

World Media on East Timor

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the reality which the media have shown the public, is to delay any, "World Media on East Timor", NAPSNet Special Reports, September 09, 1999, <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-special-reports/world-media-on-east-timor/>

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The United States Information Agency (USIA) distributed the following digest of international media reports on the violence in East Timor. The digest is comprised of an overall summary followed by summaries of selected items.

The rapidly unfolding situation in East Timor--where anti-independence militias continue to rampage in the capital, Dili, and throughout the province with apparent impunity--provoked an outpouring of editorial comment from East and South Asia, Europe, the Western Hemisphere and Africa. Analysts expressed extreme dismay over the plight of the pro-independence East Timorese, whom they saw as being "abandoned" by the international community as it debates what action to take on East Timor. Despite Jakarta's imposition of martial law in the province, sentiment was strong that the Indonesian government had lost a good measure of credibility in its handling of post-referendum events in East Timor. The majority agreed with a Seoul daily, which deemed Indonesia's military "not trustworthy for the maintenance of security" in East Timor, and with Paris's right-of-center Le Figaro, which maintained that Jakarta's dispatching of additional security forces to the island was "like asking an arsonist to put out his own fires." As they have in previous days (see Daily Digests of 9/7 and 9/3), commentators in all geographic regions voiced strong support for the "rapid deployment" of an "international intervention force" to protect East Timorese civilians. A number of analysts also favored cutting off IMF and World Bank funds to Indonesia as a means of "pressuring" Jakarta to bring the situation in East Timor under control. A new dimension in foreign media reaction was a noticeable upturn in criticism of the UN for its "grave miscalculations" and "broken promises" in East Timor. Highlights in

commentary follow:

INDONESIA WEIGHS IN: In Jakarta, the majority of editorialists expressed support for the government's insistence that it--and not "foreign or UN troops"--must be responsible for "restoring security" in East Timor. These writers sided with leading, independent Kompas, which judged that there would be "many negative ramifications" for Indonesia should it decide to allow outsiders to intervene. Only independent Berita Buana and the leading, English-language Jakarta Post voiced tacit support for "UN security support" in the province.

'DELAY WILL LEAD TO BUTCHERY': Support for a "speedy UN resolution" to dispatch an international peacekeeping force to East Timor spanned the geographic spectrum, including ASEAN member and observer states. A number of writers joined opinionmakers in Portugal and Australia who lamented the U.S.' "failure" to agree to participate in a peacekeeping operation and the U.S. and Britain's lack of "any more effective plan than to send a delegation to Jakarta to meet with the Indonesian government."

KOSOVO PARALLELS: Nearly all European observers, and a fair number elsewhere, drew parallels between the situation in East Timor and that of Kosovo. These writers shared the contention of an Italian commentator, who averred: "Once again, the UN made a promise and could not keep it." "The UN allowed the people of East Timor to vote for independence," stressed a Paris daily, adding: "Now they are learning the price of trusting the UN.... The [Indonesian] militias are now free to implement their own idea of order, made up of terror and massacres." EDITOR: Kathleen J. Brahney

EDITOR'S NOTE: This survey is based on 62 reports from 26 countries, September 3 - 8. The following editorial excerpts are grouped by region; editorials from each country are listed from the most recent date.

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

INDONESIA: "Negative Ramifications If UN Force Used"

Leading, independent Kompas held (9/8): "The martial law imposed by the Indonesian police and military must successfully restore security and order to East Timor.... There are many negative ramifications for the national way of life if foreign troops, even under a UN banner, enter East Timor."

"Habibie Throws Fireball At UN"

According to Muslim intellectual Republika (9/8): "As a leader in the UN, the United States has vacillated.... It should also be observed that the United States and Australia have disagreed about East Timor. The United States, which is yet to be burdened with refugee matters, is now using U.S. World War II assistance to Australia as a lever to cite

Australia's moral obligation to deploy troops to East Timor."

"Martial Law In East Timor"

Ruling Golkar Party's Suara Karya pointed out (9/8): "The international community strongly criticized the decision [to impose martial law in East Timor]. As always, British Foreign Minister Cook and U.S. Secretary of State Albright conveyed the same severe criticism.... Seemingly, both Cook and Albright have forgotten that the Tripartite Accord states that most or all soldiers must be withdrawn from East Timor during Phase II. Security and order are to be fully under police control.... There are many obstacles in the field.... To help restore order, a supportive attitude on the part of foreign countries is necessary. Threats to interfere in East Timor encourage pro-independence groups to retain their weapons to fight the Indonesian military. We must recognize that."

