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FOURTH COMMITTEE
16th meeting
held on
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at 10.30 a.m.
New York

UN/SC/COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RAMADAN (Egypt)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR (continued)

Hearing of petitioners (A/C.4/37/3/Add.3, Add.5, and Add.8-10, A/C.4/37/8 and Add.1-3)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Whitlam took a place at the petitioners' table.

2. Mr. WHITLAM said that, whereas only one of the six petitioners who had preceded him had been to East Timor and the others had not even been to South-East Asia, he himself had spent four days in East Timor in March 1982 accompanied by the distinguished Australian foreign correspondent and editor, Mr. Peter Hastings, who had already been there in 1974 during the Portuguese administration and in 1978 at the end of the civil war. Their itinerary had been laid down by the delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who had been in the Territory for three years and spoke Indonesian.

3. Of the 26 States Members of the United Nations in South-East Asia, only three had supported General Assembly resolution 36/50 on East Timor: China and Viet Nam - whose diplomatic differences with Indonesia were well known - and Vanuatu. It would only be reasonable that, in a vote on South-East Asian questions, the countries of other regions should take account of the views of the South-East Asian countries, in the same way as they would expect other countries to take account of their views in votes on matters concerning their own regions.

4. He himself had a keen interest in and wide experience of decolonization and was familiar with South-East Asia. In 1975, during his term as Prime Minister of Australia, the Government had made every effort, but without success, to persuade the new political parties in East Timor to lay down their arms and plan their future together. Petitioners continued to omit two crucial facts: first, that the Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente (FRETILIN) had gained the upper hand in the first stage of the civil war because in August 1975 the departing Portuguese officers had left a large quantity of arms; and secondly, that by the end of September FRETILIN's action had driven 40,000 East Timorese to take refuge in West Timor. On 28 November 1975, FRETILIN had issued a unilateral declaration of independence. The following day, the new Australian Government - which had replaced his Government earlier in the month - and the Portuguese Government had repudiated the declaration and on 30 November, the other Timorese political parties had joined in an appeal to Indonesia, which had occupied the capital, Dili, on 7 December, four weeks after he had ceased to be Prime Minister.

5. Some of the petitioners had made scurrilous remarks about him and about his country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. The allegations about what the latter had said to President Suharto about self-determination for East Timor were a fabrication: the Permanent Representative had handed the President a letter from him (Mr. Whitlam) stressing the need for an act of self-determination,

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in March 1975, when two of the political parties, União Democrática Timorese (UDT) and FRETILIN, had been in coalition. In May 1975 the coalition had broken down and in August 1975 civil war had broken out. He himself had appeared before Australian Senate and House of Representative committees which had recently been receiving wide-ranging written and oral evidence on East Timor and in no case had any witness made statements about him of the kind made to the Fourth Committee.

6. His association with ICRC in the island of Timor dated from 1975, during which year his Government had provided equipment and facilities and had contributed \$A 100,000 for ICRC programmes in East Timor and \$A 150,000 for ICRC programmes in West Timor to deal with refugees from FRETILIN, estimated by ICRC at 40,000. In February 1982, he had visited East Timor with the ICRC delegate to ascertain for himself the contrast between, on the one hand, petitioners' accounts of famine in 1981 and some correspondence between church dignitaries, and, on the other hand, reports by Australian diplomats, ICRC and the United States Catholic Relief Services.

7. General Assembly resolution 36/50 referred twice to the "new outbreak of famine", whereas there was no such reference in draft resolution A/C.4/37/L.8. In his opinion the Committee had been misled in 1981. Too many of the pronouncements of churchmen in East Timor had been apocalyptic if not apocryphal. He himself would be quoting persons whom he would name and reports and articles that could be checked. In successive years the Committee had been given the impression, by various reports, that the food situation in East Timor had deteriorated since the days of Portuguese rule. In December 1974 a memorandum issued in Lisbon on the economic situation of the Territories under Portuguese administration had warned that without emergency assistance East Timor would become a hunger area that would disrupt the stability of the region; and in June 1975 an Australian Department of Foreign Affairs team had reported that the Territory had been gravely underdeveloped by South-East Asian standards. In December 1981 the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, who spoke the language, had travelled to six centres in East Timor and had reported that there had been no evidence of serious malnutrition and no apparent sign of severe food shortage.

