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East Timor: The Responsibility of the United States

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Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

In the preamble to the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples, there is invoked both a spirit of hope and a sense of despair. The hope derives from the rising tide of liberation movements and the consequent emancipation of millions of the most oppressed and downtrodden peoples of the world, along with the inspiration which the most successful movements have given to those who still live under the domination of foreign interests.

This hope, however, must still be tempered with despair in many parts of the world. The Universal Declaration is quite specific in characterizing the sources of the continuing despair when it declares that:

Imperialism, using vicious methods, with the complicity of governments that it has itself often installed, continues to dominate a part of the world. Through direct or indirect intervention, through multinational enterprises, through manipulation of corrupt local politicians, with the assistance of military regimes based on police repression, torture, and physical extermination of opponents, through a set of practices that has become known as neocolonialism, imperialism extends its stranglehold over many peoples.

From the point of view of a US citizen, it seems a particular irony that the Algiers Declaration of the Rights of Peoples should have been promulgated on 4 July, 1976, exactly 200 years to the day after the US Declaration of Independence was issued, a declaration which states in part that:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights . . .

and

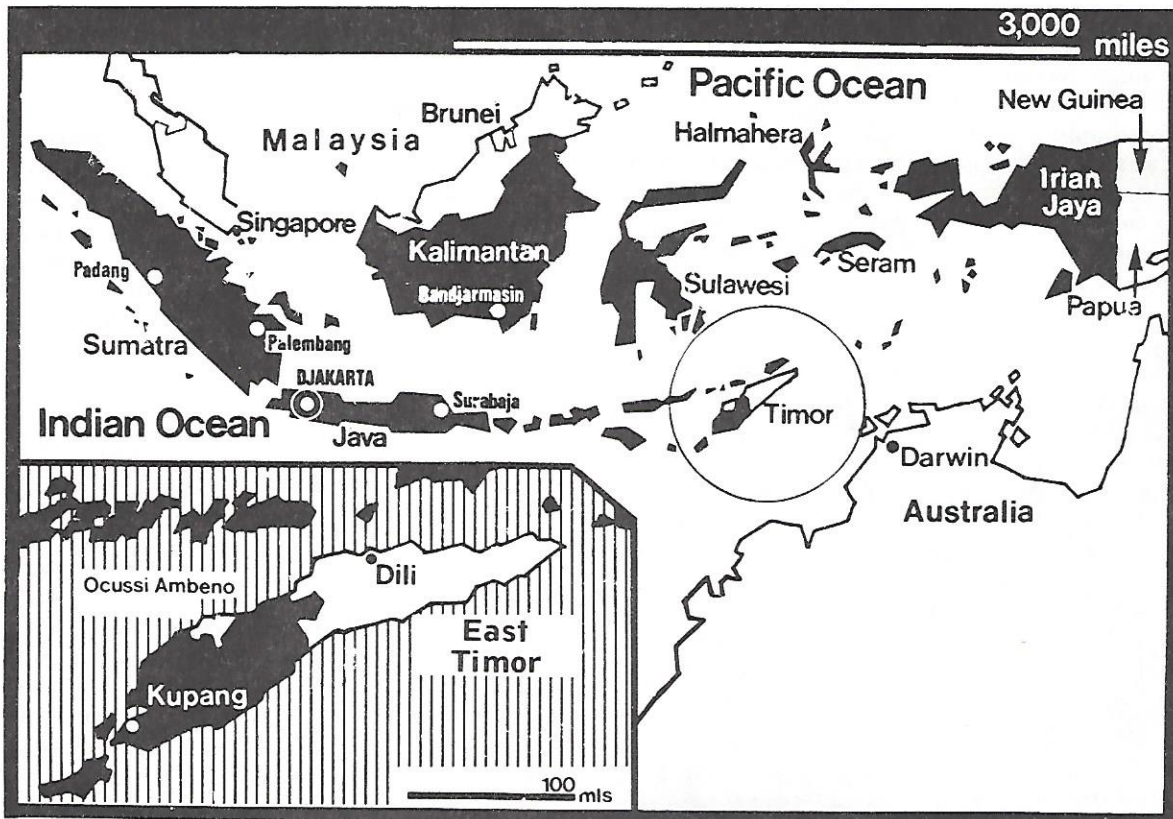
That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government . . .

The irony of that coincidence of dates, however, is far surpassed by the tragedy of an even more important coincidence: for even as the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples was being promulgated, Indonesia, one of the largest and most prominent nations of the Third World, was carrying out a brutal suppression of the rights of the people of East Timor. This suppression was, and continues to be, both the direct and indirect responsibility of one of the most powerful imperial states, The United States of America.

The responsibility of the US in the denial and suppression of the rights of the people of East Timor encompasses many aspects, all of them referred to in one way or another in the Algiers Declaration. In this submission to the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, I want to address six principal areas of US responsibility. These are:

1. That U.S. Government and US business leaders have maintained a general strategy in Southeast Asia that neglects the needs and interests of the peoples of the region and views the region almost entirely as a source of raw materials and/or cheap labor,
2. That as a consequence of this strategy, the US played a major role in destabilizing and eventually overthrowing the progressive, anti-imperialist government of President Sukarno of Indonesia and helped to install the military regime of General Suharto which is primarily responsible for crimes against the people of East Timor,
3. That before and during the massive Indonesian invasion of December 1975, and throughout the most brutal attacks by the invading forces, the US Government offered and supplied a continuous flow of the military equipment necessary to sustain the invasion,
4. That the US Government gave consistent diplomatic support to its Indonesian client state in the carrying out of the invasion and continuing occupation of the Democratic Republic of East Timor,
5. That spokespersons for the US Government have conducted a campaign of distortion and misrepresentation of the facts of the East Timor case to confuse US and world opinion, and

* This paper was presented at the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal on East Timor, 19-21 June, 1981



6. That, most recently, the US Government has maintained a duplicitous and illegal position in East Timor, helping the Indonesian regime to hold hostage even the humanitarian aid programs that might at least ease some of the material suffering of the East Timorese people at the present time.

The demonstration of these six areas of US responsibility can be made by viewing both the actual deeds of the US Government over the past several years and even the statements of many high-ranking officials who have been clumsy and revealing in their attempts to cover up what they were doing, or who have stated with remarkable candor just how responsible they and the US Government have been.

I. The US Strategy in Southeast Asia

One of the most important responsibilities of the US in the eventual invasion and occupation of East Timor by Indonesia arises from the overall military and economic strategy of the US in the Southeast Asian region. For the first half of the twentieth century, the US was a traditional colonial power in the region, having forcibly replaced Spain as ruler of The Philippines in 1899.¹ During World

War II, US forces played a major role in ejecting Japanese occupying troops from much of Southeast Asia, and, following the war, the US claimed large portions of the Pacific island region which it still administers as "Trust Territories" but maintains primarily for military reasons.² Since 1945, US political and business leaders have seen Southeast Asia as a primary source of important raw materials. There is substantial evidence for this conclusion, of which I shall give just a few of the best-known pieces.

In justifying the growing US involvement in support of French colonial rule in Indochina, for example, *US News and World Report*, a conservative business-oriented news-weekly, told its readers on 4 April, 1954 that:

One of the world's richest areas is open to the winner in Indochina. That's behind the growing U.S. concern . . . tin, rubber, rice, key strategic raw materials are what the war is really all about. The U.S. sees it as a place to hold—at any cost.

Just one year earlier the same point had been made by no less than the President of the United States, former General Dwight Eisenhower. In defending \$400 million in

1. An account of US public opposition to the war of colonial conquest in the Philippines is Daniel B. Schirmer, *Republic or Empire: American Resistance to the Philippine War*, Cambridge, Mass., Schenkman Publishing Company, 1972. Schirmer estimates that while the war against Spain cost only a few thousand lives in removing the previous colonial power, the

ensuing "pacification" of Philippine independence forces on the island of Luzon alone cost as many as 600,000 lives (p.ix). The US thus has a tradition of involvement in Southeast Asian massacres that goes back eighty years.

2. A critical overview of US policies in one part of the Pacific is Donald F. McHenry, *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New York, 1975.

The entire foreign policy of the US in Southeast Asia since 1945 is . . . a policy of seizing riches, building anticommunist alliances, keeping down the costs of raw materials, holding onto strategic sea lanes and other military objectives. It is *not* a policy designed primarily to promote national independence, economic development, or liberation of peoples from colonialism or imperialism.

US aid to the French war against the Indochinese people, Eisenhower asked if “we lost” Vietnam and Malaysia, “how would the free world hold the rich empire of Indonesia?” Aiding the French war, he argued, was “the cheapest way . . . to get certain things we need from the riches of the Indonesian territory.”³

By the 1960s, US strategists had actually taken over the French war in Indochina, but their basic attitudes remained the same. Henry Cabot Lodge, member of a leading business and financial family, a former US Ambassador to the United Nations, former US Senator, and at the time US Ambassador to South Vietnam, defended US troop build-ups in that country, noting that:

*He who holds or has influence in Vietnam can affect the future of . . . Malaysia and Indonesia with their rubber, oil, and tin to the South.*⁴

And, writing in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, which is published by the Council on Foreign Relations, a major policy-making group of businessmen and bankers, former Vice President and soon-to-be President Richard M. Nixon wrote in 1967 that:

*. . . with its 100 million people and its 3,000-mile arc of islands containing the region's richest hoard of natural resources, Indonesia constitutes by far the greatest prize in the Southeast Asian area.*⁵

More recently, US strategists have added military and political factors to their analysis of “empire,” “prize,” and “hoard of resources.” In 1973, for example, Lawrence Griswold wrote in the official journal of the Navy League of the United States that:

*Indonesia is endowed with what is probably the most strategically authoritative geographic location on earth.*⁶

Most recently, on 10 June, 1980, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke told a US Congressional panel how important Indonesia is to the entire Western alliance in Asia, led, of course, by the US.