"Martial Law In East Timor"

Armed Forces' daily ABRI judged (9/8): "Political elites, legal experts and the public must comprehend the government's actions without reckless criticism or prejudice. In compliance with the New York Accord, Indonesia will be responsible for security in East Timor until the region is handed over to the UN after the poll results have been endorsed and ratified by the People's Consultative Assembly."

"UN Security Support Needed To Avert Civil War"

Independent afternoon Berita Buana contended (9/7): "It will not be easy to secure the situation amid the flaring animosities. UN security support is now necessary in East Timor."

"Martial Law In East Timor"

Pro-government, Islamic-oriented Pelita declared (9/8): "We all support the measures taken to ensure security, order and safety in East Timor.... This is a test of Indonesia's and East Timor's reputation and credibility. We must restore security.... Failing the test offers the opportunity for foreign or UN troops to enter. It is difficult to imagine the damage to our international reputation should that occur."

"Military Rules East Timor"

According to the leading, independent, English-language Jakarta Post (9/8): "The imposition of martial law...corroborates the bitter reality that real power in this country lies in the hands of TNI (the Indonesian armed forces), not with the president or the House of Representatives.... East Timor has degenerated into such a state of lawlessness chiefly because of the inaction of Indonesian security forces as pro-Indonesia militias launched their terror campaigns against the populace before and after the August 30 ballot.... Lately, there have been allegations that Indonesian soldiers were taking part in the campaign. Whether these

allegations are true or not, TNI seemed to lack the political will to prevail over its self-created militia in East Timor from the beginning. This raises speculation that TNI may have its own agenda, different from the government's.... With most of the UN officials and foreign and local journalists out of the territory, martial law gives TNI free rein in East Timor.... In the course of the next two days, we hope TNI will disprove the misgivings.... Here is a golden last chance for the military to salvage some respect, pride and credibility, if not for itself, at least for the nation."

"Do Not Throw Xanana To The Wolves"

The government-oriented, English-language Indonesian Observer emphasized (9/8): "If UNAMET is unable to protect itself against the onslaught of the militia, and if TNI does not have the necessary strength to put an end to the murder spree...would it not be expecting too much from Xanana that he would be able to restore law and order, all by himself?... Perhaps, it was thought that it would be better to keep him in Jakarta lest his presence inflame the fighting spirit of the rebels.... We would like to remind Justice Minister Muladi that he should think carefully before sending Xanana to East Timor because he might be held accountable for Xanana's demise."

NEW ZEALAND: "APEC Must Not Fail Them"

Auckland's top-circulation, moderate New Zealand Herald opined (9/8): "Suddenly New Zealand finds itself hosting more than a trade summit. The humanitarian emergency in East Timor could hardly be sidelined for the sake of running a trade meeting.... New Zealand as the host of a timely gathering of Asian and world leaders, ought to make particular efforts to keep Indonesia on the team.... The crisis need not overshadow the important trade agenda, even though events in East Timor are bound to remain in the fore in bilateral discussions outside the formal sessions.... This is a chance for governments to show that economics and trade are not cordoned off from humanitarian concerns. People who do good business together do not remain indifferent to one another's welfare. Indonesia has been a very good contributor to APEC...but the international community's immediate demand will be for it to restore order in a territory that has voted decisively for self-determination. The challenge for APEC in Auckland is to make it happen."

AUSTRALIA: "Australia-U.S. Friction Over Timor"

The conservative Australian featured this commentary (9/8) by foreign affairs correspondent Robert Garran, who noted: "The Australia-U.S. alliance is on the line over America's reluctance to play a substantial peacekeeping role in East Timor.... No one suggests that the alliance will be disbanded over the issue, but U.S. failure to participate in a peacekeeping operation will undermine Australia's confidence in benefits of the pact. It will also suggest to the region that the United States has become reluctant to take an active part in ensuring security in

Southeast Asia."

"U.S. Response Poor"

Editorial comment in Queensland's Brisbane Courier Mail held (9/8): "The response of the United States has been very poor.... The United States demonstrated great moral leadership by intervening in Kosovo--they should show the same resolution in the case of East Timor."

HONG KONG: "ASEAN Keeps Shameful Silence On Massacres"

The independent Hong Kong Standard commented in its editorial (9/8): "Through all these days of bloodshed all the rest of the ASEAN governments have maintained a thunderous silence. Perhaps, in typical ASEAN fashion, they have refrained from 'meddling' in the internal affairs of a member state, even if principles and morality have to be set aside. Or, perhaps they have been prodding Jakarta on the quiet.... It is time the ASEAN states got off their pedestal and joined the rest of the world in urging Jakarta to stop the slaughter by requesting the UN to send in a peacekeeping force. Inaction on their part will only invite foreign intervention, which all of them profess to abhor."

