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Indonesia/East Timor: Roads Not Taken (C)

The Indonesian Government had at least three operational plans under consideration for East Timor, although security forces now appear intent on the third option, using a show of force to retain the province. Common denominators underlay each approach. (C)

1. The original public plan

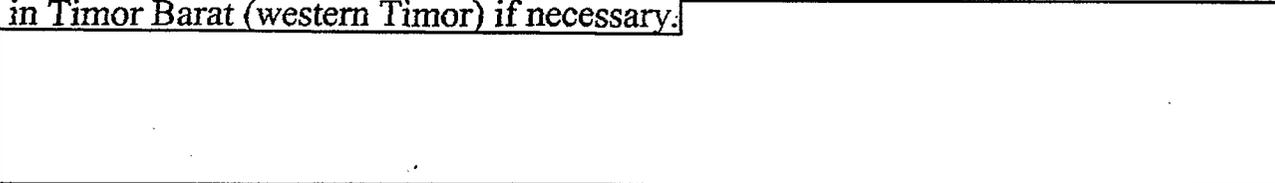
As enunciated by the Foreign Ministry and senior civilian and military leaders, Indonesia would evacuate non- East Timorese and those Timorese loyal to the Indonesian regime; reduce the military in a phased withdrawal; maintain security for the ever-growing foreign presence; continue aid until March 2000; and cooperate in a peaceful transition. (U)

2. Cut and run

Evacuate non-East Timorese and those loyal to the Indonesian regime; and expeditiously remove security forces and infrastructure "belonging" to Jakarta. Subplan A was a relatively orderly withdrawal that left a primitive, but operational infrastructure in the hands of the UN Assistance Mission for East Timor (UNAMET). Subplan B had the Indonesians trashing East Timor as they left, but still with the intent of handing things over to the UN. (C)

3. Discredit the vote and retain the province

Engage in various measures to undermine the credibility of the vote and retain control, working from a pro-Jakarta beachhead in the western part of the province or in Timor Barat (western Timor) if necessary.

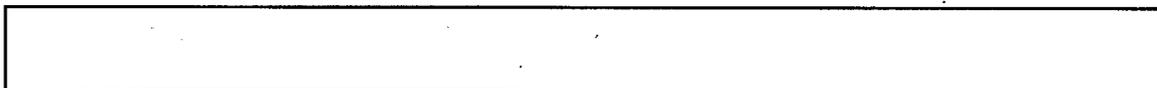


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Common denominators

All three approaches have common underlying traits:

- resentment of foreign, i.e., Western interference, and a feeling of victimization by the media;
- a belief that the UN and foreign observers were biased and that the election was not fair;
- hostility toward the "ungrateful" Timorese;
- a military that can operate outside of civilian leadership;



B1

- the absence of effective civilian leadership in Jakarta in the executive or legislative branches.
- the absence of a critical mass of civilians willing to defy the government and demand Timorese independence. (C)

What's viable?

Even if Option #2 were restored, elements in the security forces would remain committed to retaining East Timor and seek to sabotage the transition and eventual independent government. Security forces continue to see the danger of a slippery slope for other regions in Indonesia; demonstrating the "costs" of breaking with Jakarta is a consistent theme. Despite international opprobrium, Indonesia appears

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unlikely to reinstate a UN presence until the authorities are comfortable that a "second vote" would support integration. It is unclear what level of economic and political pressure would bring about the sea change necessary for Jakarta to take Option 2 seriously. (C)

Leaders may understand the potential international ramifications of pursuing Option 3, but some are impotent [redacted] and others see the interests of national unity and their personal survivability as overriding. None of the current or would be leaders have solid backing, with suspicions, fractured institutions, and competing agendas complicating the political scene and making it difficult for outsiders to identify the power center, much less to change behavior. (C)

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