*Indonesia, with a population of 140 million people, is the fifth largest nation in the world. It has the largest Muslim population in the world, is a moderate member of the Non-Aligned Movement, is an important oil producer—which plays a moderate role within OPEC—and occupies a strategic position astride the sea lanes between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. . . . It has played a central role in supporting Thailand and maintaining the security of Thailand in the face of Vietnam's destabilizing actions in Indochina. . . . Indonesia, is, of course, important to key U.S. allies in the region, especially Japan and Australia.*⁷

The entire foreign policy of the US in Southeast Asia since 1945 is exemplified in the several quotes above. It is a policy of seizing riches, building anticommunist alliances, keeping down the costs of raw materials, holding onto strategic sea lanes and other military objectives. It is *not* a policy designed primarily to promote national independence, economic development, or liberation of peoples from colonialism or imperialism. Whenever the needs of Southeast Asian people come into conflict with the needs of the Empire, the people are sacrificed. *The responsibility of the US in East Timor thus rests firstly and ultimately in the very policies that emanate from Washington vis à vis the entire region of Southeast Asia.* This helps to explain the consistent pattern of behavior of the US Government during the liberation struggle in East Timor.

II. The US Destabilized the Sukarno Government and Helped Install the Suharto Military Regime in Indonesia

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

In keeping with its general strategy in Southeast Asia, the US Government became increasingly hostile towards the progressive, anti-imperialist government of Indonesia that developed in the 1950s under the leadership of Sukarno. In a lengthy and detailed essay entitled “Exporting Military-Economic Development: America and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965–67,” Professor Peter Dale Scott has traced the origins of US destabilizing efforts back to the early 1950s and has described many of the organizations that took part in the eventual campaign to replace Sukarno with a regime more willing to cater to US interests. These organizations included the Council on Foreign Relations, the CIA, the Ford Foundation, Harvard University, the Rand Corporation (a CIA think-tank), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and several US corporations, all of whose resources were used in one way or another to plant agents, train pro-US operatives, interfere in Indonesian policy decisions, etc.⁸ Most dramatic, of course, was the 1965 coup and subsequent massacre of between 200,000 and one million Indonesians, but several other events are worthy of note because they indicate how deeply involved and thus how thoroughly responsible is the US Government for the Suharto regime's coming to power and its eventual invasion of East Timor.

3. Quoted in “Indonesia: the Making of a Neocolony.” Pacific Studies Center, Palo Alto, California, August, 1969, p. 1.

4. Henry Cabot Lodge. “We Can Win in Vietnam,” *New York Times Magazine*, 17 January, 1965, reprinted in the *Congressional Record*, 19 January, 1965, vol. III, part 1, pp. 916–17.

5. Richard M. Nixon. “Asia After Vietnam,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 46, no. 1, October, 1967, p. 111.

6. Quoted in Michael Klare, “Indonesia and the Nixon Doctrine” in *Ten Years' Military Terror in Indonesia*, edited by Malcolm Caldwell, pp. 265–74. Nottingham. Spokesman Books. Quote from p. 271, 1975.

7. Hearings, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, June 10, 1980, Part 6, pp. 2–3. Document No. H131-113. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office.

8. Peter Dale Scott. “Exporting Military-Economic Development: America and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965–67.” In *Ten Years' Military Terror in Indonesia*, edited by Malcolm Caldwell, pp. 209–261. Nottingham. Spokesman Books, 1975.

1958: A First Attempt

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal

US involvement in overthrowing the Sukarno government reached its first high point in 1958. A rebellion in the "outer islands" including Sumatra and Sulawesi was partly financed by the CIA, a fact revealed when a CIA pilot, Allen Pope, was shot down after a bombing run in the Moluccas. Pope had previously flown supplies for the French at Dienbienphu and was living in South Vietnam when he was recruited by the CIA for its Indonesian adventure. The outer islands rebellion, however, did not succeed in overthrowing Sukarno.⁹

The Sacrifice of West Irian: 1962

A second major event in the US strategy to overthrow Sukarno was the coercing of The Netherlands into granting Indonesia control over the colonization of West Irian (West New Guinea). Initially, the Indonesian victory over a last remaining Dutch foothold in its former East Indies colony appeared to be a concession by the Western powers. The recent publication of a secret letter from President Kennedy to the Dutch Government, however, reveals that the main US concern was *not* in getting the Dutch out of Southeast Asia, *nor* in providing an opportunity for self-determination for the Irianese. Rather, the US feared that active warfare between Indonesia and The Netherlands might lead to an increase in left-wing influence in Indonesia, and, as Kennedy's letter put it:

*Such a conflict would have adverse consequences out of all proportions to the issue at stake. . . . Only the Communists would benefit from such a conflict. . . . The whole non-Communist position in Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaya would be in grave peril and as you know these are areas in which we in the United States have heavy commitments and burdens.*¹⁰ (Emphasis added.)

The peaceful transition from Dutch to Indonesian control over West Irian was thus part of a larger US strategy to *weaken* liberation forces. Even a loyal NATO ally such as The Netherlands had to submit to the larger imperial concerns of the US.

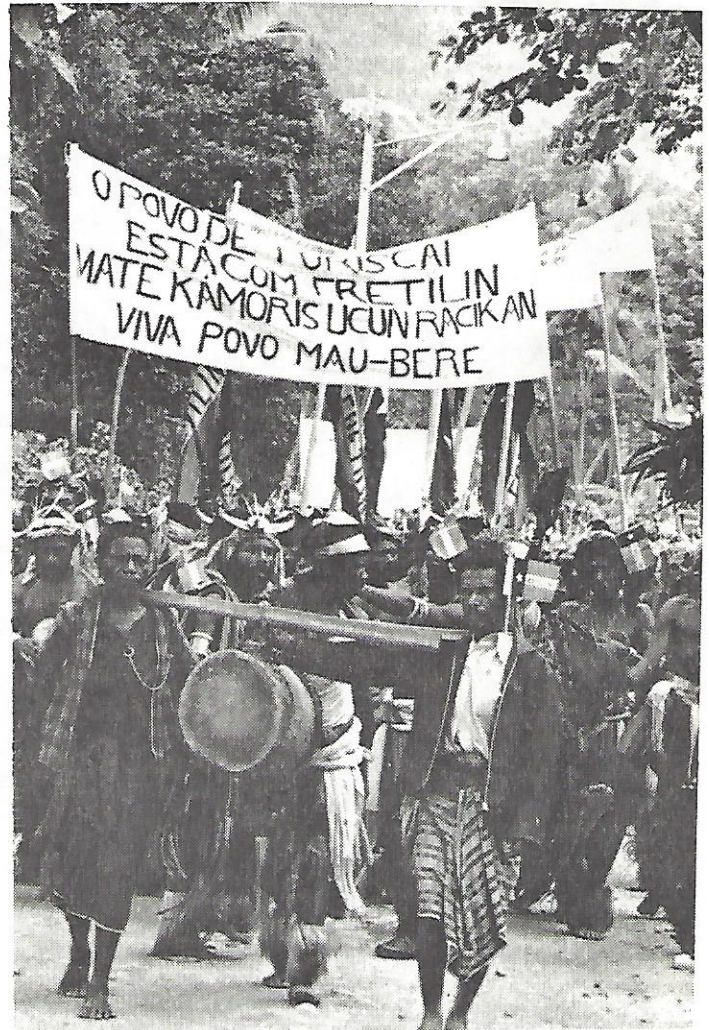
The Vietnam War: 1964-67

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

There is substantial evidence linking US activities against the Sukarno Government to the massive US invasion of Vietnam. The most intense period of this invasion was from 1964 to 1967, precisely the period during which Indonesian politics catapulted from tension into open physical combat in which a parliamentary left wing was annihilated by right wing military and paramilitary forces.

9. David Wise and Thomas Ross. *The Invisible Government*. New York, Random House, 1964. pp. 145-57.

10. As published in J.G. de Beus, *Morgen bij het aanbreken van de dag*, cited in Kees Lagerberg, *West Irian and Jakarta Imperialism*. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1979, p. 87. De Beus was the Dutch ambassador to Australia during much of the period in question.



In response to a call from Fretilin, more than 20,000 East Timorese demonstrated on May 20, 1975 in the largest public gathering in East Timor's history.

The importance of Vietnam to Indonesia has been spelled out by several high-ranking US officials. Richard Nixon, for example, argued in 1967 that the US troop deployments in Vietnam were

*a vital factor in the turnaround in Indonesia. . . . It provided a shield behind which the anti-communist forces found the courage and the capacity to stage their counter-coup.*¹¹

US political commentator James Reston, who has direct access to high-ranking government officials, wrote in *The New York Times* on 19 June, 1966 that:

*it is doubtful if the coup would ever have been attempted without the American show of strength in Vietnam or been sustained without the clandestine aid it has received indirectly from here [i.e. Washington].*¹²

11. Quoted in Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

12. *The New York Times*, 19 June, 1966.



For the first time, under the leadership of Fretilin, the deeply impoverished masses of East Timor learned to read and write their own language

A 1966 pro-war advertisement in *The New York Times*, signed by several notable figures from the CIA and the Council on Foreign Relations, also argued that:

*The American military presence in Vietnam . . . provided a shield for the sharp reversal of Indonesia's shift towards Communism.*¹³

US Military Aid to Indonesia

Finally, behind the shield of US aircraft, naval bombardment, and marines in Vietnam, the US was quietly aiding the Indonesian military even during periods when relations between Washington and Jakarta were strained. As US Pentagon official Paul Warnke explained to a US Congressional panel in 1968,

The purpose for which it was maintained was not to support an existing [i.e. Sukarno] regime. In fact, we were opposed,

13. Quoted in Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

*eventually and increasingly to the then existing regime. It was to preserve a liaison of sorts with the military of the country which in effect turned out to be one of the conclusive elements in the overthrow of that regime.*¹⁴

Equally unabashed in his praise of the effects of the US military aid even while Sukarno was still in power, was Congressman Silvio Conte.