PHILIPPINES: "The Final Solution To The East Timor Question"

Liberal Today insisted (9/8): "The only salvation to the East Timorese must come from the international community.... The one who reminds us of Hitler...is the opposition figure, Megawati Sukarnoputri. She has opposed independence for East Timor. She considers the island a legitimate spoil of war.... To no one in Indonesia can the East Timorese turn for their safety and salvation.... That is why Ramos-Horta has called on Washington to instruct the World Bank and the IMF to send the only signal that butchers will heed: the cutoff of international credit that will send the Indonesian economy into another tailspin. But so far in Washington, mum's the word."

SINGAPORE: "Jakarta Must Act On Timor"

The pro-government Straits Times indicated (9/7): "International goodwill, particularly that of the IMF on which Jakarta depends, will be severely imperiled if it does not crack down on the murderous militias.... After the successful conclusion of the international expedition to rid Kosovo of its tormentors, it is unlikely that the global community will stand by idly and let the Timorese be decimated."

SOUTH KOREA: "Massacre Should Not Be Overlooked"

Business-oriented Joong-Ang Ilbo stressed (9/8): "Reports of violence now going on in East Timor have forced us to conclude that Indonesia's military is not trustworthy for maintenance of security there. Dispatching a UN peacekeeping force, therefore, seems to be the only option for now, and the upcoming APEC summit...must take up the issue as

its top agenda.... One thing that we do not understand is the small role the United States is playing. That is particularly odd, given the fact that the United States played such a dominant role in the name of human rights during the Kosovo conflict. From now on, the United States needs to be more energetically involved in East Timor for the sake of consistency. That will be important also because of the mistake the United States made by having tacitly approved of Indonesia's rule of East Timor so far."

"Responsibility For East Timor"

Moderate Hankook Ilbo judged (9/8): "The primary responsibility for what has gone amuCK in East Timor should go to Indonesia. The Habibie administration has repeatedly said it will respect the results of East Timor's referendum and just play the role of an 'innocent mediator.'

"As it has turned out, its military is suspected of making systematic efforts to prevent independence there.... UNSC nations including the United States and England also deserve criticism for letting Indonesia be in charge of security, despite earlier speculation that it would not serve as a dependable enforcer of order.... While the United States and NATO said that it was for the sake of human rights for an ethnic minority that they forcefully intervened in the Kosovo situation, they basically allowed Indonesia to be in charge in East Timor. That is because Indonesia still serves their interests in that region. This is to say that standards for justice are always changeable in the eyes of these powers.... East Timor has become a case to see if the international community has real intention to bring about justice."

THAILAND: "Time For Jakarta To Leave East Timor"

The lead editorial of the top-circulation, moderately conservative Bangkok Post asserted (9/8): "The only chance for East Timor is rapid international action by those already prepared to take it. Indonesia must request international help in pulling out of East Timor. The region and the world must respond. Australian and Malaysian ministers have already said their troops are on standby for East Timor action. There always are U.S. forces in the Pacific region--and Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai has virtually guaranteed the Royal Thai Armed Forces will help.... Indonesia's chance to save its reputation, its face and the lives of thousands of people rests on a thoughtful and clear decision to withdraw from East Timor now."

"Delay Will Lead To Butchery"

Pichian Kurathong commented in elite Matichon (9/8): "The whole world is closely monitoring the situation to see whether the Indonesian government and armed forces will have the wit, or the willingness, to end bloodshed in East Timor.... In case they don't, the world should expect a speedy UN resolution sanctioning the dispatch of international peacekeeping troops to East Timor..... The longer the delay, the more pro-

independence Timorese will be butchered. A graceful exit for Indonesia will be to honor the results of the Timorese referendum and return peace to East Timor."

EUROPE

PORTUGAL: "Eyes On The U.S."

Adelino Gomes remarked in center-left O Publico (9/8): "The United States is...balancing between the necessity to adhere to the the principles it insistently proclaimed in the Balkans, and considerations of purely national interests in Southeast Asia. Despite the sympathy expressed by Bill Clinton, the Pentagon is blocking a direct involvement of American forces in Timor. The most recent argument was presented by sources within the Pentagon to the BBC in the following phrase, which requires no comment: 'With 14,000 soldiers in Kosovo, the resources of the United States are already being depleted.'"

