

STATEMENT OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JIM McGOVERN ON THE CURRENT VIOLENCE IN EAST TIMOR, SEPTEMBER 7, 1999

U.S. Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA) called upon the Clinton Administration today to suspend all U.S. assistance to the Government of Indonesia until such time as the violence in East Timor has ceased and the safety and security of the East Timorese people can be guaranteed. Rep. McGovern has also pressed the White House to support the immediate deployment to East Timor of a multinational peacekeeping force to help restore law and order. The following is Rep. McGovern's statement:

"I recently traveled to East Timor as part of a congressional delegation that included Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Jack Reed (R-RI) to assess the conditions leading to the August 30 referendum. Based on our interviews with officials in East Timor and Jakarta, and what we had witnessed on the ground in East Timor, I called for a United Nations Peacekeeping force to be deployed in East Timor during this difficult transition period. Throughout East Timor the people we talked with were deeply concerned about violent retaliation following the vote. Their fears have now been confirmed in the most horrific way.

"Over the past several days, I have been in discussions with many of the people I met with in East Timor, some of whom have recently been evacuated off the island. They describe burning and looting in Dili; attacks against unarmed civilians, including women and children; attacks against U.N. workers and the International Committee of the Red Cross; the rounding up of people who have taken refuge with the Catholic Church and transporting them to unknown destinations. The fate of these people is unknown, and the worst is feared. In most instances, eyewitnesses report the collaboration or direct assistance of the Indonesian police and military in these actions.

"I urge the United States to support Australia and other nations calling for the immediate deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force to restore order to East Timor and an end to the violence. The Government of Indonesia has clearly been unable or unwilling to provide security to the East Timorese people and should agree to the immediate deployment of such an international force to assist Indonesia in meeting its responsibilities and international commitments under the May 5 Agreement it signed with the United Nations and the Government of Portugal.

"I further urge the Administration to suspend all U.S. bilateral assistance to the Government of Indonesia until such time as the United Nations certifies that order has been restored and safety to the East Timorese people guaranteed. Time and again, the Government of Indonesia has pledged to guarantee security of the East Timorese people. Time and again, the U.S. has stated that there will be severe consequences should the Indonesian Government fail to live up to its commitments. They have failed to do so. It is time for the U.S. and other countries to begin demonstrating what those consequences are: a loss of all international economic, military and development support. I ask the U.S. to take the lead in urging other nations to suspend their assistance to Jakarta and for the international financial institutions to freeze all loan disbursements on current projects in Indonesia.

"Over 78 percent of people of East Timor voted for independence. Their courage and faith in democracy and the international community should not be rewarded with death and destruction. Every hour is costing lives in East Timor. The international community and the United States must act now.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: AUGUST 19-24, 1999 FACT-FINDING TRIP TO EAST TIMOR, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAMES P. McGOVERN

Having just returned from a fact-finding mission to East Timor (August 19-24) with Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Jack Reed (D-RI), I would make the following observations:

(1) The May 5th Agreement on East Timor—signed by the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal and the United Nations Secretary General—puts forth the framework for elections in East Timor that would decide whether East Timor would remain a part of Indonesia (technically the vote is on supporting or rejecting autonomy).

The United Nations Mission on East Timor (UNAMET) has been established to implement the agreement and the Indonesian Government is responsible for ensuring the ballot can take place in a peaceful and stable environment.

(2) UNAMET has done an excellent job in creating a process that will allow this plebiscite to occur. Despite a smear campaign being launched against them by pro-integration forces, UNAMET has been objective and fair—and has established a process that is credible.

UNAMET has already postponed the vote twice—from August 8 to August 21 to August 30. It appears unlikely that it will be postponed again.

In the face of political intimidation and violence—mostly by pro-integration forces—UNAMET nonetheless, registered over 450,000 voters. People defied the intimidation and registered in higher than expected numbers (over 100,000 more than what the U.N. considered an "acceptable" level).