*I remember taking a tremendous amount of heat on the floor of the House when Sukarno told us to get out . . . but . . . it was as a result of continuing aid and continuing that small military program that Sukarno was thrown out and a democratic [sic] form of government was put in, without firing one shot [sic], without losing one American life.*¹⁵

And, on 3 March, 1976, even as Indonesian forces were massacring East Timorese, Congressman Broomfield stated on the House floor:

*I think probably one of the best areas we can look at is the Indonesia of a few years ago with Sukarno. Through our training program we trained many of the military people who were able to take over Indonesia and they have become friends of the United States. I think they have done a good job.*¹⁶

What was this aid being referred to? By 1964, the US had trained over 500 Indonesian police officials, some 1200 military officers, including senior military figures, and had participated in the training of 62,000 of the 110,000-member national police.¹⁷ In addition, there were numerous high-level contacts between US intelligence personnel and Indonesian officers.¹⁸ The indirect responsibility of the US in installing the Suharto regime is thus clear. But was there also direct involvement in the 1965 coup itself?

The 1965 Coup

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

Public awareness of US-sponsored and organized coups d'état to topple popularly elected or revolutionary governments have gone through three general stages. During the 1950s, as for example in Iran and Guatemala, CIA involvement was widely known and the US Government depended upon the anticommunist hysteria created in the period 1946–54 to gain national if not international acquiescence. During the 1970s, by contrast, US interference in the affairs of other nations, such as Chile and Jamaica, has come to light *against* the wishes of the government, but because of the courageous work of certain journalists and the continuing defection of highly placed CIA and other personnel who have become disgusted with their work. In the 1960s, however, and particularly in the case of the Indonesian right-wing takeover and

14. U.S. House, 1968, *Foreign Assistance Act of 1968*. Hearings, House Foreign Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 706.

15. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1976*, hearings, House Appropriations Committee, part 2, p. 631, as quoted in Lenny Siegel, "Arming Indonesia," Pacific Studies Center, 1975, p. 1.

16. *Congressional Record*, Vol. 122, no. 29, March 3, 1976, p. H1539, as quoted in Siegel, *ibid.*

17. *ibid.*, p. 1.

18. Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 220–27 and 232–45.

By installing a government based on massive terror and military rule, the US was placing in power, with the aid of certain right-wing forces within Indonesia, the kind of government that would *not* be willing to tolerate even the most moderately progressive independent neighbor; for that neighbor could become an example for the exploited and potentially restless peasant population on which Jakarta's generals have forced their will. In this way, the US, through its role in installing the Suharto regime, bears a heavy responsibility in what was to happen in East Timor ten years later.

bloodbath against the left, an almost successful wall of secrecy was maintained; so much so, indeed, that many people still believe the right-wing takeover was primarily a response to an attempted left-wing coup and the bloodbath that followed represented the legitimate anger of the Indonesian people against the left, or a mass psychosis of "running amok" (*amok* being an Indonesian-Malay word).¹⁹

In recent years, however, the role of the US has become increasingly clear. During October of 1965, two representatives of the Bertrand Russel Peace Foundation were in Jakarta. As reported by Russell:

*In Jakarta few had any doubt about what was taking place around them. The United States Seventh Fleet was in Javanese waters. The largest base in the area, feverishly constructed by the United States but a few months earlier on the southernmost point of the southernmost island of The Philippines, was ordered "on alert." General Nasution had a mission in Washington. The United States was directly involved in the day to day events.*²⁰

Other evidence linking the US directly to the installation of General Suharto in power is circumstantial but significant. In June 1965, Bernardo Hugh Tovar, a high-ranking CIA operative with experience in the Philippines in the 1950s and who was later to work in Laos and then Bangkok, was joined in Jakarta by the new US Ambassador, Marshall Green, who "had direct experience in the CIA-sponsored replacement of Syngman Rhee by the military regime of

19. "At the end of October 1965, the long-suffering country ran amuck. . . . People who knew the Indonesians and the torment they were undergoing [at the hands of Sukarno and what the author calls "godless Communists"] were predicting a bloody end to their patience as far back as 1964." Wilfred T. Neill. *Twentieth Century Indonesia*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1973. pp. 354-55. In *Time Out of Hand: Revolution and Reaction in Southeast Asia* (New York, Harper and Row, 1969) Robert Shaplen explains that "politics in Indonesia had never had a rational development" and that "the mass killings that occurred in the name of the attempted coup may be judged as the almost inevitable excesses of a riven nation whose repressed demons and furies were ultimately bound to produce some such cataclysm." (p. 26).

20. Quoted in Deidre Griswold. *Indonesia: The Second Greatest Crime of the Century*. New York: World View Publishers. 1979 (orig. 1970), p. 13.

21. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

Chung Hee Park" in Korea.²¹ Ambassador Green remarked later to an audience of Australian scholars that "we did what we had to do and you'd better be glad we did because if we hadn't Asia would be a different place today."²² Green was referring to the September 30, 1965, events in Jakarta.

Most dramatically, in just the past two months an important new piece of information has been added on the question of US involvement in the Indonesian coup. Ralph McGehee, who worked for the CIA from 1952 to 1977, and specialized in "Communist terminology, techniques and modes of communications" has described, *based on his personal involvement in the events*, the orchestration of the 1965 coup and the subsequent mass killings of progressive forces by CIA methods, operatives, and planning. McGehee's article was censored by the CIA, and a total of 10½ sentences and 43 words was deleted. Even with the deletions, however, the role of the CIA is clear: for example, McGehee writes of the 1965 events as a "CIA [one word deleted] operation," and

The Agency chose [four words deleted] as its vehicle for overthrowing Sukarno and armed tens of thousands of their subordinates.

McGehee continues:

*The Agency was extremely proud of its successful [one word deleted] and recommended it as a model for future operations [½ sentence deleted].*²³

Finally, high-ranking journalists in the US sent little glimmers of information out of the closed rooms of the US plotters in brief reports on how the events were viewed in Washington. Max Frankel, for example, noted in *The New York Times* on 12 March, 1966, after the major extermination campaigns had been underway for months, that:

*The Johnson Administration found it difficult today to hide its delight with the news from Indonesia. . . . After a long period of patient diplomacy designed to help the army triumph over the Communists, officials were elated to find their expectations being realized.*²⁴

Three months later, on 19 June, 1966, columnist James Reston was more explicit. Entitling his *New York Times* column "A Gleam of Light in Asia," Reston noted that:

*Washington is careful not to claim any credit for the coup and massacres, but this does not mean that Washington had nothing to do with it. There was a great deal more contact between the anti-communist forces in that country and at least one very high official in Washington before and during the Indonesian massacre than is generally realized.*²⁵

22. *ibid.*, p. 244.

23. This information appears in an article with the title "The CIA and the White Paper on El Salvador," by Ralph McGehee, in *The Nation*, 11 April, 1981, pp. 423-25. An account of the lawsuit regarding the deleted words and sentences was carried in the *Washington Post*, 28 March, 1981, p. 20.

24. *The New York Times*, 12 March, 1966.

25. *The New York Times*, 19 June, 1966. Professor W.F. Wertheim has put together several threads of evidence that suggest General Suharto may have himself been a double agent in the left-wing coup, thus assuring his own seizure of power for the right. See "Suharto and the Untung Coup—

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

There is considerable evidence to justify the conclusion that the US worked directly and indirectly, "using vicious methods" to install a client government in Indonesia. What is even more important for purposes of this Tribunal, by installing a government based on massive terror and military rule, the US was placing in power, with the aid of certain right-wing forces within Indonesia, the kind of government that would *not* be willing to tolerate even the most moderately progressive independent neighbor; for that neighbor could become an example for the exploited and potentially restless peasant population on which Jakarta's generals have forced their will. In this way, the US, through its role in installing the Suharto regime, bears a heavy responsibility in what was to happen in East Timor ten years later.

US Military Aid to the Indonesian Regime

Within a short period after the fall of Sukarno, the US Government began stepped-up arms deliveries along with massive economic aid to the new military regime. Between 1967 and 1974, \$1.5 billion in economic aid and more than \$94 million in military aid flowed from Washington to Jakarta. In 1976, another \$54 million in aid was granted to the military. This aid included \$3 million in M-16 rifles, light machine guns, mortars and rocket launchers in 1970; at least ten naval vessels including minesweepers, tank

landing ships, and destroyer escorts in 1970-74; from six to fourteen F-51 Mustang fighters, ten C-47 transport aircraft, sixteen T-33 trainers, ten Sikorsky S-55 helicopters, and sixteen OV-10 Bronco counterinsurgency aircraft, all in 1972-73; and in 1971 training for at least ninety-four naval officers in use of tank landing ships.²⁶

Finally, following the collapse of the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia in April of 1975, President Ford shifted an undisclosed amount from the \$425 million emergency fund initially planned for Cambodia, over to use in Indonesia. These funds could be deployed without Congressional approval under existing laws.

US Military Supplies Were Essential in the Invasion and Occupation of East Timor, 1975-1981

US military aid was not limited to a *general* build-up of Indonesian military strength, however. Both the specific weapons and the timing of deliveries were consistent with Indonesia's particular military problems in driving the East Timorese resistance forces out of the mountains in 1977 and 1978 and bringing much of the population into the so-called "resettlement centers."

A partial list of military equipment, *admitted to have been used in East Timor by the US State Department*, includes:

OV-10 counterinsurgency aircraft
V-150 armored cars
Bell UH-1 helicopters

The Missing Links," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 50-57.