"A Machiavellian Plan In Diplomatic Guise"

In a commentary for center-left O Publico, Ambassador Fernando Reino asked (9/8): "How many more deaths, assassinations, how many more massacres will be necessary before the international community decides to give East Timor a chance? And I will add now: 'The key to this question is in Washington.'"

"Kill And Let Kill"

Antonio Ribeiro Ferreira penned this editorial in centrist Diario de Noticias (9/8): "The strategy of certain countries, very inconvenienced by the reality which the media have shown the public, is to delay any decision, let time pass and, primarily, see if the matter will disappear from the newspaper headlines and the primetime reporting of the major television channels around the world."

"Timor, The UN And The Powers"

General Loureiro dos Santos underscored in centrist Diario de Noticias (9/8): "All the powers that matter have already declared their agreement for an international force, but have made it dependent on [Indonesia's] authorization. This makes it necessary to keep up the pressure on Indonesia, with a view to making it change its position.... We will see if it is possible to convince Indonesia. If this happens, there will be a deployment of an intervention force of about seven thousand troops, possible only with the help (nominally logistical) of the United States, perhaps led by Australia, and including, among others, New Zealand and Great Britain. It is these countries that will decide and act, not the United Nations. I doubt Indonesia would authorize the participation of the Portuguese military in such a force, though Portugal should, as it already has, offer its participation."

"Tragedy Of East Timor"

Former Portuguese president Mario Soares commented in center-left *O Publico* (9/8): "Madeleine Albright, in the name of the United States, said with meridian clarity: 'Indonesia has only two options: either it puts an end to the violence, getting the situation under control, or it must seek the assistance of the international community.' One asks oneself: What if they do not do either of these things? Now, this possibility...appears not to have troubled the spirit of Mrs. Albright, it is legitimate to think that she knows that the United States has sufficient persuasive power to convince the Indonesians. They, of course, cannot live on the margin of the international community, and need, as a matter of survival, to receive favorable terms in their negotiations with the IMF and the World Bank. I am inclined to think that the various forms of diplomatic pressure on Indonesia have not been exhausted and ought to continue to develop."

"What About The Defenseless East Timorese?"

In an editorial in center-left *O Publico*, Fernando Rosas asserted (9/8): "Now...after decades of criminal complicity with Indonesia, even as the massacres take place with impunity before the eyes of the world, the United States, Great Britain, all the champions of yesterday's 'humanitarian intervention'...cannot come up with a more effective plan than to send a delegation to Jakarta to meet with the Indonesian government!"

BRITAIN: "Intervening In East Timor"

The independent *Financial Times*' lead editorial maintained (9/8): "If Indonesia cannot or will not provide security for East Timor's transition to independence, it must let the international community do so.... The international community is partly to blame for the East Timor mess. Having for years goaded Jakarta to give East Timor self-determination, it could hardly refuse President Habibie's snap referendum that some considered dangerously rushed. Yet it should never have been so trusting of the president's offer to provide security for the vote and its aftermath. Despite this guilt complex, however, no one is going to fight their way into East Timor over the opposition of Indonesia. Indonesia must give that permission, in its own self-interest.

"If its soldiers are worried about East Timor's knock-on effect on Indonesian unity, they should also see that nothing is less likely to keep their country together than to plunge it into the turmoil that is threatened by events in East Timor."

"A Faraway Island"

The conservative *Times* carried this op-ed piece (9/8) by former editor and regular columnist Simon Jenkins: "I am all for the self-determination of small states where it can be attained and secured. But

Western support for that concept, when limited to hot air, is a catastrophe. It just kills people. Better by far to leave separatists to their own devices. They have their freedom fighters. They have their guns. East Timor is not our business."

FRANCE: "What Is The UN Doing?"

Pierre Rousselin had this to say in right-of-center Le Figaro (9/8): "The UN allowed the people of East Timor to vote for independence.... Now they are learning the price of trusting the UN.... The UN's request that Jakarta put an end to the bloodshed is like asking an arsonist to put out his own fires.... The witnesses who could prove embarrassing have been sent out of East Timor.... The militias are free to implement their own idea of order, made of terror and massacres.... This, of course, reminds us of Kosovo...including the stalemate at the UN.... How can the UN help a people to seek their independence and then abandon them? If the UN wants to preserve its credibility, it must decide on an intervention now."

"The Price To Pay For Justice"

Jacques Amalric averred in left-of-center Liberation (9/8): "Only a massive and quick intervention could save the people of East Timor, not from ethnic cleansing, but from political cleansing.... But such an intervention at this stage is improbable. It would carry with it a triple price to pay. The first would be born by the UN: It is inconceivable that the Security Council will give its green light to a military operation.... Secondly, an intervention outside the international realm of the UN would only accentuate the discomfort triggered by the Kosovo intervention which was never explicitly approved by the Security Council.... Finally, such an intervention would put in the balance Indonesia's already shaky future."