(3) From discussions on the ground in East Timor with a variety of parties, it seems unlikely that there will occur a truly free and fair plebiscite. However, UNAMET's efforts could very well lead to a vote that truly reflects the will of the people in East Timor.

Armed militias continue to operate with impunity. We visited the town of Maliana on Saturday—only to learn that the town is regularly swarming with armed militias. The U.N. offices were recently attacked. In fact, a rock that was hurled through a window is still lodged in a wall in one of the offices. A number of local people have been killed, some are reported missing and many are routinely threatened with death if the election should result in a pro-independence vote.

We met with the local police chief who, while assuring us he will do his best to maintain security for the vote, conceded that he could give no instances where individuals associated with militias had been arrested—despite the fact that militia activity is strictly illegal.

It is also clear that the militias are a product of the Indonesian military—and not of any community-based organization. They exist to do the army's bidding—plain and simple. If the military authorities wanted militia activity to cease, it would.

The police force, which has been technically charged with maintaining security and has been given all the appropriate support UNAMET, has been unwilling or unable to control militia violence. By all accounts, police security simply stand by and watch in the face of militia violence—and refuse to go against the military. What is particularly alarming is that this same police force is charged with maintaining security in the post-plebiscite period.

A visit by our delegation to Suai on Saturday revealed many of the same problems as in Maliana. Armed militias, political intimidation and threats of violence are all commonplace. In Suai, a potentially explosive

situation has arisen where over 2000 internally displaced persons (IDP's) are seeking temporary sanctuary on the property of a local church. It is clear that most of the IDP's are pro-independence and are waiting in order to vote on August 30. Local authorities in Suai had shut off the water supply to the church and have also refused to allow food products to be brought to displaced people by the UNHCR. Our delegation appealed to local authorities to allow water and food to be brought to these people—and we were told that would happen. Water was restored, according to U.N. reports, later the next day.

(4) On Saturday, Senator Harkin and I met with Indonesian President B.J. Habibie. We expressed our gratitude for his public statements in support of a free and fair vote in East Timor—but reported that our recent visit demonstrated to us that conditions there were still very disturbing. We urged that he take a more aggressive role in demanding Indonesian military compliance with the spirit of the May 5th agreement. We suggested a number of military officers who should be replaced based on their inappropriate behavior. He asked us to follow-up with a memo—which Senator Harkin agreed to do before leaving Jakarta.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) The United States and the world community should continue to strongly—and without equivocation—support UNAMET. This is especially important to do now because prointegration forces are smearing UNAMET in order to justify ignoring the voting results if the decision is pro-independence.

(2) The United States should urge the U.N. and the Indonesian government to allow a U.N. peacekeeping force into East Timor immediately. It is clear that the Indonesian police and military are not creating a secure environment, which could be particularly dangerous in the aftermath of a pro-independence vote. A number of U.N. and human rights observers continue to worry about retaliation in the aftermath of the election. Based on what I've observed, the local police will not or cannot stand up to military-backed militias.

(3) The United States and the world community must continue to make clear that Indonesia's failure to live up to the May 5th agreement and provide security to the people of East Timor before, during and especially after the vote will result in strong consequences—both economically and diplomatically. The Indonesian Government can show good faith now by disarming the militias and arresting anyone with an unauthorized weapon.

The U.S. Congressional delegation met with:

U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia J. Stapleton Roy and embassy staff.

Xanana Gusmao, opposition leader.

Major General Zacky Anwar—Indonesia Armed Forces (TNI) in East Timor.

Deputy Governor Sudharto of Dili, East Timor.

Party Leaders of the National Council of the Timorese Resistance (CNRT, the coalition of pro-independence forces).

United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor team members (UNAMET)—including Ian Martin, Special Representative for the Secretary General for the East Timor Popular Consultation.

Roman Catholic Bishop of Dili, East Timor, Carlos Felipe Zimenes Belo.

