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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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April 30, 1999

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DECL: 1.6X1

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TO: S/WCI - Ambassador Scheffer  
FROM: INR - Phyllis E. Oakley  
SUBJECT: East Timor--The Worst Case

You asked for a worst case scenario on East Timor and comments on a UN or "Friends group" response. A worse case is for the Indonesian military to decide, with or without Jakarta's political acquiescence, to keep the province at all costs and undertake a massive sweep against pro-independence activists and sympathizers. This could result in significant deaths or disappearances. Another bloody scenario is for pro-independence forces to expand guerrilla activity to include hit-and-run attacks or bombings directed at pro-Indonesian sympathizers and institutions. (C)

We cannot rule out either development, but a more likely pattern is continuation of Indonesian intimidation and isolated attacks that cause pro-independence activists to go into hiding or appear to capitulate, at least for the near term. A key determinant will be the size and credibility of "neutral" monitors or security forces on the ground. Diplomatic actions against a weak central government more concerned with the national/provincial parliamentary election in June and selection of a president in November will be of questionable value. Even more problematic would be trying to get the government in Jakarta to stop the actions of an uncooperative military. (C)

The current tense atmosphere and uncertainty surrounding the autonomy vote will continue to breed violence between pro-integration and pro-independence forces. Those who have been displaced in the latest round of fighting number in the thousands. The ICRC fears a recurrence of the tragedy experienced during military operations in 1975-79 when many deaths resulted from the absence of shelter, food, and medicine, according to Embassy Jakarta. Possible triggers that could set

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REASON: 1.5(c)(d)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: MURRAY D ZINOMAN  
DATE/CASE ID: 31 MAR 2006 200300722

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off even more widespread fighting include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to finalize the autonomy plan at the upcoming May 5 UN-sponsored tripartite talks;
- A breakdown of the tripartite process over implementation of the direct ballot and modalities of a UN security presence which produces a further delay, if not cancellation of the autonomy vote;
- A sudden announcement by President Habibie to withdraw military forces, whether or not a UN security presence is on the ground;
- A UN security presence becomes the target of pro-integration militia attacks, particularly if UN personnel suffer casualties and are forced to withdraw;
- The assassination of pro-independence activist Xanana Gusmao, or one (or both) of the bishops in East Timor. (C)

The country most able to intervene is Australia because it is proximate and has the military capacity to mobilize quickly. However, pro-East Timor independence domestic sentiment in Australia could constrain Canberra's ability to be perceived as a "neutral" peacemaker. Moreover, although the UN is recognized by Indonesia as having a political role, Jakarta's view on a security presence prior to the autonomy vote is still evolving. The worst case scenario posits the Indonesian military resisting such a presence or seeking to restrict its activities on the ground. In such a scenario, the broadest possible grouping of UN members and "Friends" would be desirable. (C)

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