8. In 1981 the FRETILIN petitioner had told the Fourth Committee that the ICRC programme had been abruptly terminated in April 1981. In fact, however, the programme had not been terminated: ICRC had scaled down its medical and material assistance in April as a result of the marked improvement in the food supply and the health of the people, and had later undertaken other activities in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). On his own recent visit to East Timor he had met the Apostolic Administrator of Dili and had later been received by the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in Jakarta, who had himself spent 10 days in Timor in 1981. On his return to Australia, Mr. Hastings, who had accompanied him, had reported that there was no famine or sign of famine in East Timor, that steps were being taken against any such possibility, and that the situation had improved immeasurably since his visit in September 1978. That confirmed what had been said and believed by ICRC, the Indonesian Red Cross, the Catholic Relief Services and the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio.

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9. A written submission by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs in April 1982 and oral evidence by a representative of the Department in June 1982 to the Australian Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, an article by Mr. Barry Wain, diplomatic correspondent of the Asian edition of the Wall Street Journal in June 1982, and testimony from the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs before a United States Congressional Committee in September 1982, all refuted reports and forecasts of famine in East Timor. Similar findings had been reported by UNICEF, as indicated in paragraph 44 of the working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/715).

10. In 1981 the FRETILIN petitioner had told the Committee that more than 50 per cent of ICRC aid had ended up in shops or in other Indonesian islands and that the inhabitants of East Timor had been forced to procure medicines in the local Chinese and Indonesian shops. A similar allegation had been made in Australia in December 1979 by Father Francesco Fernandez - following his appearance before the Fourth Committee - but his claim that shops in Dili were stocked with Red Cross supplies of food, clothes and medicines sold by Indonesian army officials had been promptly refuted by the Secretary-General of the Australian Red Cross Society, who had himself inspected stores in Dili. The allegations by the FRETILIN petitioner to the Committee in 1981 had also been refuted in the ICRC situation report on East Timor dated March 1982 which, had been based on three ICRC missions to East Timor during the second half of 1981.

11. While the food situation in East Timor offered a salutary example of the exaggeration and misinformation to which the Committee had been subjected over the years, there were also two other examples. First, under the section on military developments in document A/AC.109/715, the Apostolic Administrator of Dili was cited as the authority for an allegation that over 1,000 civilians, including pregnant women and children, had been killed in the Eastern Los Palos region. Mr. Hastings and he himself had spent an hour and a half with the Bishop - who had in fact used the figure 500 - who had confessed that neither he nor any of his priests had visited the region. As reported by Mr. Hastings, according to one assessment from an Indonesian source that there had been an exchange of fire in a surprise attack on a FRETILIN group by a company of Hansip - the local levies, not the Indonesians - in which 60 to 80 people might have died including several women who had been there as part of the families.

12. Secondly, that section of the document dealing with the human rights situation went into some detail about a report soon to be drafted by the Regional Popular Assembly of East Timor. According to evidence given by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, spokesman to the Australian Senate Committee, it was not clear whether that Assembly had voted on the report or approved it. Although an attached letter appeared to have been signed by two members of the Assembly, João Pedro Soares and Liandro Isac, he (Mr. Whitlam) had spoken to both members during his visit to East Timor and both had denied that the signatures on the letter were theirs.

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13. On his return from East Timor in December 1981 the Australian Ambassador had also reported that in all centres visited the situation had appeared normal. Extensive resettlement had resulted in people now having access to schools and medical facilities. Health remained a major problem, with malaria, skin diseases, eye disorders, gastric disorders and influenza still endemic. The Indonesian authorities seemed committed to developing East Timor, very little having been done under the Portuguese, and major efforts appeared to have been directed towards road building, schools, housing, medical facilities and health.
14. He himself had reported, on his return in March 1982, that the conditions of the people of East Timor were much better than before the 1975 civil war and the 1978 famine; that the Indonesian authorities had committed themselves to developing the province; that throughout East Timor there were new schools, hospitals and dispensaries, houses and community facilities; roads were being extended and irrigation systems installed. There were no signs of a security problem, or of famine or epidemics.
15. In his recent evidence before the Australian Senate Committee on East Timor he had reported that he had flown by helicopter over the whole territory without following a pre-determined course yet without fear of being shot at, as had occurred over Viet Nam in the late 1960s. In Dili he had been accompanied only by a driver and an interpreter, both of them unarmed. His hotel had not been guarded and there had seemed to be no security problem. He had also given evidence on the preparations for the elections, in which there had been every opportunity for voters to become acquainted with the names and allegiances of all candidates at least two months before the elections.
16. In his evidence on religion in Indonesia, including East Timor, he had stressed that there was complete freedom for members of other religions to practise and promote their beliefs. Indonesia was the most populous Islamic country in the world; Bali was predominantly Hindu, several of the eastern provinces predominantly Christian, and in East Timor those who were not animists were nearly all Catholics.
17. According to evidence given to the Senate Committee in June 1982 by witnesses from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, the current security situation appeared to be quiet, with FRETILIN activities being only of nuisance value in isolated areas; the election campaign had apparently been free of incident, with no reports of malpractice; people in settlement centres did not appear to have been forced to stay there; there was a long tradition of respect for local cultures, languages and customs among the many different ethnic groups, religions and races making up Indonesia; there was religious freedom and the position of the Catholic Church had been fully respected by the local authorities; and during the period 1975 to 1980 there had been no transmigration into East Timor - although about a year earlier the Indonesian authorities had announced a transmigration of about 50 Balinese farmers to assist in developing agricultural techniques not known in East Timor.

