

FORD, KISSINGER AND THE INDONESIAN INVASION, 1975-76

Ford and Kissinger Gave Green Light to Indonesia's Invasion of East Timor, 1975: New Documents Detail Conversations with Suharto

National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 62
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December 6, 2001

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The New Evidence

The Indonesian invasion of East Timor in December 1975 set the stage for the long, bloody, and disastrous occupation of the territory that ended only after an international peacekeeping force was introduced in 1999. President Bill Clinton cut off military aid to Indonesia in September 1999—reversing a longstanding policy of military cooperation—but questions persist about U.S. responsibility for the 1975 invasion; in particular, the degree to which Washington actually condoned or supported the bloody military offensive. Most recently, journalist Christopher Hitchens raised questions about the role of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in giving a green light to the invasion that has left perhaps 200,000 dead in the years since. Two newly declassified documents from the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, released to the National Security Archive, shed light on the Ford administration's relationship with President Suharto of Indonesia during 1975. Of special importance is [the record of Ford's and Kissinger's meeting with Suharto in early December 1975](#). The document shows that Suharto began the invasion knowing that he had the full approval of the White House. Both of these documents had been released in heavily excised form some years ago, but with Suharto now out of power, and following the collapse of Indonesian control over East Timor, the situation has changed enough that both documents have been released in their entirety.

Other documents found among State Department records at the National Archives elucidate the inner workings of U.S. policy toward the

Indonesian crisis during 1975 and 1976. Besides confirming that Henry Kissinger and top advisers expected an eventual Indonesian takeover of East Timor, archival material shows that the Secretary of State fully understood that the invasion of East Timor involved the "illegal" use of U.S.-supplied military equipment because it was not used in self-defense as required by law.

Although Indonesia was a major site of U.S. energy and raw materials investment, an important petroleum exporter, strategically located near vital shipping lanes, and a significant recipient of U.S. military assistance, the country—much less the East Timor question—barely figures into Henry Kissinger's memoirs of the Nixon and Ford administrations. Gerald Ford's memoir briefly discusses the December 1975 visit to Jakarta but does not mention the discussion of East Timor with Suharto. Indeed, as important as the bilateral relationship was, Jakarta's brutal suppression of the independence movement in East Timor was a development that neither Ford nor Kissinger wanted people to remember about their time in power. That the two decided on a course of action of dubious legality and that resulted in the slaughter of thousands of Timorese may well have also discouraged further reflection, at least in public. No doubt the omissions from Ford's and Kissinger's memoirs also reflect the low priority that East Timor had during the Ford administration. For senior officials, the fate of a post-colonial East Timor paled in comparison to the strategic relationship with the anti-communist Suharto regime, especially in the wake of the communist victory in Vietnam, when Ford and Kissinger wanted to strengthen relations with anti-communists and check left-wing movements in the region.⁽¹⁾ But it is not simply a matter of omission; on several occasions Kissinger has explicitly denied that he ever had substantive discussions of East Timor with Suharto, much less having consented to Indonesian plans.⁽²⁾ The new evidence contradicts Kissinger's statements: Indonesian plans for the invasion of East Timor were indeed discussed with Suharto, and Ford and Kissinger gave them the green light. As Kissinger advised Suharto on the eve of the invasion: "it is important that whatever you do succeeds quickly" but that "it would be better if it were done after we returned" to the United States.

Although these new documents shed important light on U.S. policy toward the East Timor question in 1975, much more needs to be learned about U.S. policymaking during 1975 and 1976. Unfortunately, most of the relevant sources are classified. The large collection of Kissinger-Scowcroft office files at the Ford Library remains unavailable, as are the records of the State Department's Indonesia desk and the Bureau of East Asian Affairs for the 1970s. The State Department's recent acquisition of Henry Kissinger's telephone conversation transcripts might include important material, although they will probably reflect the relatively low priority that the policymakers gave to the East Timor question.

