JULY OF THIS YEAR. TRYING TO OUTWAIT THE GUERRILLAS OR STARVE THEM OUT COULD TAKE AT LEAST A YEAR LONGER. IN EITHER EVENT, INDONESIA SEES A TOUGH ROAD AHEAD. THE SITUATION IS COMPLICATED, MURDANI SAID, BY THE FACT THAT, BECAUSE OF INTERNATIONAL OPINION, THE GOI HAS NOT USED NAPALM OR SIMILAR WEAPONS.

3. I TOLD MURDANI THAT, IN LINE WITH THIS, THERE HAD BEEN REPORTS THAT THE GOI HAD USED HERBICIDES ON FRETILIN CROPS. WHAT WERE HIS COMMENTS? MURDANI STRONGLY REFUTED THESE ALLEGATIONS, NOTING THAT INDONESIA HAD NO HERBICIDES AND, EVEN IF IT DID, IT LACKED THE CAPABILITY TO DEPLOY THEM. HE SUGGESTED WE VERIFY THE LATTER POINT BY CHECKING WITH OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSOCIATED WITH THE INDONESIAN AIR FORCE.

4. ASKED IF THE EAST TIMOR AMNESTY, WHICH TECHNICALLY EXPIRED AT THE END OF 1977, WOULD BE EXTENDED, MURDANI SAID IN EFFECT IT HAD BEEN. THOUGH THERE HAD BEEN NO FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUCH A DECISION IN JAKARTA, THE RADIO IN EAST TIMOR CONTINUED TO BROADCAST APPEALS FOR
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PEOPLE TO COME OVER TO THE INDONESIAN SIDE. THIS WOULD CONTINUE. I SAID THIS SEEMED A WISE MOVE. ANY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN BLOODSHED IN EAST TIMOR WOULD DAMAGE INDONESIA'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND FURTHER COMPLICATE THE SITUATION IN THE UN IF, AS APPEARED LIKELY, A RESOLUTION ON EAST TIMOR WAS INTRODUCED THIS YEAR.

5. I TOLD MURDANI IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO US AND OTHER FRIENDS OF INDONESIA IF SOME IMPARTIAL INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCY, SUCH AS THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE, WERE PERMITTED TO OPERATE IN EAST TIMOR. THIS WOULD REINFORCE

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INDONESIA'S OWN HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS TO HELP THE PEOPLE AND ALSO HELP COUNTER CHARGES THAT INDONESIA KEPT EAST TIMOR ISOLATED FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD. MURDANI SAID THIS WAS POSSIBLE AFTER THE PRESENT GOVERNOR IS REPLACED, PROBABLY IN MARCH. HE WONDERED, HOWEVER, IN LIGHT OF INDONESIA'S EXPERIENCE IN INVITING THE PRESS TO WITNESS RELEASE OF THE DETAINEES ON DECEMBER 20, IF I COULD ASSURE HIM THAT CRS PERSONNEL WOULD NOT MAKE STATEMENTS WHICH WOULD FURTHER COMPLICATE INDONESIA'S POSITION. I SAID I OBVIOUSLY COULD GIVE NO SUCH ASSURANCES, BUT THE CRS IS A HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION AND I WOULD NOT EXPECT ITS PERSONNEL TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL OR PARTISAN ACTIVITIES. HOWEVER, THE GROUND RULES WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE GOI AND WHATEVER ORGANIZATION WAS SELECTED. MURDANI SAID HE RECOGNIZED THE BENEFITS OF SOME SUCH MOVE BUT NOTHING COULD BE DONE AT LEAST UNTIL GOVERNOR ARAUNJO, WHO OPPOSES ANY FOREIGN PRESENCE, IS REMOVED.

MATERS

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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