Mateu Maiz, Mayor of Dili and spokespersons of the United Front for East Timor Autonomy (FPDK), the coalition of pro-integration forces.

Site visits to the western towns of Maliana and Suai in East Timor.

Indonesian President B.J. Habibie.

CARTER CENTER REPORT NO. 8 ON EAST TIMOR
CARTER CENTER STAFF EVACUATES EAST TIMOR;
CENTER JOINS CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL
INTERVENTION IF INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT
FAILS TO ACT

The Carter Center has been forced by militia attacks in East Timor to evacuate its remaining three international staff members from the territory. Their reports from Jakarta of the events they witnessed just prior to leaving the East Timor capital of Dili conclusively show complicity of Indonesian forces, both police and military, with the armed gangs terrorizing and displacing the local East Timorese populace. This includes militias' efforts to drive international observers, journalists, and U.N. staff out of East Timor.

This violent situation is not chaotic, but rather appears to follow a plan, since Indonesian forces openly tolerate or even support assaults and killing of unarmed civilians by the militias. The Indonesian government has repeatedly pledged to take steps to stop the violence and has sufficient forces in East Timor to do so, but no action to stop the rampaging militias is evident in Dili or elsewhere in East Timor. At the very least, insubordination of military forces in the territory to higher command officials is occurring. Immediate changes in command and public issuance of orders to the military to use force to stop the militias are required.

If the U.N. ambassadorial delegation determines that the Indonesian government is not prepared to reverse this situation immediately, every step should be taken to get President B.J. Habibie to agree to the introduction of armed international peacekeeping forces.

Carter Center observers, now stationed in Jakarta, have confirmed the following incidents through direct observation or reliable reports from eyewitnesses in East Timor:

Since the vote results were announced on Saturday, armed pro-integration militia members have erected roadblocks throughout Dili and control the streets of the capital at all hours of the day. Militia members are: terrorizing and murdering unarmed civilians; intimidating, threatening, and attacking international personnel; burning houses; and displacing large numbers of people. Carter Center observers have on numerous occasions witnessed militia members perpetrating acts of violence in full view of heavily-armed police and military personnel who either stand by and watch or actively assist the militias.

On Monday afternoon, Sept. 6, in Dili, reports were received that thousands of internally displaced persons were being taken from their places of refuge in Dili by police and loaded on trucks headed for West Timor.

Over the weekend, militia members attacked and burned the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the residence of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Bishop Carlos Belo, and other places of refuge, forcing thousands of internally displaced people sheltered in those places to flee.

Carter Center observers contacted officials at one Catholic mission in Dili that was sheltering several thousand internally displaced persons. They said armed militia had removed all young men from the compound on Monday evening. Their current whereabouts and condition is unknown.

Carter Center observers were attacked by militia at the port of Dili as they attempted to evacuate the Carter Center's local East Timorese staff on Sunday. After being pursued through the city by armed militia and by Indonesian police, the Center's inter-

national observers were evacuated to Jakarta with the help of the Australian consulate and the U.S. Embassy. Carter Center local staff are still scattered in Dili and unaccounted for.

International press and observers were forced at gunpoint by Indonesian police to evacuate their hotels and residences on Sunday and Monday and driven to the airport. A small number of international journalists refused to leave and some are now taking refuge at UNAMET headquarters.

There has been almost constant automatic weapon fire around and over UNAMET headquarters since Saturday evening. On Sunday night several thousand internally displaced persons sheltered in a school adjacent to UNAMET headquarters were forced to flee into the U.N. compound after automatic weapons with tracer bullets were fired over their heads. An estimated 2,000 people have now taken refuge in the U.N. compound.

UNAMET has been forced to evacuate all eight of their regional offices and on Monday evacuated a large number of international staff from UNAMET headquarters in Dili. U.N. vehicles carrying evacuees to the airport on Monday were fired upon.