Background

The leftist military revolt that overthrew Portugal's authoritarian regime in April 1974 encouraged nationalist movements in the Portuguese colony of East Timor calling for gradual independence from Lisbon—a position also initially favored by the new Portuguese government. One of these groups, the Timorese Democratic Union (UTD), had greater support among Timorese elites and senior Portuguese colonial administrators, while the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin), with its left-leaning, social democratic program, had the support of younger Timorese and lower-level colonial officials. In January 1975 the two groups formed an uneasy coalition. Increasingly, Fretilin enjoyed the greatest public support and led the push for rapid independence.⁽³⁾

Early signals from the Indonesian government indicated that it was prepared to support East Timorese independence,⁽⁴⁾ but Jakarta soon became interested in turning the region into the country's twenty-seventh province. Fears that an independent East Timor could be used as a base by unfriendly governments or spur other secessionist movements in Indonesia had convinced hardliners in the military to press for annexation of the territory. In February 1975 the Indonesian military conducted a mock invasion of East Timor in South Sumatra.⁽⁵⁾ Military hardliners also backed the pro-integration Timorese Popular Democratic Association (Apodeti) with financial assistance and launched a propaganda campaign against the pro-independence groups.⁽⁶⁾ Apodeti, however, never had the popular support enjoyed by Fretilin or UDT.

The new regime in Lisbon was preoccupied with its own internal political controversies and could do little to ensure a steady transition toward independence. During 1974 and 1975 Indonesian authorities hoped that the Portuguese would acquiesce in Jakarta's plans to acquire East Timor. At first the Portuguese seemed responsive, but by mid-1975 it had become evident that Lisbon supported self-determination for the people of East Timor. In July 1975 Lisbon rebuffed Jakarta with the issuance of Constitutional Law 7/75, setting forth a timetable for home-rule, including the election of a popular assembly that would determine East Timor's future, with Portuguese sovereignty ending no later than October 1978.⁽⁷⁾

Events in East Timor, however, did not proceed in accordance with Lisbon's schedule. The delicate UDT-Fretilin alliance had fallen apart in May, in part due to a propaganda campaign launched by the Indonesian government to inflame UTD concerns about Fretilin's alleged communist tendencies.⁽⁸⁾ UDT's fears were bolstered in June when Fretilin refused to attend an all-party conference on decolonization hosted by Portuguese officials on Macao due to the presence of Apodeti representatives.⁽⁹⁾ To Fretilin the issue of independence was not up for discussion, least of all

with Jakarta. The extent of Fretilin's popularity—and thus popular sentiment for independence from Indonesia—became evident in July when the party won 55 percent of the vote in local elections.⁽¹⁰⁾ Convinced by Indonesian intelligence that Fretilin was planning a coup, UDT staged its own in August 1975 in the Timorese capital Dili in an effort to drive out Fretilin supporters. A Fretilin counterattack pushed UDT forces out of the city, however, and by September Fretilin controlled nearly all of East Timor, the Portuguese administrators having fled to the island of Ataúro.⁽¹¹⁾ Despite having gained de facto control of the territory, Fretilin ended its call for immediate independence and now supported a plan similar to the gradual independence program proposed in June by the Portuguese.⁽¹²⁾

The Indonesian government did not seize the opportunity to move troops into Dili on the premise of restoring order. Suharto was still concerned about the reaction from the West and needed more time to get the UDT and other anti-Fretilin groups to support integration.⁽¹³⁾ The UDT, now refugees on the Indonesian side of Timor and in need of food and shelter, had no choice but to sign a pro-integration petition drawn up by Indonesia. Meanwhile, in October Indonesian special forces began to infiltrate secretly into East Timor in an effort to provoke clashes that would provide the pretext for a full-scale invasion. When these incursions—including the murder by Indonesian forces of five journalists employed by Australian TV—failed to elicit any noticeable reaction from the West, Indonesia stepped-up its attacks across the border.⁽¹⁴⁾