In assessing the nature and degree of US participation in the 1965 coup, one must of course recognize the existence of powerful interests *within* Indonesia who were as concerned as was the US government with a possible socialist revolution. Whether these interests could have prevailed on their own is difficult to say, but we can show at least that virtually every form of encouragement and support short of direct military intervention was offered during the 1950s and 1960s by various US institutions, including particularly the CIA. The most extensive discussion of US manipulations and intrigues in Sukarno-period Indonesia is Peter Dale Scott's essay, "Exporting Military-Economic Development—America and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965-67" in Malcolm Caldwell, ed., *Ten Years' Military Terror in Indonesia*. 1975. Spokesman Books, pp. 209-261. (Available in the US from Tapol—USA, P.O. Box 609, Montclair, N.J. 07042, for \$5.50 including postage). Scott identified, among other interventions: 1) establishment of foundations and companies in Indonesia that could channel CIA funds within the country, 2) large subsidies to anticommunist political parties with these CIA funds during the 1950s, 3) high-level discussions in which Council on Foreign Relations members, RAND advisors, and CIA personnel identified the sections of the Indonesian military most likely to offer opposition to a Communist "take-over," 4) establishment of ties with such military personnel and political figures and aid to help them organize a base at the Bandung Indonesia Army Command School (SESKOAD) from whose graduates much of the coup and postcoup governmental apparatus was derived, and 5) the dispatching of US officials and agents closely associated with counterinsurgency and/or right wing coups in other countries in 1966, e.g. Bernardo Tovar, a veteran of Edward Landsdale's anti-Huk campaigns in the Philippines; and, in June of 1965, Marshall Green, a Foreign Service Officer in Seoul from 1959 to 1961 with experience in the replacement of Syngman Rhee. It may never be possible to prove whether or not a specific decision within the CIA or another agency was made to attempt an overthrow of the Indonesian government on a specific date, but the extensive chain of connections above indicates at least that elaborate plans for such a decision were made and that once Suharto had seized power in Jakarta, a well-prepared US-sponsored grouping was able to carry out with confidence and training the plans outlined in Council on Foreign Relations, CIA, and RAND Corporation papers.

26. The military equipment data was derived from US government documents and published in Siegel, *op. cit.* The general dollar amounts are given by Siegel as follows:

POST-COUP U.S. MILITARY AID TO INDONESIA (\$ THOUSANDS)

| Fiscal Year | Grants ¹ | Sales Orders | Sales Credits | Commercial Sales Deliveries | Excess Deliveries ² |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1966 | | 1 | | 116 | |
| 1967 | 2508 | 1 | | 23 | 1 |
| 1968 | 4594 | 24 | | 2730 | 98 |
| 1969 | 4908 | | | 760 | 201 |
| 1970 | 5405 | 3 | | 233 | 1333 |
| 1971 | 16164 | 18 | | 412 | 2347 |
| 1972 | 16982 | 3 | | 51 | 1925 |
| 1973 | 18666 | 148 | | 68 | 8380 |
| 1974 | 14010 | 148 | 3500 | 859 | 5541 |
| 1975 | 15850 | 48514 | 5000 | | 1221 |
| 1976 ⁴ | 19400 | | 23100 | | |

1. Does not include ship loans and other miscellaneous programs.
2. Original acquisition cost.
3. Less than \$500.
4. Proposed.

Source: "Foreign Military Sales and Military Assistance Facts," November, 1975, Defense Security Assistance Agency.

Additional information on US military supplies to Indonesia, along with revealing comments about the intent, appears in Michael Klare, "Indonesia and the Nixon Doctrine," in *Ten Years' Military Terror in Indonesia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-274.

Bell S-61 helicopters
C-130 transport aircraft
patrol craft
various infantry weapons such as M-16 rifles, machine guns,
mortars, recoilless rifles, ammunition, and extensive com-
*munications and support equipment.*²⁷

I can think of no way to summarize better the significance of this equipment than to quote from a US military expert, US Admiral Gene La Rocque (Ret.), a former commander of a nuclear-armed navy fleet:

The Rockwell OV-10s were particularly important to the Indonesians. They are slow-moving planes specifically designed for counter-insurgency missions against an enemy lacking in anti-aircraft capability. They were used widely in Vietnam to carry out search and destroy and scorched earth missions. They can carry a remarkably heavy load of ordnance (3600 pounds) including bombs, rockets, napalm, and machine guns (7.62 mm. M-60Cs), as well as infra-red detectors. They are equipped with grenade launchers also. It has been described as one of the deadliest and most versatile light strike and counter-insurgency aircraft in the world.

The V-150 armored cars are ill-suited for use against regular military forces, but are very effective in counter-insurgency situations where the enemy has only small arms. They are fully amphibious, hold a crew of up to 12 combat troops, and can be equipped with machine guns, 81 mm. mortars, 20 mm. cannons, and smoke and tear gas launchers.

The Bell UH-1 helicopter also saw a lot of use in Vietnam. It is heavily armed with 40 mm. grenade launchers and/or M-134 7.62 mm. "Miniguns."

*The Beechcraft T-34 armed trainer aircraft can carry 1800 pounds of ordnance and have recently been adapted for the COIN (counter-insurgency) role.*²⁸

Other US-supplied equipment includes the A4-Skyhawk II fighter aircraft, armed trainer aircraft, four ex-US Navy destroyer escorts, and assorted police gear.²⁹ Altogether, in money terms, more than \$250 million in military assistance has been granted to Indonesia since the war against East Timor began.³⁰

According to *The New York Times*, at least four of the ten major support ships used during the 7 December, 1975,

27. *Human Rights in East Timor and the Question of the Use of US Equipment by the Indonesian Armed Forces.* Hearing Before the Sub-Committees on International Organizations and on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, March 23, 1977, pp. 60 and 62. Washington, D.C. US Government Printing Office. Document No. 88-077.

28. Admiral Gene R. La Rocque, US Navy (Ret.). Additional Statement for the Record, Hearing Before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Relations, 10 June, 1980, p. 13. The statement was not printed by the Subcommittee but is available at the Center for Defense Information, 122 Maryland Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20002

29. *ibid.*, p. 12

30. U.S. Department of Defense, *Foreign Military Sales and Military Assistance Facts.* Washington, December 1979. La Rocque comments: The total includes \$159.6 million in foreign military sales, \$52.4 million in grants, \$31.8 million in commercial sales, and \$9.5 million for the International Military Education and Training Program. Cited in La Rocque, *op. cit.*, note 9.

landing at Dili, were US-supplied.³¹ Overall, US State Department Legal Advisor George H. Aldrich estimated that the Indonesians "were armed roughly 90% with our equipment."³²

Of particular interest is the timing of the specific military aid. For the year 1975, just preceding the invasion, the US pledged 450% more military assistance to Indonesia than in 1974. Among the items included during this period were sixteen OV-10s, forty five V-150 armored cars, and three C-130s, all of which were destined for use in East Timor. Also delivered in time for use in East Timor: \$92,000 worth of rifles, \$104,000 worth of small arms spare parts, and some communications spare parts.³³

Despite these massive infusions of US equipment, however, the several thousands of Indonesian troops were unable to accomplish more than to hold the small urban and coastal areas of East Timor throughout 1976 and most of 1977. The Maubere people chose to go into the mountainous interior where they joined with Fretilin and the resistance movement, either as fighters or as political activists, growing food, teaching reading, practicing medicine, or performing other tasks familiar to all who have studied peoples' war. It must be assumed that US military personnel were aware of this successful resistance, for, in 1977 and 1978, Indonesia was supplied with special additional equipment particularly useful in helping the Suharto regime to carry out against the people and their resources two of the most brutal and massive destruction campaigns in recent history.

In 1976, a stalemate of the war had developed. Fretilin held the countryside and the mountainous interior while the heavily equipped Indonesian forces maintained control over the coastal regions where naval bombardment and armor could be deployed.

In September of 1976, however, the first three OV-10s arrived, followed by three more in November, three in February 1977, two in March and two more shortly thereafter.³⁴ In addition, a Bell UH-1 (250A) helicopter and

31. *The New York Times*, 8 December, 1975.

32. *Human Rights in East Timor.* Hearings Before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives. Document No. 94-077. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office. Most of the time previous to this admission, State Department spokespersons had been coy, as in the following exchange from the March 23, 1977, Hearings (*op. cit.*), p. 12.

Mr. Fraser: Did the intervention at that time involve the use of paratroops with respect to Dili? [i.e. 7 December, 1975 invasion, RF]

Mr. Oakley: Yes, sir, so far as we know. We think there was some use of paratroops and some U.S.-origin aircraft were used as part of that action.

Mr. Fraser: Is it true that some American Hercules airplanes were used to transport the paratroops so far as we know?

Mr. Oakley: Yes.

Mr. Fraser: The aircraft was Hercules?

Mr. Oakley: C-130.

Mr. Fraser: Were those paratroops equipped with U.S. arms?

Mr. Oakley: Yes, sir. We said in the previous hearings, Mr. Wolff's subcommittee, there were U.S.-origin arms used by some of the units which went into East Timor.

33. Summarized from various reports in La Rocque, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

34. Hearings, 23 March, 1977, p. 63, as part of an official State Department reply to questions by Congressman Donald M. Fraser.

several armored cars were delivered in 1977.³⁵ The effects of these aircraft, along with increased naval bombardment have been eloquently described by Father Leoneto de Rego, who recounted the beginnings of the famine that was to result from the aerial destruction of crops and the forcing of constant movement upon the people so that they could not properly concentrate their productive forces on the land.

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

As brutal as these attacks of 1977 were, they were surpassed by the attacks of 1978. And even as these more recent attacks were more brutal, they were *even more* dependent on aid from the United States.