**COMMEMORATION FOR THE
 HOUSTON COMETS**

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, back to back to back. The Houston Comets are phenomenal women, and I am here this morning to congratulate them for their terrific victory against the New York Liberty. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, I am here to congratulate outstanding sports players and women who played last Sunday at the arena in Houston before a sold-out crowd, and yes, this team has had its trials and tribulations, its ups and downs, but they took the bottom of their spirit, and they brought it to the top, and their perseverance and their strength, and they dedicated their game to Kim Perrot, the spiritual leader of their team who flew with the angels and looked down and said, "you've got to win this for Kim."

And so this crowd has shown us along with the Houston Comets what it means to be strong in one's soul and to win a game because they really won it and they deserve it. All the little girls of Houston and the Nation can now look up to this phenomenal team and these phenomenal women.

To Cynthia Cooper and Sheryl Swoopes, to Tammy Jackson, to Janeth Arcain, Cynthia Cooper, Sonja Henning, Tammy Jackson, Monica Lamb, Mila Nikolic, Jennifer Rizzotti, Sheryl Swoopes again, Tina Thompson again, Polina Tzekova, Amaya Valdermoro, and Kara Wolters and to the MVP and the dynamic public relations leader, Sarah Joseph, and, of course, to Van Chancellor, the coach who is the coach of the WNBA, and the owner, Les Alexander; they are a champion, they are phenomenal women, and we say to our spiritual leader who flies with the angels, Kim Perrot, "We'll never forget you."

Congratulations to Houston and congratulations to the WNBA.

Back to back to back.

I am pleased to address the House to congratulate the Houston Comets on their third Women's National Basketball Association title. On Sunday, the Comets beat the New York Liberty 59-47 in front of a sell-out crowd at the Compaq Center in Houston.

It was a great day for Houston, a great day for women's basketball and women's sports, and it was a great day for the Comets, a team that has overcome tragedy to make history.

The Houston Comets have now won three consecutive championship games. This is the second time that the team has faced the New York Liberty and won. And for the third consecutive season, Cynthia Cooper has been named the Most Valuable Player for the WNBA Finals.

Sunday was indeed a great day for Houston because it brought the city together. The game on Sunday was played before a sell-out crowd of 16,285 fans. It brought the best out in a team and a city that suffered the loss of Kim Perrot, the point guard who passed away one week before the play-offs.

Kim Perrot was crucial to the Comets in their two previous championship games. Unfortunately, she was diagnosed with lung cancer earlier this year, and passed away in mid-August.

Although she was not physically present, her spirit was indeed there as the team rallied to victory. The crowds chanted "Three for Kim, three for Kim," until the final buzzer, and several fans wore her jersey, number 10 in her memory.

The excitement over the Comets' win follows behind the triumphant win by the U.S. Women's Soccer Team earlier this summer. Both of these wins have ushered in a new era of respect for women's sports.

Women's sporting events have proven to be just as exciting as men's sports. We have seen an increase in sports participation by girls in school and we will soon see more women's sports in prime time. Young girls now have role models in athletics like Cynthia Cooper, Sheryl Swoopes and Tammy Jackson.

Just as we paid homage to Title IX earlier this year, I would like to again mention how important that legislation has been to women's professional sports today. The accomplishments of the Women's National Basketball League serve to remind us that only 27 years ago, there was no Title IX and women were still second class citizens. We have come a long way from the days when only men were expected to excel in sports.

In athletics, we will continue to see more opportunities for women in intercollegiate and professional sports. Institutions must ensure that there is adequate athletic financial assistance, accommodation of athletic interests and abilities of women, and that the opportunities and treatments afforded to sports participants must be equivalent. All of this is critical to ensure a solid future for women's professional sports.

The Houston Comets have now followed in the footsteps of some of the more prominent NBA teams in winning three titles in a row. The Comets are now a part of the pantheon that includes the former Minneapolis Lakers, the Boston Celtics, and the Chicago Bulls.

I salute the Houston Comets team—Janeth Arcain, Cynthia Cooper, Sonja Henning,