While Indonesian airborne troops—outfitted with American equipment—prepared to take Dili, Fretilin petitioned the United Nations to call for the withdrawal of the invading forces. Four days later, on November 28, Fretilin declared East Timor's independence—apparently in the belief that a sovereign state would have greater success appealing to the UN, but also thinking that Timorese soldiers would be more likely to fight for an independent state. Indonesia countered the next day with a “declaration of integration” signed by Apodeti and UDT representatives and coordinated by Indonesia's military intelligence service.⁽¹⁵⁾ The invasion, originally scheduled for early December, was apparently delayed by the visit of Ford and Kissinger to Jakarta on December 6.

Operation Komodo, a general invasion of East Timor, commenced the next day. In the following weeks a series of United Nations resolutions—supported by the U.S.—called for the withdrawal of the Indonesian troops.⁽¹⁶⁾ An estimated 20,000 Indonesian troops were deployed to the region by the end of the month. While casualty estimates vary, anywhere from 60,000-100,000 Timorese were probably killed in the first year after the violence began in 1975.⁽¹⁷⁾ In 1979 the U.S. Agency for International Development estimated that 300,000 East Timorese—nearly half the

population—had been uprooted and moved into camps controlled by Indonesian armed forces. By 1980 the occupation had left more than 100,000 dead from military action, starvation or disease, with some estimates running as high as 230,000.(18)

Note: The following documents are in PDF format.
You will need to download and install the free [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) to view.



Document 1

Memorandum of Conversation between Presidents Ford and Suharto, 5 July 1975, 12:40 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Source: Gerald R. Ford Library, National Security Adviser Memoranda of Conversations, Box 13, July 5, 1965 - Ford, Kissinger, Indonesian President Suharto

This document records a conversation between Suharto and Ford at Camp David on July 5, 1975, five months before the invasion of East Timor. Speaking only a few months after the collapse of the Thieu regime in South Vietnam, the two presidents shared a tour d'horizon of East Asian political issues, U.S. military assistance to Indonesia, international investment, and Portuguese decolonization. Fearing greater political and ideological ferment in the region following the Communist victory in Vietnam, Suharto saw his ideological concoction "Pancasila" (possibly misspelled "Pantechistita" in the document) as useful, no doubt because its emphasis on consensus excluded any oppositional political activity.(19) Not taking "consensus" for granted, Suharto wanted U.S. help in building up his military machine to increase its mobility for dealing with insurgent elements, noting that, "Especially at this moment, intelligence and territorial operations are very important." Ford proposed setting up a joint commission to scrutinize Suharto's military request but wanted Kissinger to settle the details.

Suharto brought up the question of Portuguese decolonization in East Timor proclaiming his support for "self-determination" but also dismissing independence as unviable: "So the only way is to integrate [East Timor] into Indonesia." Without mentioning Fretilin by name, Suharto misleadingly characterized it as "almost Communist" and criticized the group for boycotting the decolonization meeting in Macao. Suharto claimed that Indonesia did not want to interfere with East Timor's

self-determination but implied that it might have to because “those who want independence are those who are Communist-influenced.”

While Lisbon still had legal sovereignty over East Timor, apparently neither Ford nor Suharto discussed the implications for Indonesian policy. Although Washington had worked closely with the Salazar dictatorship that ruled Portugal for decades, it was now deeply suspicious of the new social democratic regime in Lisbon; with its exaggerated concerns about a Communist coup, the Ford administration considered the possibility of expelling Portugal from NATO and supporting an independence movement in the Azores (where the U.S. had important military facilities). Thus, from Ford's and Kissinger's perspective in 1975, Portugal's role in the region was of little interest and did not pose an important obstacle to Indonesian action. That some left-leaning Portuguese officers had contacts with Fretilin undoubtedly made the White House even less inclined to concern itself with Portugal's response to Indonesian action in East Timor.(20)



Document 2

The Secretary's 8:00 a.m. Staff Meeting, Tuesday, August 12, 1975, Secret [excerpt], with cover memorandum on highlights of meeting attached