"The UN's Waiting Game"

Left-of-center Liberation also had this by Pierre Haskin (9/8): "Embarrassment is clearly felt at the UN and in the world's capitals for what appears to be the abandonment (by the international community) of a people.... But the international community is walking on eggs when it comes to pressuring Jakarta, because of the shaky political situation of the post-Soeharto era.... In reality, the outcome of the conflict in East Timor depends entirely on the outcome of Indonesia's internal political fight. Like Bosnia, East Timor could be one more in the long list of victims due to the international community's impotence."

"The Dismantling Of Empires"

Dominique Bromberger opined on government-funded France Inter radio (9/8): "There are monsters condemned by history that do not want to die.... What is happening in Indonesia, what happened in Chechnya or Kosovo is the antecedent of what could happen elsewhere in Asia, in India

or in China: the dismantling of empires. Ideology has kept together people who today see nothing but their differences.... Those who oppose this trend by either deportation or importation of whole populations will fail in the end. A new organization of the world is taking shape, with hundreds of nations instead of tens of them, with their own set of new problems."

GERMANY: "Left In The Lurch"

Right-of-center Frankfurter Allgemeine front-paged this editorial (9/8) by Werner Adam: "Did the UN once again get it wrong? Is the organization even open to the charge of criminal rashness for allowing elections to take place in such an explosive atmosphere without having taken even the most basic security measures?... Now the generals will take things into their own hands more than ever, since the martial law that was imposed on East Timor...gives them the legal basis to do so. Although it cannot be quite ruled out that the military will now move to stop the murdering mob, it is alas quite possible that the campaign of expulsion will continue or even escalate."

"Abandoned By The World"

Daniel Kestenholz opined in right-of-center Die Welt of Berlin (9/8): "All the complaints filed in New York are nothing but further betrayal of the people of East Timor, who have been left alone by the world. Kosovo demonstrated that troops have to march in well in advance if the worst horrors are to be avoided. But Indonesia is clever enough to wait until East Timor is a political wasteland before giving its approval for the deployment of UN troops. After countless broken promises, there is no relying on this Indonesia."

"Nothing With Which To Counter Indonesia"

Centrist Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich underscored (9/8): "[Military intervention] has one small catch: the Indonesian army.... An international force would not want to move against the 15,000 to 20,000 Indonesian troops deployed in East Timor. It is not a matter of war. International intervention...would have to have Indonesia's blessing. But the Indonesian armed forces could be in a position even today to bring the situation under control. They just have to want to."

"Chronicle Of A Disaster Foretold"

Brigitte Spitz queried in left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau (9/8): "So what can be done to stop the violence quickly? It is clear that there will be no mandate in the Security Council for UN troops against Indonesia's will. Thus the only option is to exert massive pressure on Jakarta, particularly on the military, so that they call off the militia in East Timor. It will not be enough to drop hints. The military must be reminded that the annual \$5 billion of development aid can be stopped, as can supplies of weapons. Indonesia is not Iraq or Yugoslavia. The

intelligent use of threats to impose economic sanctions on Jakarta might have some effect.... If the United Nations is to retain a shred of credibility, it cannot just abandon a democratic referendum that was conducted under its own aegis."

"Calculated Escalation"

Readers of left-of-center Die Tageszeitung of Berlin saw this editorial (9/8): "Everything is proceeding to plan. The final chapter of the drama, directed by influential circles in the army, has begun.... The only thing left to be taken care of is the small army of guerrillas in the mountains, who have followed Xanana Gusmao's instructions not to respond to the massacre perpetrated by the militia. But they won't be able to stay silent much longer, and as soon as they decide to hit back, the Indonesian army--recently reinforced with elite troops--can finally move into action, ending in the very civil war that the generals have invoked. And then, calculate the generals, the UN will have to accept that this is not the time for the independence of East Timor."

ITALY: "Intervention Likely"

Alberto Pasolini Zanelli filed from Washington for leading, conservative, opposition Il Giornale (9/8): "It is not a matter of days anymore, but of hours: the 'international community' will likely intervene in Timor as soon as tomorrow.... There are two unknown factors: if the Indonesian government will 'actively' cooperate, as it was asked to do, in an intervention of foreign troops in a territory which has been, so far, its own territory; and if the United States will directly participate in the operation.... In practice, Jakarta had already given up its sovereignty on East Timor, when it accepted to hold a referendum.... Now it cannot but pass powers to the peace force, from which only the seal of a UN vote is missing. There are no doubts as to its outcome. Secretary Albright will have another tiny Kosovo, this time helping the Christians against the Muslims. If Jakarta protests, the United States might cut out all the assistance programs, including the training of their armed forces."