By the end of 1977, Indonesian military units were running short of military supplies.³⁶ It was at this time that Vice-President Mondale of the US visited Indonesia and promised to sell sixteen A-4 Skyhawk II counterinsurgency planes. In place of \$25 million in sales of military equipment that had been planned, the US boosted the total to \$110 million while overall assistance rose from \$30 million in 1977 to \$131 million in 1978.³⁷

The effects of this aid on the people of East Timor were disastrous. With the A-4 Skyhawks, 15,000 new M-16 rifles, sixteen Bell helicopters, and over \$5 million in ammunition,³⁸ the Jakarta military regime was able to conduct a massive "search and destroy campaign of firebombing and helicopter-borne attacks."³⁹ These attacks killed untold thousands of East Timorese people and so devastated the land and resources that, despite their intense commitment to self-determination and independence, more than 200,000 East Timorese were finally driven out of the mountains by early 1979, where they were to become the subjects of yet another US-sponsored campaign to which I shall return in the last part of my presentation.

Military assistance, however, was not the sole means by which the US Government directly aided the Indonesian regime in its campaign of murder and destruction in East Timor. As if to highlight its own complicity, the US Government gave almost complete diplomatic backing to Indonesian intrigues and subterfuges, both before and during the major invasions.

US Diplomatic Resources Were Put Consistently at the Disposal of the Indonesian Regime Before and During the Invasion and Occupation of East Timor

In 1975, as an Indonesian invasion approached, Indonesian-US friendship seemed to increase accordingly. In

35. From the *State Department Fiscal Year 1977 Report to Congress*, cited by La Rocque, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

36. *Los Angeles Times*, 24 November, 1977.

37. La Rocque, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

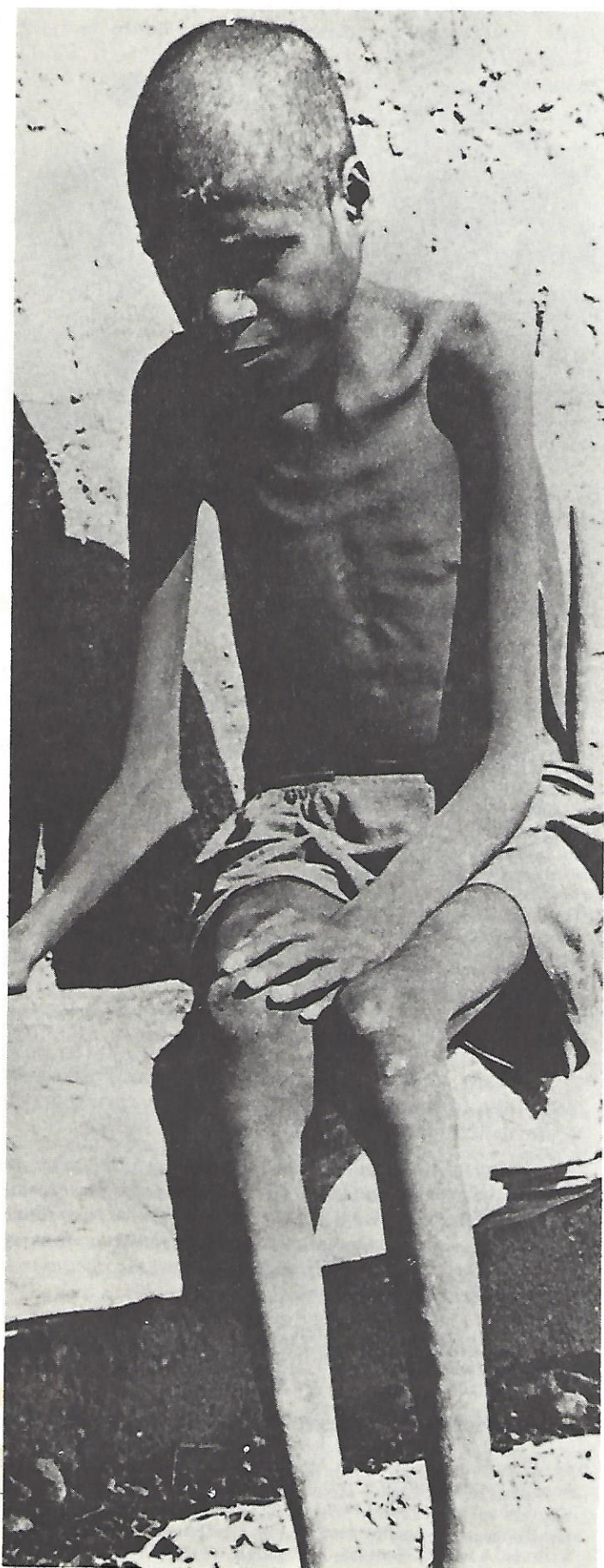
38. La Rocque, *op. cit.*, p. 17. The source given in this instance is not directly from the U.S. Government, but based on an analysis by Delia Miller of the Institute for Policy Studies: "Memorandum on U.S. Military Assistance to Indonesia," December 1979, p. 4.

39. *The New York Times*, 19 April, 1978. Much of the material from Admiral La Rocque's testimony and Additional Statement has appeared in published summary in Scott Sidell, "The United States and Genocide in East Timor." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 44-61.



East Timor, December, 1979. After two years of massive aerial bombardment, the independence forces were driven in large numbers from the mountains. In 1983, new reports of guerrilla actions are reaching Portugal.

(Photos by Peter Rodgers)



July of 1975, for example, President Suharto made a five-hour stopover in Washington where he received assurances from President Ford that the US was firm in its commitment to grant military aid to Indonesia. *It was after this visit that Suharto made his first public statement opposing independence for East Timor.*⁴⁰ The trip seems to have been merely a prelude for bigger things to come, however. In August a group of US Congresspeople visited Indonesia on a trip that was not apparently reported in the US press. A BBC report from Jakarta on 8 August, 1975, made the following points:

The Indonesian Government realizes that if it wants more arms from America, it will have to convince Congress as well as the President and Congress is not all that in favor of more military aid these days. Indonesia does want more arms. . . . Also it wants new patrolboats and aircraft in particular, and this will be expensive. So it has asked Congress for more military aid. Later this year for example, there will be a prestigious seminar in Washington, where leading Government figures will put their case to influential Americans.

The “prestigious seminar” in Washington did indeed occur. Several high-ranking Indonesian government and military officials toured the US, starting in Los Angeles on October 14 and ending up in New York City on October 23. In between they visited San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Washington, D.C. Though little US press coverage was given to this tour, it was almost certainly of great significance in view of Indonesia’s desire to get increased US military aid.

On the tour, the Indonesian delegation visited the offices of the Council on Foreign Relations in many cities, met with Congressional representatives, Asia scholars, and the “Center for Strategic and International Studies” at Georgetown University. The head of the Indonesian delegation was Major General Ali Murtopo, honorary Chairman of the “Center for Strategic and International Studies” in Jakarta, Indonesia. Major General Ali Murtopo, chief intelligence aid to President Suharto, was also the military “project officer” in charge of the invasion of East Timor.

By October of 1975 it must have been clear to those in command of the information services of the US Government that an Indonesian invasion of East Timor was a distinct possibility. After all, Indonesian troops were already at that time fighting along the border area *inside* East Timorese territory.

Then, on 6 December, 1975, President Ford reciprocated the earlier visits of high-ranking Indonesians by spending several hours in Jakarta. Three major events occurred during and after that visit. First of all, there was a lot of fancy dining. According to *The New York Times*, President Suharto “went all out for the Ford family,” offering galantine of duckling and tournedos of beef with imported French wines and champagnes—all of this served in crystal goblets and on gold plates, while an orchestra serenaded.

To further enliven the evening, the Fords and the

40. Arnold Kohen. “Invitation to a Massacre in East Timor.” *The Nation*, vol. 232, no. 5, 7 February, 1981, p. 138.

Suhartos exchanged gifts, with the US leader receiving a fifteen-inch gold and ivory *kris* (dagger) and Mrs. Ford receiving a gold-filigree handbag the size of a canteloupe. The Fords gave General Suharto a porcelain sculpture of two eagles, and a similar piece went to Mrs. Suharto.⁴¹

In addition to the dining, there was a second feature of the visit. Reassurances were given to Indonesia's leaders that, as Ford put it, "No area of the world is more important to us than Asia," and that, "We remain firmly committed to peace and security in Southeast Asia."⁴²

Finally, just twelve hours after the toasts and the gifts and the fine words of reassurance and pledges to peace, just twelve hours after Ford left Jakarta—6,000 Indonesian troops, backed by helicopters, tanks, naval artillery and air bombardment, began their first massive assault on East Timor. It seems likely that even while the President was dining in Jakarta, the troop movements must have begun.

When Ford landed in Hawaii, reporters asked him for comment on the invasion. He smiled and said: "We'll talk about that later." An Associated Press account for 7 December continues:

... Nesson [Press Secretary] said the President discussed the Timor issue only in very "general terms" with Indonesian President Suharto after Suharto raised the matter. He said Suharto did not inform Ford of any action he intended to take. When a reporter said he understood US officials had asked Suharto to hold off until the President's party left, Nesson said he never heard of such a thing.

Later on officials also denied that Henry Kissinger had given assurances to Indonesian leaders that the United States "understands Indonesia's position regarding East Timor."

In a sense, this latter denial was true. In a report carried by *The Los Angeles Times*, 7 December, 1975, Kissinger was quoted as having "told newsmen [emphasis added] in Jakarta that the United States would not recognize the Fretilin-declared republic and 'the United States Understands Indonesia's position on the question.'"⁴³ Thus, perhaps nothing was said directly to Indonesian leaders, but by making such a statement to the press in Jakarta, Kissinger was making an even wider audience—the entire international diplomatic community in Jakarta—aware of the US support for the massive invasion that was about to commence.