Source: National Archives, Record Group 59, Department of State Records, Transcripts of Staff Meetings of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, 1973-77, box 8

Apparently encouraged by his meeting with President Ford, Suharto returned from Washington on July 8 and made his first public statement suggesting that an independent East Timor was not viable. Only days later, UDT leaders launched their coup with the hope that they could suppress Fretilin. During an August 12 discussion of the coup, Henry Kissinger and his close advisers were not altogether sure what was happening, but did not disagree with Assistant Secretary Philip Habib's statement that the Indonesians would not let a “communist-dominated group,” i.e., Fretilin, take over. Kissinger, in particular, assumed that an Indonesian takeover would take place “sooner or later.” Believing that Australia, a key regional ally, would feel “impelled” to support self-determination for the Timorese, Kissinger and his advisers wanted to avoid controversy over the issue. They quickly agreed that the State Department should make no comment on the coup or related events.

A few days later, the Australian ambassador in Jakarta relayed a statement by U.S. ambassador John Newsom that summarized Washington's approach but alluded to a problem that Kissinger and his advisers had not specifically discussed on August 12. The message noted Newsom's August 16 comment that if Indonesia were to invade East Timor, it

[should] do so “effectively, quickly, and not use our equipment.”(21) The U.S. ambassador recognized that there was a congressional prohibition on Indonesia’s use of military gear financed by U.S. aid for anything but defensive operations. Kissinger would come to understand the problem, if he did not already, but as document four suggests, he was not willing to let it tie Jakarta's hands.



[Document 3](#)

Memorandum to President Ford from Henry A. Kissinger, "Your Visit to Indonesia," ca. 21 November 1975



[Document 3A](#)

Enclosure to Document 3, State Department Briefing Paper, "Indonesia and East Timor," ca. 21 November 1975

Source: National Archives, Record Group 59, Department of State Records, Executive Secretariat Briefing Books, 1958-1976, Box 227, President Ford's Visit to the Far East - Indonesia Nov-Dec. 1975

This Kissinger memorandum, prepared for President Ford some two weeks before the two were to visit to Jakarta, indicates that the administration's larger strategic interests in Indonesia made it unlikely that Washington would make a fuss over East Timor. The eventual fate of East Timor was evidently a relatively low priority for Kissinger and his staff—it was the twelfth and final item mentioned in the memo.(22) While Kissinger, in the memo, acknowledged that the Indonesians have been “maneuvering to absorb the colony” through negotiations with Portugal and “covert military operations in the colony itself,” he apparently did not expect an overt invasion using U.S. -supplied military equipment. Indeed, his memo and the briefing paper on “Indonesia and Portuguese Timor” both indicate that to do so would violate U.S. law, suggesting that this consideration had induced "restraint" on the part of Jakarta. Moreover, and in contrast to Habib's view(23) that Fretelin was "Communist-dominated," the author of the briefing paper more accurately characterized the Front as "vaguely left-wing."



[Document 4](#)

Embassy Jakarta Telegram 1579 to Secretary State, 6 December 1975
[Text of Ford-Kissinger-Suharto Discussion], Secret/Nodis(24)

Source: Gerald R. Ford Library, Kissinger-Scowcroft Temporary Parallel File, Box A3, Country File, Far East-Indonesia, State Department Telegrams 4/1/75-9/22/76

On the eve of Indonesia's full-scale invasion of East Timor, President Ford and Secretary Kissinger stopped in Jakarta en route from China where they had just met with Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. During his meeting with Suharto, Ford emphasized America's continuing commitment to Asian affairs despite the "severe setback of Vietnam." Discussion then turned to the problem of Communist influence in the Non-Aligned Movement and the insurgency movements in Thailand and Malaysia. Ford told Suharto that he would be "enthusiastic" about building an M-16 plant in Indonesia to provide small arms to help Southeast Asian governments counter regional insurgency movements. Kissinger also approved of the proposed arrangement "because of its indication of wider cooperation."