"The UN Sank In East Timor"

An editorial in provocative, classical Il Foglio mused (9/8): "Having sent the five UNSC representatives to Jakarta and not to Dili is just the latest mistake that the UN and their wavering secretary general made in East Timor.... Indeed, the referendum was promoted by the UN, which was supposed to grant its implementation in peaceful conditions.... The White House is taking its time, and the Pentagon opposes any use of American soldiers, once again, in far off regional crises. But at the end the marines in Okinawa will leave. Because East Timor is small and far away, but it is located in an area of great strategic importance to the United States."

"An Impossible Task For Indonesia"

Nicol degli Innocenti judged in leading business Il Sole 24-Ore (9/8): "Jakarta's silence on the situation in East Timor is deafening. Indeed, the future of the former Portuguese colony is being decided over there: Now the UN is waiting for the Indonesian government's green light to send international troops.... But it is difficult to understand who will make the decision in Jakarta.... The city is in a dangerous limbo, before a new president and a new government are elected in November.... Those who urge...an immediate intervention of the UN seem to ignore the fact that the UN is a giant which moves slowly, which is hostage, not only to fatiguing (bureaucratic) procedures, but also to other countries, such as the United States, which follow different logic."

"Broken Promises"

Pietro Veronese observed from Jakarta in left-leaning, influential La Repubblica (9/8): "A UNSC mission is arriving in Jakarta. In the meantime...the anti-independent militias in East Timor now use the machete, as the authors of the genocide in Rwanda once did. Once again, the UN made a promise and could not keep it. It gave hope and then left. Even worse: it foresaw and did not act. East Timor as Rwanda, as Srebrenica in Bosnia? When the sun rises again in Dili we will know, perhaps."

RUSSIA: "Foreign Intervention Predicted"

Aleksandr Chudodeyev said in reformist Izvestiya (9/8): "East Timor has landed war instead of independence. Western observers compare President Habibie's policy in East Timor to Slobodan Milosevic's in Kosovo and predict that failing to reach a truce will make foreign intervention in the form of international peacekeepers inevitable."

"Europe Favors UN Mission"

Ksenia Fokina pointed out in centrist Nezavisimaya Gazeta (9/8): "European diplomacy favors sending a UN force to East Timor. As Portugal suggested that the squeeze be put on Jakarta, the strongest support for this idea came from the United States, Britain and Australia."

DENMARK: "International Community Must Increase Pressure" Center-left Politiken commented (9/8): "The international community [must] use all the means at its disposal to increase pressure on Indonesia. The IMF, which has pumped billions of dollars into Indonesia over the last few years, has started to address the issue. The United States, with the support of other like-minded countries, ought to intensify pressure [on Jakarta] and the UN should strengthen its presence. It is high time that the notion of a UN military task force was turned into a reality. Even though East Timor is a far cry from being Kosovo, much could be done."

"A Military Task Force Is Needed"

Center-right Jyllands-Posten noted (9/8): "First Kosovo, now East Timor-

-two examples of the international community's inability to react fast enough. Aims and means simply do not match up. A military task force should be deployed. The Jakarta regime ought to be put on ice until it shows respect for human rights."

"The Only Option Left"

Left-wing Information editorialized (9/8): "The only option is to exert maximum pressure on Indonesia's President Habibie. China and the United States are set to participate in an emergency APEC meeting [which Habibie may also attend]. China should be reminded of its [duties] as a member of the UNSC and be made to realize the necessity of acting now."

KAZAKHSTAN: "Freedom Is Main Thing"

Independent weekly Delovaya Nedelya predicted (9/3): "It will be difficult for the Indonesian government to resist the temptation to make the election results fraudulent.... What will happen if East Timor will really get its independence? Most likely, it will be impossible to avoid bloodshed, and pro-Indonesian military units on the territory will continue attacking peaceful citizens."

NORWAY: "UN Not Up To The Job"

Social democratic Dagsavisen Arbeiderbladet (9/8) commented: "The UN as a problem solver can never be better than what its member countries allow. The problem for the UN is that the expectations of what the world organization can handle are far greater than the resources placed at its disposal and the actual power the UN is equipped with.... But now it's East Timor. The UN cannot escape the grave miscalculation it made in trusting the promises from Jakarta that Indonesian forces would take care of security of the population.... It is an acute crisis. Then the member countries must start the requisite debate on what actually they want out of the UN."