Just how important this diplomatic support was for the Indonesian regime has been confirmed through the release of secret Australian embassy cables that make clear how deeply involved were US officials in the 7 December invasion. A cable, described as having "overriding sensitivity," included the following report by the Australian ambassador in Jakarta:

The United States might have some influence on Indonesia at



(Photo by Peter Rodgers)

present as Indonesia really wants and needs United States assistance in its military re-equipment program. But Ambassador David Newsom told me last night that he is under instructions from Kissinger personally not to involve himself in discussions on Timor with the Indonesians on the grounds that the United States is involved in enough problems of greater importance overseas at present. The State Department has, we understand, instructed the embassy to cut down its reporting on Timor.

*I will be seeing Newsom on Monday, but his present attitude is that the United States should keep out of the Portuguese Timor situation and allow events to take their course. His somewhat cynical comment to me was that if Indonesia were to intervene the United States would hope they would do so "effectively, quickly and not use our equipment."*⁴⁴

Finally, despite the denials of President Ford's press secretary, former BBC and *Washington Post* correspondent Hamish MacDonald, claims that:

an attack on Dili was to have been made on 5 December, the day U.S. President Gerald Ford and his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, were due to arrive in Jakarta from China. American intelligence learnt of this highly compromising timetable, and successfully demanded that the operation be postponed until after Ford left on 6 December.

MacDonald also writes that Suharto was so in need of US aid in 1975 that he could have been prevailed upon by the US Government to stop the invasion.⁴⁵

41. *The New York Times*, 7 December, 1975.

42. *Washington Post*, 6 December, 1975.

43. A detailed discussion of these events is given in Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*. Boston. South End Press, 1979, esp. p. 156. The discussion of East Timor, the US government and the US media on pp. 129–204 is one of the most detailed and completely documented accounts available.

44. Quoted in Kohen, *op. cit.*, from *Documents on Australian Defence and Foreign Policy, 1968–1975*, pp. 199–200 published by Angus and Robertson, Ltd., 1981. See also Chomsky and Herman, *op. cit.*, pp. 156–157.

45. Kohen, *ibid.*, quoting from Hamish MacDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia*. Victoria, Australia. Fontana, 1980, p. 211.

Despite all the complicated double-talk about having “enough problems” and not wanting to get involved in East Timor, the US position, both diplomatically and militarily, was summed up by an anonymous State Department spokesperson who said:

*The United States wants to keep its relationship with Indonesia close and friendly. We regard Indonesia as a friendly, nonaligned nation—a nation we do a lot of business with. . . . In terms of the bilateral relations between the US and Indonesia, we are more or less condoning the incursion into East Timor.*⁴⁶

With the full-scale invasion of 7 December, 1975, diplomatic activity shifted from US, Portuguese, Australian, and Indonesian embassies to the United Nations. Here, once again, the US followed a consistently pro-Indonesian policy.

US Support for Indonesia at the United Nations

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

In addition to US diplomatic support and encouragement directly to the Indonesian regime, the US gave considerable support at the United Nations to what it has admitted is an illegal occupation. The history of US maneuvers with regard to the East Timor question has been thoroughly recounted to 1978 by Professors Noam Chom-

46. Ross Waby, *The Australian*, 22 January, 1976. Emphasis added.

As with the role of the US in the coup of 1965 (see note 25 above), it is not possible to show a specific US decision to have Indonesia invade East Timor. Rather, it appears U.S. officials were simply willing to go along with whatever the Jakarta general considered in their own interests, the assumption being that US interests (as defined by these high-level officials) would be served also in this way. In addition to the evidence in the text of this presentation to the Permanent People's Tribunal, new data has come to light. Dale Van Atta, a researcher with Jack Anderson's office in Washington, and Brian Toohey, made available in May of 1982 extensive quotations from the *National Intelligence Daily*, a news sheet prepared each day for the US President's desk and for a small, “cleared” audience among the National Security Agency, State Department, etc. The almost day-by-day account runs from August 11, 1975, to February 13, 1976, and reveals that US intelligence knew weeks in advance of the Indonesian invasion plans. Of particular interest is the briefing, apparently on President Ford's desk, August 20, 1975, which reads in part:

President Soeharto evidently is still delaying on a decision to authorize military action. Apparently, a major consideration on his part is that an invasion of Timor, if it comes, must be justified as an act of defense of Indonesian security. He is acutely aware that conditions of US military assistance to Indonesia specifically limit the use of this equipment to defense purposes. (Quoted in National Times of Australia, 30 May, 1982, p. 18)

Just two days earlier, Ford had received a similar assessment:

Soeharto continues to worry about an adverse reaction from the US, particularly since a move against Timor at this time would come only a few weeks after his visit to Washington. (Ibid.)

The documents released by Van Atta and Toohey indicate substantial Portuguese and Australian connivance in facilitating an eventual Indonesian decision to invade, but for purposes of this essay, it seems most significant to note that the President of the United States had on his desk intelligence evaluations indicating that the US could play a possible role in avoiding bloodshed and war in East Timor. The other evidence in this paper indicates that, as far as we can tell at this writing, the only step Ford and Kissinger took was to attempt to reduce their own embarrassment by having the dates of the invasion shifted. (A photocopy of the entire published part of the document may be requested for a small fee from Tapol—UK, 8a Treport St., London SW18 2BP, England.)

sky and Edward Herman in their study *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*. On 22 December, 1975, the US had joined in the unanimous approval of Security Council Resolution 384, which “calls upon the Government of Indonesia to withdraw without delay all its forces from the Territory.”⁴⁷ On 22 April, 1976, while heavy fighting continued in East Timor, the Security Council passed Resolution 389, repeating the earlier demand. This time, however, the US and Japan abstained. On 1 December, 1976, the US voted *against* the General Assembly resolution which was passed 68 votes to 20 with 49 abstentions. One year later, the General Assembly passed a resolution calling on the UN Special Committee on Decolonization to send a mission to the territory (67 yes, 27 no, 46 abstentions), but, despite Indonesia's flagrant announcement that it would bar the UN representative regardless of the outcome of the vote, the US voted *against* the resolution, and thus *with* the public arrogance of Indonesia vis à vis the United Nations. Again, on 21 November, 1979, the US joined thirty other nations in voting “no” on a strong resolution (34/40) declaring that “the people of East Timor must be enabled freely to determine their own future under the auspices of the United Nations.” Sixty-two nations voted for that resolution with forty-five abstentions.⁴⁸ Most recently, on 11 November, 1980, the US joined thirty-four other nations in voting against Resolution 35/598, which reaffirmed “the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence, in accordance with the Declaration on the granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).” The US thus, after 1975, moved rapidly towards an official public position in the international political arena which put it squarely at odds with several of the most basic principles and specific resolutions of the United Nations regarding the rights of colonial peoples to determination and independence.

US involvement in opposing the rights of the East Timorese did not stop with mere votes, however. Although the exact details are not yet available, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the US engaged in diplomatic maneuvers to weaken the UN support for East Timor whenever possible. Indeed, the available evidence suggests that the US actually viewed the East Timor issue as one on which they might launch a probing action to try to break up the general solidarity of Third World nations that has threatened the Western capitalist countries with some moderate international economic reforms, labelled “The New Economic Order.”

In a cablegram of 23 January, 1976, for example, then-US Ambassador to the UN Daniel P. Moynihan informed then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and all US Embassies of the “considerable progress” toward a basic foreign policy goal, that of breaking up the blocs of nations, mostly new nations, “which for so long have been arrayed against us in international forums and in diplomatic en-

47. Chomsky and Herman, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

48. The UN vote was reproduced in the Hearings, 10 June, 1980, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

counters generally.”⁴⁹ In his published memoirs, Moynihan was even more specific about his work in relation to East Timor:

*. . . the United States wished things to turn out as they did, and worked to bring this about. The Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook. This task was given to me, and I carried it forward with no inconsiderable success.*⁵⁰ (Emphasis added.)

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

Coming as it does, from the most direct and responsible participant in the US UN Mission, can this statement leave any doubt about the responsibility of the US Government in undermining—to the extent of its considerable power in the world—the main international organization charged with bringing about a just decolonization and peaceful exercise of the right of self-determination to the people of East Timor?

V. US Attempts to Deceive and Manipulate Public Opinion

As most scholars, journalists, lawyers, and jurists are undoubtedly aware, every campaign to deny people their rights is accompanied by attempts to deceive, misinform, confuse, and manipulate public opinion. Ironically, perhaps, this seems especially important in countries such as the US where formally there are broad freedoms of information, discussion, and publication. As Professors Chomsky and Herman have shown, however, the major press and electronic media in the US have generally shown themselves only too willing to become accomplices of government deception. In this presentation, I do not believe it is necessary to document the role of the press and media generally with regard to East Timor: this has already been done with thorough detail and documentation by Professors Chomsky and Herman. I believe, however, that it is important to summarize a few of the many statements by US government spokespeople in order to indicate the extent to which the US Government has been willing to misrepresent even the simplest and most verifiable facts about the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor.

The various statements by President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger have been noted above. Our knowledge of most of the other misrepresentations comes primarily from a set of several official US Government hearings that have been held over the past six years regarding the use of US military equipment in East Timor, political and economic conditions in the territory, and, most recently, food and medical relief operations.

One tactic used by State Department spokespeople is to assert that the annexation of East Timor is a *fait accompli*, thus not worth further debate. As early as March, 1977, State Department official Robert Oakley stated that “in our judgment, East Timor is effectively part of Indonesia.”⁵¹ In June and July of that same year, George H. Aldrich stated that “As a political matter, the United States has recognized the annexation of East Timor and the legality of the exercise of sovereignty there by the Indonesian Government.” He continued that the United States has taken no stand on the question whether Indonesia has violated “international standards or norms of conduct or international principles” in “the seizure and annexation of East Timor.”⁵² Note that these statements were made at a time when Fretilin held most of the countryside and that there has never been any legal ambiguity concerning the “international standards or norms of conduct” with regard to forcible annexation in violation of United Nations resolutions, etc.