On 4 or 5 December, while still in Beijing, Kissinger received a cable from the State Department suggesting that the Indonesians had "plans" to invade East Timor.⁽²⁵⁾ Thus, Ford or Kissinger could not have been too surprised when, in the middle of a discussion of guerrilla movements in Thailand and Malaysia, Suharto suddenly brought up East Timor. Suharto noted that while Indonesia "has no territorial ambitions," Fretilin has not cooperated with negotiations and has "declared its independence unilaterally." The current situation, he said, "will prolong the suffering of the refugees and increase instability in the area." Suharto then assured the Americans that "the four other parties" favor integration, with the apparent implication that a mere majority among the "parties" to the conflict—absent a popular referendum—alone constituted an act of self-determination. "We want your understanding," Suharto continued, "if we deem it necessary to take rapid or drastic action."

Ford and Kissinger took great pains to assure Suharto that they would not oppose the invasion. Ford was unambiguous: "We will understand and will not press you on the issue. We understand the problem and the intentions you have." Kissinger did indeed stress that "the use of US-made arms could create problems," but then added that, "It depends on how we construe it; whether it is in self defense or is a foreign operation." Thus, Kissinger's concern was not about whether U.S. arms would be used offensively—and hence illegally—but whether the act would actually be *interpreted* as such—a process he clearly intended to manipulate.⁽²⁶⁾ In any case, Kissinger added: "It is important that whatever you do succeeds quickly."

Indeed, timing and damage control were very important to the Americans, as Kissinger told Suharto: "We would be able to influence the reaction in America if whatever happens happens after we return. . . . If you have made plans, we will do our best to keep everyone quiet until the President returns home." Kissinger also asked Suharto if he anticipated a "long guerilla war," apparently aware that a quick military success would be

easier to spin than a long campaign. Suharto acknowledged that there "will probably be a small guerilla war" but he was cagey enough not to predict its duration. Nevertheless, his military colleagues were optimistic; as one of the architects of Indonesian policy, General Ali Murtopo explained to a U.S. scholar some months before the invasion, "the whole business will be settled in three weeks."⁽²⁷⁾

With the U.S. position on the East Timor "business" settled, Suharto turned to economic problems, especially petroleum investments. With the recent bankruptcy of the state oil company, the regime needed more revenue and Suharto wanted to get it from the oil companies that invested in Indonesia. Noting that the oil companies were sharing larger shares of their profits with Middle Eastern states than they were with Indonesia, Suharto told Ford and Kissinger that he wanted to negotiate an "understanding" with them. Both Americans were sympathetic and said that he would have their support. Kissinger, however, noted carefully that whatever Suharto did he should "not create a climate that discourages investment." The possibility that the East Timor affair could prove to be a disaster for Indonesia and someday impair the "climate for investment" never seems to have occurred to either Kissinger or Ford.



Document 5

Secretary of State Kissinger's Daily Schedule, 5 and 6 December 1975

Source: National Archives, Record Group 59, Department of State Records, Executive Secretariat Briefing Books, 1958-1976, Box 227, President Ford's Trip to the Far East (Follow-Up) Nov-Dec. 1975

This brief schedule details Secretary Kissinger's two-day visit to Indonesia with President Ford. So far, no record of Kissinger's meeting with Adam Malik has been found.