"The UN's Dilemma In East Timor"

Conservative Aftenposten (9/8) commented: "East Timor is on the way to becoming Southeast Asia's Kosovo and just as great a challenge for the world community as Kosovo was.... The handling of the crisis by the UN also has many similarities to Kosovo."

"There was no lack of warnings and resolutions with appeals to the Yugoslavian authorities and the parties in conflict to resolve it in a peaceful way. If not, actions would be taken. They came, but not from the UN, because the world organization was hobbled by internal disagreement in the Security Council. Some of the same can happen again.... But something must be done. The UN has a duty to find a way out."

POLAND: "War Of Secession"

Tomasz Wojciechowski opined in centrist weekly Wprost (9/8): "A peaceful separation of East Timor may prove to be a real test for the painstakingly emerging Indonesian democracy. Even though President Habibie unequivocally stated that he would accept any outcome of the referendum, the parliament also must give its endorsement for the province's independence. And here [in the parliament] the military has enormous influence. A substantial number of the military generals fear that the example of East Timor can trigger pro-independence movements of other minorities."

SPAIN: "Both Of Indonesia's Armies Are In East Timor"

Independent El Mundo noted (9/8): "The government in Jakarta has decided to restore order in East Timor by sending in fresh, elite units whose members have no business interests there, as opposed to the troops already in place. The objective of the regular Indonesian army and the militias it supports is to impede the independence of East Timor. Not surprisingly, the fresh units have found it necessary to confront their locally stationed counterparts...with the civilian population caught in the crossfire. If President B. J. Habibie is sincere about wanting to resolve the conflict, he can demonstrate that by allowing himself to be helped by neutral forces."

"Timor Twists In The Wind"

Conservative ABC remarked (9/8): "Timor is too far from anywhere for it to be helped by anyone.... The warnings issued by the United States are less than convincing, and Habibie does not have control over the army...nor is there any NATO-like organization in the area to assist the victims. Only pressure by Portugal may be able to put together a coalition that would not include any of the great powers."

THE NETHERLANDS: "UN's Fatal Mistake In East Timor"

Rotterdam's centrist Algemeen Dagblad indicated (9/8): "The UN is making a fatal mistake by emphasizing the procedural niceties with regard to East Timor. Every hour that an international peacekeeping force is not deployed means increasing violence for the citizens of East Timor."

"East Timor Vs. Kosovo"

Amsterdam's influential, liberal-left De Volkskrant stressed (9/8): "East Timor doubtlessly suffers as much as Kosovo, but large international interests are not at stake--unless we count among these the credibility of humanitarian intervention. That splendid principle is threatened to be unmasked, in East Timor, as yet another argument of convenience."

TURKEY: "The UN's Fiasco In East Timor"

Semih Idiz charged in tabloid Star (9/8): "The UN is fully responsible for the post-referendum situation in East Timor. We know how the UN was useless during the Bosnia crisis. And the Serbian aggression in Kosovo was stopped because of NATO's determination to keep the UN out of the picture..."

"The UN's secretary general didn't do anything except make statements [regarding the elections in East Timor], and today the UN is witness to the massacres there.... Now there is a plan for a UN military intervention, but it's too late. It is unclear whether the UN is really going to take any course of action.... What is clear from the East Timor issue is that the UN's role within the new world order is becoming even more controversial."

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: "Martial Law Unlikely To Stop East Timor Violence"

The centrist Times of India had this by Hong Kong correspondent Harvey Stockwin (9/8): "No country, and least of all the UN, has any interest or inclination to mount a peacekeeping mission against Indonesia's wishes. But the willingness to wait awhile also stems from one subtle Indonesian excuse which has found favor in some diplomatic circles, notably Australia's. The excuse is that the inability to control East Timor stems from the fact that 6,000 East Timorese troops in the Indonesian army in Timor are the ones on the rampage, beyond the control of non-Timorese. Martial law, it is argued, is needed to end their revolt."

PAKISTAN: "Campaign Of Terror"

An editorial in the centrist national News remarked (9/8): "A transitional authority will be in place only sometime in November and until then only peacekeepers can stall the state of anarchy that the East Timorese have already been a helpless witness to."

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA: "Strong UN Leadership Is Needed"

The liberal, independent Star maintained (9/8): "The news from East Timor...is awful. Two points should be made. The first is that the world community needs to demonstrate that it will not be intimidated by pro-Indonesia government militias or Jakarta itself. The second is that we are once again reminded that our own transition was made possible because rational men and women behaved rationally. There can be no doubt about what the people of East Timor want.... But it would seem that it is not that easy to shake off twenty three years of often brutal Indonesian rule.... Now it seems that a proxy war is going to subject the East Timorese to more misery. There is a need for strong UN leadership in this matter."