A second approach taken by government spokespersons is to attempt to detract from the Indonesian atrocities by placing most of the casualties, including civilian casualties, during the period of the Fretilin-UDT civil war of August-September, 1975, or within the period of the first massive invasion. Thus, Robert Oakley spoke in March of 1977 of “the number of total casualties, civilian, military, everything else” as “probably under 10,000.” He continued:

But this is a very rough guess because no one has any hard figures and most of this took place over a year ago. Most of the violence, in which there were major losses of life or wounded, took place during the period between August 1975 and March 1976.

Under questioning, Oakley was more specific in his misinformation:

Mr. Goodling: Am I right in understanding there was a tremendous slaughter prior to Indonesian intervention? Is that what you are telling me?

*Mr. Oakley: Yes.*⁵³

These statements were made, it should be noted, while independent sources, including the Catholic Church inside East Timor, were estimating up to 100,000 deaths caused by the Indonesians and after Red Cross and Australian church and aid workers had estimated only about 1,500 deaths maximum during the Fretilin-UDT civil war of August-September, 1975.⁵⁴

49. Chomsky and Herman, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

50. Daniel P. Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place*. Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1978, p. 247, cited by Noam Chomsky, “Statement Delivered to the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly,” October 1979, p. 3. Chomsky’s 1978 and 1979 UN testimony are available in published form in Torben Retboll, ed., *East Timor, Indonesia and the Western Democracies: A Collection of Documents*. International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. Document 40. Copenhagen, Denmark, 1980. pp. 1–25 and 109–120.

51. Hearings, 23 March, 1977, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

52. Hearings, June–July, 1977, *op. cit.*, p. 64. The Orwellian quality of these remarks is brought out in Chomsky and Herman, *op. cit.*, pp. 160–161.

53. Hearings, 23 March, 1977, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

54. A recent reaffirmation of this estimate is bluntly stated by Dunn:

I do not propose to engage in an analysis of the various accounts of the total loss of Timorese lives resulting from the war. The figure is probably not less than 100,000 and it might conceivably be twice that number. It is important to note, however, that only a small fraction of the total casualties occurred in the one month long civil war. The international Red Cross and ACFOA aid team (which I led) went to all parts of East Timor during the two

Another distortion used by US officials is that the population of East Timor was held hostage by Fretilin guerrillas. As Robert Oakley explained in February of 1978:

*We are concerned about the situation in East Timor, and as I stated we would like to see the situation there solved, as we would any conflict, by peaceful means. This has not yet happened. There has been a certain change in the situation, in that a large number of people have moved from areas that could be described either as no-man's land or under the control of Fretilin to areas where they could be protected by the Indonesian Government.*⁵⁵

And, although from time to time State Department representatives have pleaded lack of sufficient information when questioned about Indonesian atrocities, their memories come to life when drawn out by right-wing supporters of the slaughter; including even the resort to racist language by turning East Timorese into "Fretilins":

Mr. Burke: I have one question. There was one group that moved in and declared themselves the independent representatives of the people. The Fretilins—was that it?

Mr. Oakley: Yes sir.

Mr. Burke: Would you explain something about the Fretilins and their atrocities and the statement for instance made by the Indonesian Government which I think was made a couple of years ago concerning the Fretilins—the need really to step in and stop atrocities by the Fretilins?

Mr. Oakley: I tried to point out, Mr. Burke, both during Mr. Wolff's hearings and in these, there clearly was a lot of violence going on in the period between the Portuguese departure and the period when the Indonesians moved in.

Mr. Burke: What was the portion of the Fretilins that represented the Indonesian people?

Mr. Kenney: I am not sure I understand your question.

Mr. Burke: Percentagewise how many of the Fretilins were represented and where were they located?

*Mr. Kenney: I believe our figures are that at their height they probably had somewhere around 20,000 to 30,000 people possibly out of 650,000.*⁵⁶

How 20,000 to 30,000 "Fretilins" could make hostages of 200,000 people in the face of massive military force against these "Fretilins" is not within the scope of State Department deceptions to explain.

A US Congressional report on East Timor, issued on the basis of a "Special Study Mission to Asia, January 5–23, 1980," appeared to be more balanced in its approach, arguing that:

month period following the civil war and were able to assess its death toll at between 1500 and 2000. This fact is important in the light of attempts by Indonesians and apologists for Indonesian actions in East Timor, to suggest that much of the death toll of the past five years occurred during the civil war.

James Dunn. "Timor: Australia's Acquiescence of Indonesian Aggression." *Newsletter, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs*. No. 25/26, March, 1981, p. 75.

55. February 1978 Hearings, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–40 as quoted and analyzed in Chomsky and Herman, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

56. Hearings, 23 March, 1977, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

*There have been reports that most of those at the relief sites were forced out of their mountain homes and fields by Indonesian authorities in order to secure better control of the population. On the other hand there are also reports that the insurgent Fretilin forces had coerced the population in areas they control, and that in Dili there are some surrendered Fretilin leaders who have been released by the Indonesians but who stay indoors for fear of being killed by irate Timorese who hold them responsible for Fretilin atrocities.*⁵⁷

Such reporting, mixing verifiable statements from a wide range of sources including refugee reports, smuggled letters, East Timorese Catholic Church sources, etc., which support the first view above, with the propaganda statements of the Indonesian authorities, revealed in the latter and lengthier comment in the report, serve to promote confusion and inability by the average citizen to comprehend the issues. This renders fruitless any attempt to make an independent judgment by the ordinary citizen and thus represents an assault on the democratic process within the USA itself.

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

The preceding examples are but a small sampling of the bending and breaking of truth and the dishonest and inaccurate reporting of events that of necessity accompany the attempt to suppress the real will of any people. They stand, in the case of East Timor, as testimony to the deep and thoroughgoing responsibility of the US in the violations that have taken place in the land of the Maubere people.

VI. The US Government Has Attempted to Manipulate and Control Humanitarian Aid to East Timor in Ways That Directly Support the Continued Indonesian Occupation

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

As succinctly stated by Professor Noam Chomsky in his 1979 testimony to the Decolonization Committee of the United Nations, the military campaigns of 1977 and 1978 were especially destructive in East Timor:

*. . . an Indonesian official privately admitted that more than 100,000 people had died in the territory because of the war, adding that hundreds of villages had been 'wiped off the face of the earth' in the bombing.*⁵⁸

As villages were being wiped off the face of the earth, crops were being destroyed, and eventually more than 200,000 people were forced down from the mountain regions, many of them starving, near death, or in advanced states of malnutrition. As you are probably aware, numerous studies have shown that malnutrition is especially harmful to children, who are the first to die, and even those who may

57. *Asian Security Environment: 1980*. Report submitted by a Special Study Mission to Asia, January 5–23, 1980, under the Auspices of the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives. Washington, D.C., US Government Printing Office. Document No. 67–727 O, p. 30.

58. Chomsky, 1979, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

be saved will often suffer physical and mental damage for the rest of their lives. The crimes of the US-backed Indonesian invasion could thus continue for an entire generation of East Timorese even *after* the eventual withdrawal of the occupying forces. It is instructive to look at how the US Government has dealt with the immediate after-effects of the bombardments of 1977 and 1978.

US Ambassador to Indonesia Edward Masters visited occupied East Timor in September of 1978. According to a US press account:

*Foreign ambassadors, including U.S. Ambassador Edward E. Masters, came away so shocked by the condition of the refugees [the people forced down from the mountains, RF] that they immediately contacted the Governor of East Timor to explore the possibilities for providing humanitarian assistance.*⁵⁹

The photographs that were to appear in the Western press in late 1979 along with descriptions by seasoned relief workers such as Frank Carlin of Catholic Relief Services, that "I have been doing this sort of work for 14 years, but East Timor is the worst I have ever seen," speak for themselves.⁶⁰

Despite his 1978 visit to East Timor, however, the US Ambassador later testified to a US Congressional Committee that "the ambassadors at the time did not know how bad it was—the others felt the same as I did, that the situation was not that serious."⁶¹

Indonesia scholar and professor Benedict Anderson has unveiled the explanation for this apparently contradictory set of reports.

*I think the answer is made perfectly clear by an internal State Department document of last October 1979 which says that "It was not until spring of 1979 that the Government of Indonesia felt East Timor to be secure enough to permit foreign visitors."*⁶²

And, indeed, US "humanitarian" assistance was formally requested by the US Ambassador on 1 June, 1979. Professor Anderson concludes:

*. . . for 9 long months, from September 1978 to June 1979, while, to quote Mr. Kamm [New York Times correspondent, RF], "in ever increasing numbers the starving and the ailing, wearing rags at best, drifted onto the coastal plains," Ambassador Masters deliberately refrained, even within the walls of the State Department, from proposing humanitarian aid to East Timor.*⁶³

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

After hearing the evidence above, can we possibly

59. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 September, 1978, as cited by Professor Benedict Anderson, in *Human Rights in Asia: Noncommunist Countries*. Hearings Before the Subcommittees on Asian and Pacific Affairs and on International Organizations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, February 4, 6, and 7, 1980. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office. Document No. 59-993 O, p. 245.

60. *The New York Times*, 3 October, 1979.

61. Quoted by Anderson in Hearings, 4, 6, and 7, February, 1980, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*

conclude differently than did Professor Anderson when he told the Congressional Subcommittee that:

*Until the generals in Jakarta gave him the green light, Mr. Masters did nothing to help the East Timorese.*⁶⁴

Thus, paltry food and medical supplies that have recently been sent from the US have been sent *only* in accordance with the timetable and plans of the occupying forces.