Document 6

Transcript of Staff Meeting, Tuesday, June 17, 1976, Secret [excerpt]

Source: National Archives, Record Group 59, Department of State Records, Transcripts of Staff Meetings of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, 1973-77, box 9

Washington's initial response to the invasion was to delay new arms sales to Indonesia pending an administrative review by the State Department, ostensibly to determine whether Indonesia had actually violated the bilateral agreement stipulating that U.S.-supplied arms could only be used for defensive purposes. Military equipment already in the pipeline continued to flow, however, and during the six-month review period the

U.S. made four new offers of military equipment sales to Indonesia including maintenance and spare parts for the Rockwell OV-10 Bronco aircraft, designed specifically for counterinsurgency operations and employed during the invasion of East Timor.(28) The administrative delay and the subsequent offers were the subject of a December 18, 1975, meeting between Secretary Kissinger and his advisers in which he chastised his staff for writing a memo recommending that arms sales to Indonesia be cut off for violating the end-use agreement. While the memo was not widely distributed, Kissinger was angry that word might leak about how “Kissinger overruled his pristine bureaucrats and violated the law.” The secretary told his staff that he “took care of it with the administrative thing by ordering Carlyle(29) not to make any new sales.” If Congress asked about the policy, Kissinger said, “We cut it off while we are studying it. We intend to start again in January.”(30)

Six months later, and exactly one month before the formal annexation of East Timor by Indonesia, the subject of East Timor again came up during a staff meeting between Secretary Kissinger and his State Department bureau chiefs. The question was raised as to whether or not the U.S. should send a representative to accompany an Indonesian parliamentary delegation to East Timor—an invitation declined by most other countries. Robert H. Miller, an adviser from the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, recommended against accepting the invitation, suggesting that “broader objectives with respect to Indonesia – including overall support to Timor,” would be better served “if we don’t have high-profile participation.” Miller hoped to prevent “Congressional [sic] sentiment with regard to Indonesia from being rekindled.” Philip Habib, under secretary of state for political affairs, agreed: “There’s no need to take this action . . . Let them go ahead and do what they’ve been doing. We have no objection . . . They’re quite happy with the position we’ve taken. We’ve resumed, as you know, all of our normal relations with them; and there isn’t any problem involved.” In apparent reference to the continuing arms sales, his deception of Congress, or possibly to Indonesia's bloody invasion and occupation, Kissinger responded: “Not very willingly. Illegally and beautifully.”

Notes

1. Benedict R. Andersen, "East Timor and Indonesia: Some Implications," in Peter Carey and G. Carter Bentley, eds., *East Timor at the Crossroads: The Forging of a Nation* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 138-40.

2. At a 1995 press conference Kissinger told former East Timorese resistance leader Constancio Pinto, "Timor was never discussed with us when we were in Indonesia" and then qualified this remark by stating that he learned about the invasion plans at the airport as the presidential party was about to leave. See "Ask Kissinger about East Timor: Confronting Henry Kissinger," East Timor Action Network, August 1995 <<http://etan.org/news/kissinger/ask.htm>>. During a radio interview in 1999, Kissinger continued to treat the discussion with Suharto on East Timor as incidental and nonsubstantive: "We were told at the airport as we left Jakarta that either that day or the next day they intended to take East Timor." See <[http://www.etan.org/vti bin/shtml.exe/news/kissinger/radio.htm/map](http://www.etan.org/vti/bin/shtml.exe/news/kissinger/radio.htm/map)>.

3. Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000) 198-204, for a fine overview of the East Timor issue.

4. Indonesian foreign minister Adam Malik said in June 1974 that "the independence of every country is the right of every nation, with no exception for the people in Timor." See Center for International Policy, *Human Rights and the U.S. Foreign Assistance Program, Fiscal Year 1978, Part 2 – East Asia* (Washington, D.C., Center for International Policy, 1978), 18.

5. John G. Taylor, "East Timor: Contemporary History, A Chronology of the Main Events since 1974," Carey and Bentley, eds., *East Timor at the Crossroads*, 239.

6. Hamish McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia* (Blackburn, Australia: Fontana, 1980), 202-203.

7. Ibid. 204.

8. Ibid., 203.

9. Schwarz, *A Nation*, 202.

10. Taylor, "East Timor: Contemporary History," Carey and Bentley, eds., *East Timor at the Crossroads*, 239.

11. John G. Taylor, "Emergence of a Nationalist Movement," Carey and Bentley, eds., *East Timor at the Crossroads*, 35; James Dunn, "Timor in International Perspective," *ibid.*, 63-64.