"Little Alternative But To Rapidly Deploy UN Peacekeepers"

Independent Business Day commented (9/8): "Events in East Timor have again forced on the world the images of a bloody conflict which was entirely avoidable.... The events show that neither the Indonesian government nor the UN was adequately prepared for the reaction of the military.... Still care should be taken in apportioning blame.... The UNSC is too often reluctant to commit the forces necessary to ensure that violence can be kept in narrow bounds from the start.... Whatever lessons Washington drew from the Kosovo conflict, it seems the need for preventive UN diplomacy (sometimes armed) was not one. Equally, to attack Indonesian President...Habibie misses the point. He, and the chances of democracy taking root in Indonesia, are under threat from the military-sponsored carnage in East Timor. In the current bloody crisis that is little alternative to the rapid deployment of UN peacekeepers, with U.S. troops among them."

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

CANADA: "Crimes In East Timor Require International Action"

Under the sub-heading, "Indonesia must be convinced to accept a UN peacekeeping force," the leading Globe and Mail observed (9/8): "The situation in East Timor is quite clear, and every pressure should be brought on Indonesia to let the international community assume its responsibilities there."

"Timorous Behavior"

The mid-market Ottawa Citizen opined (9/8): "It is now abundantly clear that the UN was mistaken to have entrusted the Indonesian authorities with maintaining security in East Timor during the independence referendum. It is also becoming clear that the Security Council did not have any contingency plans to deal with a collapse of law and order in the wake of East Timor's overwhelming decision to be independent. These were critical errors of judgment that have cost many people their lives, but now is not the time to try to allocate blame. There will be plenty of time in the future for finger-pointing, but now the Security Council's top priority must be finding a way to restore peace in East Timor.... Allowing the killing to continue is not an option." "A Terrible Price For Inaction"

Quebec's English-language Gazette lamented (9/8): "Ideally, any international intervention should have the blessings of the UN, Indonesian political authorities and the Indonesian military. Realistically, the wait for those things could be long indeed. Meanwhile, lives are at stake. And so is the UN's credibility. It should have seen this coming.... Some form of military action to protect the people of East Timor seems necessary. If Indonesia cannot or will not rein in its murderous militias, others will have to do the job. And there is no time to spare."

BRAZIL: "Who's Concerned About East Timor?"

Political analyst Antonio Carlos Pereira argued on center-right O Estado de Sao Paulo's op-ed page (9/7): "Washington is doing nothing to end the cruelties imposed on indigenous people in East Timor.... The population of East Timor needed international troops to guarantee their integrity, not UN observers.... None of the measures adopted will prevent the militia from going on massacring the Timorese under the Indonesian government's complacent attitude.... The Indonesian officials who drafted this plan or who are partners to it count on the hypocrisy of the UN, the great powers and public opinion. Timorese are not Slavs, nor do they live in the heart of Europe. Along with millions of Africans, they are the pariahs of a world...and for such pariahs, the humanitarian right, which motivated the bombing of Yugoslavia, does not exist. The Timorese crime is to speak Portuguese, to be Catholic and have never assimilated into Indonesian culture.... Madeleine Albright, who saw in Kosovo's ethnic cleansing the possibility of a repetition of Hitler's tragedy, sees no reason to feel the same moral repulsion when the victims of the cleansing are Timorese.... This is the greatest weakness of President Clinton's foreign policy.... So far, no analyst has succeeded in defining which U.S. national interest was threatened by the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Likewise, no one will be able to say how the U.S. national interests have been hurt in East Timor."

"The U.S. Role"

Independent afternoon Jornal da Tarde ran this editorial (9/8): "East Timor is swimming in chaos.... President Bill Clinton has stated that U.S. military intervention now would only worsen the situation. Although Clinton is aware that he will not escape sending troops to the region when it becomes necessary, he wants to gain time for a political solution...."

"With or without a U.S. military intervention, East Timor's destiny--and as a consequence all of Southeast Asia--depends on the U.S. decisions. Since the end of the Cold War...the United States has become the world's policeman. Although such a role is many times misunderstood, it is decisive for guaranteeing world peace, as was demonstrated in the Gulf War, in Somalia and in Kosovo. Evidently, the East Timor case will not be an exception."

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Nautilus Institute

2342 Shattuck Ave. #300, Berkeley, CA 94704 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org