But US responsibility for the current situation does not end even here. In concluding this brief survey of the recent famine, I would like to take note of two other elements in the US role since 1979 when the destitution of the East Timorese people became a major news story for a few short weeks.

First, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, US Ambassador Masters has maintained that the forced settlement of East Timorese into guarded camps

*. . . offers a better future than the slash and burn subsistence agriculture long practiced by these mountain people. This is important. East Timor has been almost totally deforested by many years of shifting agricultural production. Erosion is a serious problem, and the land can no longer support its former population.*⁶⁵

Slash and burn agriculture is perhaps 11,000 years old in Southeast Asia and at least 2,000 years old in the Eastern Sunda Islands, of which East Timor is a geological part. Yet the Ambassador would have us believe that deforestation became a problem suddenly in 1979, by coincidence just after the US-supported campaign of destruction. As an anthropologist who specializes in food production systems and ecological studies, I would like to note here as well that the weight of evidence suggests that slash and burn agriculture—a system of food production that as recently as 1957 supported one in twelve of the earth's people—is regarded by many—possibly a majority—of its closest students, as a system that in general *tends to maintain* rather than to destroy natural ecology. It may be the case that the sudden influx of people into the mountains of East Timor in 1976 put a large burden on the natural ecology of the steep-sloped mountains; but even if this is a partial cause of the ecological ruin, it occurred *only* because of the Indonesian atrocities in the coastal areas which drove even many of Fretilin's previous opponents into the mountains to take up arms with the Liberation Forces. Since US equipment was instrumental in the initial attacks and atrocities of 1975 and 1976, in any just and meaningful system of international law, it is the US Government which bears the ultimate responsibility for whatever environmental harm has been done to the mountain forests of East Timor. Note, however, that this entire line of reasoning *excludes* the more likely explanation for the hunger and the environmental damage—the savage bombing attacks of 1977 and 1978 that have been referred to earlier.

A second aspect of the current relief effort is also

64. *Ibid.*

65. *Famine Relief for East Timor*. Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, December 4, 1979. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office. Document No. 57-034 O, p. 26.

important in terms of the US role. Beginning in October 1979, the International Red Cross was finally allowed back into East Timor, after having been forced out by Indonesian threats just before the 7 December, 1975, invasion. Even up to the present day, however, only one foreign doctor and his wife, a nurse, are in the territory.⁶⁶ The only other relief agency allowed into East Timor has been Catholic Relief Services, which has received \$9.4 million in US support, as compared with \$1.5 million for the ICRC.⁶⁷ Catholic Relief Services has just one foreign staff person available part time in East Timor. In addition, CRS has been criticized by many Catholic priests for its pro-Marcos activities in the Philippines, its possible CIA connections in Vietnam during the US occupation, and, in the case of East Timor, for the fact that:

The only accounting that the CRS is prepared to give for . . . US foreign assistance in East Timor is to AID and the State Department.

and,

CRS declined to appear before the most recent [June 1980] hearing on East Timor. . . . Its internal auditing records are not available to the scrutiny of donors or the press.⁶⁸

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

In the last week of March 1981, Indonesian military forces conducted exercises in the Eastern Sunda Islands. Included in these exercises was a simulated assault on the Baucau area of East Timor, a landing and aerial attack on Los Palos, and an amphibious landing at Laga. The attack on Los Palos involved the Indonesian 502nd Airborne Battalion,⁶⁹ using Hercules transport aircraft made in the USA, while Indonesian newspapers, including the armed forces paper *Angkatan Bersenjata*, specifically reported the use of OV-10 Broncos.⁷⁰ As Los Palos and Laga are in the easternmost parts of East Timor, where the resistance continues at its highest level, there is reason to believe reports received by members of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid that "some 6,000 of the troops engaged in the exercises were to stay behind to join the 12,000 troops already in East Timor and that this force of 18 battalions was to conduct a 'general clean-up.'"⁷¹

If this campaign is even partially successful, it will drive more of the Maubere people from the mountains; they will be rounded up and placed in "resettlement centers," where Catholic Relief Services, financed by US "humanitarian" aid money, will keep some of them alive to become subjects of Indonesian overlords. In the USA, supporters of the East Timorese people are working to compel the US Government to bring in a wider group of relief personnel so that at least some of the facts of the

continuing occupation will not remain buried in the confidential files of Catholic Relief Services or in the office of the same US Ambassador who has shown a willingness to await a green light from the occupying forces before allowing in aid. We are especially eager to compel the continued and, if possible, expanded presence of the International Red Cross as a starting point for a more humane relief effort and to put some pressure on the Indonesian forces to reduce the level of brutality.

As long as the Indonesian troops remain in East Timor, however, any relief efforts are bound to produce more violence than aid in the long run. Since the people are concentrated in camps where they cannot make a living, their physical recovery from famine, combined with the atrocities and the unwelcome nature of the Indonesian occupying forces, will eventually lead many of them back into the mountains where they will attempt to grow their crops as they did in the past—and as they were able to do even under the harsh rule of the Portuguese colonialists. These crops alone will appear to the Indonesians as a sign of the rebirth of Fretilin resistance wherever they are spotted and will bring on yet another massive military operation to drive people back into the camps.

Honorable Jurors of the Tribunal:

The US-sponsored invasion has led in East Timor to a US-sponsored cycle of famine to famine relief to renewed resistance to renewed famine to renewed famine relief and so on. It is a political and military impasse that can be broken only in one of three ways:

1. The total annihilation of the Maubere people, which must be considered a real possibility given the types of equipment available to the Indonesian regime and given the political-economic-military cycle just described;
2. A genuine act of self-determination which would require an Indonesian withdrawal either as part of a negotiated settlement worked out internationally, and which would require the active backing of the US Government;
3. An Indonesian withdrawal brought about by a change of government in Jakarta, which is a growing possibility with or without US support.

At this moment, all available evidence indicates that the US Government has chosen to continue its support for whatever measures the current Jakarta military regime deems necessary to subdue, or annihilate, the Maubere people of East Timor.

VII. Conclusions

There can be no doubt that whatever crimes and injustices you may find have been committed against the people of East Timor have been committed in the first instance by the forces of the Indonesian military regime of General Suharto, by his close associates Ali Murtopo and Benny Murdani, and under the leadership of countless other high-ranking Indonesian officials who sit at the top of a system of power, of privilege, of intimidation, and of control of information that makes possible the acquiescence of ordinary Indonesians who are the footsoldiers, pilots, camp guards, etc., and who find themselves, like at least some of the Nazi defendants in the Nuremberg trials,

66. Arnold Kohen and Roberta Quance. "The Politics of Starvation." *Inquiry*. 18 February, 1980, p. 20.

67. *The National Times of Australia*, 7–13 September, 1980.

68. *Ibid.*

69. *Kompas*, 26 March, 1981/ *Angkatan Bersenjata*, 26 March, 1981. Both are Jakarta daily papers.

70. *Kompas*, 28 March, 1981.

71. Australian Council for Overseas Aid. "Urgent Memoranda Re East Timor." 4 May, 1981. Canberra.

“only following orders.” Here, however, the general parallel with those earlier atrocities breaks down.

For, as I believe has been demonstrated by the evidence presented in earlier sections of this paper, the Indonesian violations of the rights of the Maubere people of East Timor are not the sole responsibility of a single government or a single movement and political organization, as was perhaps the case in the Nuremburg judgments. Jakarta's generals could never have *initiated* their invasion plans without positive diplomatic signals from the United States, and without promises that military aid would be forthcoming if and when necessary. They could never have *carried out* the invasion of 7 December, 1975, without the assurances of President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger, who so graciously visited Jakarta on the very eve of the invasion. Jakarta's military rulers could never have *sustained* their occupation of the coastal areas, and indeed, might well have been driven out of the territory towards the end of 1977, or at least been forced to negotiate a withdrawal, had it not been for the timely delivery of key US equipment such as the OV-10 Broncos and other counter-insurgency equipment which I have listed earlier.

Furthermore, as I believe the evidence shows, US officials lent themselves to any number of lies and distortions to help keep their aid and its effects from being properly understood by the people of the United States who, in light of the Vietnam experience, might otherwise have protested more vigorously yet another act of genocide in Southeast Asia committed in our name. And finally, when, in 1978 and 1979, thousands of starving and destitute survivors of that holocaust of the previous two years in the mountains of East Timor came straggling into the coastal regions, Indonesia could never have put a good face on the situation as the corruption and incapacity of the military-

run bureaucracy is too great to permit even a modestly successful relief effort. Here again, the US came to the rescue of its client state and has attempted to keep the humanitarian aid program well within the boundaries acceptable to the occupying forces who would like to convince world opinion, and perhaps especially opinion in the nonaligned nations, that Indonesia is somehow still an anticolonial power. All of this evidence alone would be, in my view, sufficient to indict the government of the United States before this Peoples' Tribunal of gross violations of human rights in East Timor and of violations of several of the specific provisions of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples.

As I have explained earlier, however, I would go even further, and argue that the very *existence* of the Suharto regime and its abuses against its own people, especially the farmers and farm workers of Java, ethnic minorities such as the Chinese, people with socialist or anti-imperialist political views, Moslems, students, trade unionists, women's emancipationists, etc. — this very regime and its policies are not simply products of Indonesian society and Indonesian history. Rather they originate to a great degree from the activities of the US government in Southeast Asia over the past thirty-five years; and these activities themselves derive from the overall strategy of the US Government to make all of southeast Asia a haven for cheap mineral extraction, and cheap labor to help maintain US business profits.

I apologize to the jurors for the great length of my presentation. The subject, however, is one on which even *more* could be said. And I believe it is the spirit of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples that we should thoroughly expose and analyze the forces of imperialism and their “vicious methods” for all the world to see. ★

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