12. Center for International Policy, *Human Rights and the U.S. Foreign Assistance Program, Fiscal Year 1978, Part 2*, 19.

13. McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia*, 207.

14. Ibid., 210-11.

15. Ibid., 211.

16. Center for International Policy, *Human Rights and the U.S. Foreign Assistance Program, Fiscal Year 1978*, Part 2, 19.

17. James Dunn cites a study by the Catholic Church suggesting that as many as 60,000 Timorese had been killed by the end of 1976. This figure does not appear to include those killed in the period between the start of the civil war in August 1975 and the invasion on December 7. See James Dunn, "The Timor Affair in International Perspective," in Carey and Bentley, eds., *East Timor at the Crossroads*, 66; The 100,000 figure is cited in McDonald, 215, and also in Taylor's chronology, "East Timor: Contemporary History," in Carey and Bentley, *East Timor at the Crossroads*, 239. McDonald's figure includes the pre-invasion period while Taylor's does not.

18. Schwarz, 205; Estimates vary widely. On November 12, 1979, Indonesia's foreign minister, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, estimated that 120,000 people had died in East Timor since 1975. See Taylor's chronology, "East Timor: Contemporary History," in Carey and Bentley, *East Timor at the Crossroads*, 240; Amnesty International estimates that 200,000 died from military action, starvation or disease from 1975-1999. See Amnesty International, "200,000 Dead. Enough is Enough." *New York Times* (advertisement), September 23, 1999.

19. For "pancasila," see Schwarz, *A Nation*, 10, 24, 41-42, 45-46, 292-93.

20. Andersen, "East Timor and Indonesia: Some Implications," Carey and Bentley, eds., *East Timor at the Crossroads*, 138-39.

21. The comment is cited in a telegram written by Australian Ambassador Richard Woolcott on August 17, 1975 (Cited in Munster, G.J. and Walsh, R. (eds), *Documents on Australian Defence and Foreign Policy, 1968-75* (Sydney, 1980), 200.

22. The memo was drafted by Edward C. Ingraham, director of the Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore office at the State Department's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

23. See [Document 2](#).

24. "Nodis" means "no distribution" without the permission of the State Department's Executive Secretary.

25. The cable, entitled "Plans for Indonesian Invasion of East Timor," remains classified but is cited by title and cable number in a list of cables that Kissinger received while traveling in East Asia. The list may be found in National Archives, Record Group 59, Executive Secretariat Briefing Books, 1958-1976, Box 227, President Ford's Trip to the Far East (Follow-Up) Nov.Dec. 1975. The National Security Archive has submitted a request to the State Department for declassification of this and other cables on East Timor cited on the list.

26. Indeed, later that month Kissinger asked his advisers whether "We can't construe a Communist government in the middle of Indonesia as self-defense?" See Mark Hertsgaard, "The Secret Life of Henry Kissinger; minutes of a 1975 meeting with Lawrence Eagleburger," *The Nation*, October 29, 1990, at [http://etan.org/vti bin/shtml.exe/news/kissinger/secret.htm](http://etan.org/vti/bin/shtml.exe/news/kissinger/secret.htm).

27. Andersen, "East Timor and Indonesia: Some Implications," Carey and Bentley, eds., *East Timor at the Crossroads*, 137.

28. Center for International Policy, *Human Rights and the U.S. Foreign Assistance Program, Fiscal Year 1978*, Part 2, 19-20. Max Holland, who co-wrote the Center's report, discovered the State Department's administrative delay and the continued offers of security assistance. The editors thank him for bringing this report to our attention.

29. Carlyle Maw, Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance.

30. Mark Hertsgaard, "The Secret Life of Henry Kissinger; minutes of a 1975 meeting with Lawrence Eagleburger," *The Nation*, October 29, 1990. <http://etan.org/vti bin/shtml.exe/news/kissinger/secret.htm>.