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18. The core of the support for the annual General Assembly resolution on East Timor had come from the five former Portuguese colonies in Africa, all of which recognized FRETILIN as the Government of an independent State of East Timor. Their analogy between the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) and FRETILIN was false since, whereas FRELIMO had conducted a long and hard campaign against Portugal before winning independence for Mozambique, FRETILIN had never fired a shot against the Portuguese but had used the thousands of weapons abandoned by the Portuguese against the other Timorese parties.

19. Draft resolution A/C.4/37/L.8, which included Brazil and Portugal as sponsors for the first time, maintained the legal fiction that Portugal was the administering Power, although it was more than seven years since the Portuguese Governor had left. The Australian Government under his Premiership had made great efforts to encourage the Portuguese Government to carry out its responsibilities. There was little reason to assume that Portugal would be any more responsible or effective today than it had been in 1975, yet the draft resolution called upon all specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to assist the people of East Timor "in close consultation with Portugal" which, having deserted its family seven years earlier, was now seeking a declaration from the United Nations that all was forgiven and an invitation to return home. It was not true, as stated in the draft resolution, that Portugal had "stated its full and solemn commitment to uphold the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence". Article 297 of the Portuguese Constitution, as recently amended, bound the President of the Republic and the Government to perform all acts necessary to promote and safeguard East Timor's right to independence, but made no provision for self-determination. Self-determination could lead not just to a separate independent State, but to integration with another existing State - an option envisaged under General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV).

20. The United Nations had approved self-determination for West Irian through integration with Indonesia and for North Borneo through integration with Malaysia; and part of the former British Cameroons had joined the former French Cameroons, the other part being integrated with Nigeria. Portuguese-speaking nations in Africa had never been concerned with self-determination: they had recognized FRETILIN without elections or self-determination in East Timor. Both Portugal and its former colonies were committed to maintaining the division of the island of Timor which Portugal and the Netherlands had brought about in imperial times. East Timor's participation in the national and provincial elections in May 1982, in which the people of East Timor had all taken part in a territory-wide election for the first time in their history had put an entirely fresh complexion on the issue of self-determination.

21. While not supporting all the foreign policies of the present Australian Government, he supported what it had done in recent years in East Timor and its view that if Australia and other nations wished to serve the best interests of those people they should encourage the Indonesian Government in its efforts to improve their living conditions. The Indonesians were making efforts in that

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direction and were spending more per head in East Timor than in any other province. Australia was entitled to have its views heard on the issue. The Government had already contributed \$6.2 million to ICRC for East Timor relief, compared with a mere \$5,000 from Portugal up to the end of 1981. The Australian Government had also made an initial contribution of \$250,000 to UNICEF to meet half the cost of its operations in East Timor.

22. Portugal had now mounted a diplomatic offensive to gain support for draft resolution A/C.4/37/L.8 from those who had opposed or abstained on the resolution adopted in 1981. The African nations which had sponsored the resolution over the years could not claim to be the only ones devoted to decolonization. Of the 26 nations in South-East Asia and the Pacific which were now members of the United Nations, only three had been fully independent when the United Nations had been founded: all the others had had to be freed from foreign troops or colonial masters since that time. No nations had been more concerned about decolonization or were better acquainted with the situation in East Timor and 23 of them had refused to support the resolution on East Timor in 1981.

23. It was high time the question of East Timor was voted off the agenda and that the sponsors and supporters of draft resolution A/C.4/37/L.8 joined in supporting the organizations of the United Nations system in bringing the people of East Timor the benefits denied them by imperial neglect and civil war.

24. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Ramos-Horta (Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente (FRETILIN)) took a place at the petitioners' table.

25. Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde) said that he wished to put two questions to Mr. Whitlam. The petitioner had said that frequently the representatives of FRETILIN had been mestizos. He would like to know what the intent of the petitioner had been by stressing the racial element and whether he was implying that, because of their racial background, mestizos were not representative. A second question was whether, in the view of the petitioner, the right of self-determination could be freely exercised under military occupation.

26. He would also like to hear the comments of Mr. Ramos-Horta on the statement by Mr. Whitlam to the effect that there was no famine in East Timor.

27. Mr. WHITLAM said that occasionally, in passing, he had referred to the fact that some of the articulate representatives of the population of East Timor had been mestizos and had done so to emphasize that they were scarcely the most representative persons of the East Timorese community. Writers on East Timor had all emphasized that when political parties had been formed in 1974/1975, not more than 2,000 people in East Timor could read and write. Those comments had been made by authors who had written at that time. There had been no intention whatever to cast aspersions on mestizos. Over the years most petitioners had been Europeans and the spokesmen who had come from the people of East Timor had often been mestizos. The bulk of the people of East Timor had never had an opportunity to govern themselves and in 1974 the parties had been run by very small elites. The

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first time the country had been fully consulted had been at the election held in May 1982.

28. In connection with the second question, he had gained some acquaintance with agricultural, pastoral and settlement conditions as a result of visits to every Member State in the region. He had also drawn on the 1980 and 1981 annual reports and seven situation reports of ICRC as well as on information received from the United States Catholic Relief Services, from the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in Jakarta and from Australian and United States diplomats. Other sources had included approximately 11 journalists who had visited East Timor the previous year, including the diplomatic correspondent of the Asian edition of the Wall Street Journal.

29. Mr. RAMOS-HORTA (FRETILIN) said that, on the instructions of the Central Committee of FRETILIN, he had visited Canberra to talk with the Australian Government and to request Australia, Portugal and Indonesia to set up a multinational force to stop a civil war in East Timor. Mr. Whitlam, then Prime Minister of Australia, had turned the request down, however. To say that the leaders of FRETILIN were irresponsible but omitting the fact that it had been UDT which had initiated the civil war was a distortion of history.

30. Mr. Whitlam based his remarks about the food situation in East Timor on the Wall Street Journal and other newspapers. A Pulitzer prize-winning reporter who represented the Philadelphia Enquirer and had spent the longest time in East Timor had categorically stated, however, that serious famine existed in East Timor.

31. Mr. Whitlam had accused Father Lopez of nostalgia for the old Portuguese days and had called him a mestizo. Father Lopez was not a mestizo; and he had been editor of a Catholic newspaper in East Timor which, under his editorial guidance during the period of Portuguese colonial rule and strict censorship, had published articles criticizing the Portuguese colonial administration. His paper had consequently been closed down by the authorities. Father Lopez was still in East Timor; he was visited by hundreds of people and had been hurt by Mr. Whitlam's attacks. He appealed to delegations from third world countries to imagine whether a courageous leader whose life had been endangered would take unnecessary risks by publicly denouncing foreign atrocities if they did not occur. If Father Lopez had been nostalgic for the old Portuguese days he would have gone to Portugal: if he had been an opportunist he would have co-operated with the Indonesian Government.

32. Mr. Whitlam had been in East Timor for four days; he had travelled everywhere by helicopter and had been escorted by Indonesian intelligence officials. The question which arose was how Mr. Whitlam could possibly have determined that there was no hunger in East Timor. The information supplied by FRETILIN leaders reflected the realities of life in East Timor. It was not his intention to initiate anti-Indonesian sentiment but he would be failing in his duty if he did not denounce the situation as it existed.

33. Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde) said that Mr. Whitlam had not answered his second question asking whether the petitioner thought that the right of self-determination could be freely exercised by people under military occupation.
34. Mr. WHITLAM, in reply to Mr. Ramos-Horta, said that, while it was true that he himself had not seen Mr. Ramos-Horta or representatives of the other parties when they had visited Australia in 1975, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs had received them; he himself had insisted that the Minister should receive the delegations of all the parties who had visited Australia from East Timor. The Minister for Foreign Affairs had received Mr. Ramos-Horta on three occasions, namely, on 11 December 1974, on 20 August 1975 - after the civil war had broken out, when he had recommended that FRETILIN should cease hostilities and undertake negotiations - and on 23 September 1975, when he had urged a cease-fire and consultations. Mr. Ramos-Horta had, however, been unwilling or unable to convey that message home. On 22 November 1975, after his own Government had been replaced and a week before FRETILIN had made its unilateral declaration of independence, Mr. Ramos-Horta had been received at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and efforts had been made to induce him to stress to the FRETILIN administration that it should be conciliatory and have talks with its opponents whom it had routed with Portuguese weapons. All had been to no avail.
35. During his own visit to East Timor, he had travelled in ICRC helicopters with a total capacity of five persons. Apart from the civilian pilots, Mr. Hastings and himself, there had been a representative of ICRC. On occasions, the group had arrived at villages ahead of time when no one had been there to meet them and they had therefore had an opportunity to walk around and see things for themselves. They had been impressed by the health of the community and had observed in particular that the eyes and teeth of individuals had been notably good. Although he himself had been in East Timor only four days, Mr. Hastings had visited the country on three previous occasions. He had noted that no criticism had been directed against ICRC or UNICEF, although their reports on the food situation had been favourable.
36. Mr. Ramos-Horta had also referred to the Apostolic Administrator. He himself had spoken with the Apostolic Administrator, in the company of the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio and Mr. Hastings; the Apostolic Administrator had approved the taping of the conversation and the tape had subsequently been played to the Australian Parliament. The Apostolic Administrator had in particular said that unless \$250,000 was received from Australian Catholics, there would be another famine in East Timor. He had nevertheless admitted that a buffer stock of 1,000 tons of maize had been arranged for East Timor. When he had asked the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio why, in view of the existence of the buffer stock and in the light of the statement by ICRC that there was no food shortage, the Apostolic Administrator had written demanding \$250,000 to save East Timor from famine, the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio had replied that he could give had no explanation. It would seem that some people believed that they must exaggerate in order to make a point. The Apostolic Pro-Nuncio and priests whom he had met had also assured him that the human rights situation in East Timor was now good.

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37. On the issue of self-determination, he was not sure how self-determination had been achieved in Cape Verde or any other former Portuguese colonial Territory in Africa. Things had, however, changed for the better during the past seven years. It seemed to him that the important question was what was best for East Timor at the present time. No benefit would flow from agitation year after year by African and Latin American nations. The situation had changed radically in recent months: there had been an election in East Timor; people had voted and three parties were currently recognized. Because of the generosity of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF and ICRC. Currently, for the first time in its history, there was institutional backing for the development of East Timor.

38. Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde) said that Mr. Whitlam did not seem willing to answer his second question as to whether self-determination could be exercised freely during a period of military occupation.

39. Mr. WHITLAM said that the act of self-determination which had been discussed in 1975 by himself and President Suharto with their respective Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal had been negated by the civil war. There had been no opportunity for an act of self-determination in East Timor in 1975. That had not been the fault of the Indonesian or Australian Governments. It had been the fault of the Portuguese Government, which had run away from its responsibilities, compounded by the small elites running the parties in East Timor which had been born the previous year. It had not proved possible to get the parties together. There had been an attempt to do so in June 1975, when Portugal had arranged for the three parties to meet in Macao, but, at the last minute, FRETILIN had refused to attend and instead had sent a delegation to Maputo, Mozambique, to celebrate the independence of that country. Portugal had been ineffective in carrying out its responsibilities.

40. Mr. RAMOS-HORTA (FRETILIN) said that Mr. Whitlam had referred to FRETILIN's unwillingness to co-operate with other parties. He had explained FRETILIN's position on a number of occasions at press conferences in Australia; on 16 September 1975, FRETILIN had called for an immediate cease-fire, a joint force of FRETILIN and Indonesian troops to patrol the borders of East Timor, and negotiations with all the parties concerned. Arrangements had been made for talks between FRETILIN, Portugal and the other parties concerned and the reason why those talks had not been held was that UDT leaders being held hostage in Indonesia had not been allowed to attend them.

41. It was true that, as Mr. Whitlam had indicated, the Indonesian Government had built schools and roads in East Timor, but the question at issue was that of self-determination; it was for the Committee to decide whether self-determination had taken place in East Timor in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). Moreover, it was not appropriate for Mr. Whitlam to tell delegations how to vote. It was irrelevant for Mr. Whitlam to say that African countries were not qualified to take a decision on the question of East Timor because East Timor was in another continent; that argument denied the universality of the United Nations.

42. Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde) said that he understood from Mr. Whitlam's answer to his second question that the people of East Timor had not been able to exercise their right to self-determination in accordance with the Charter and relevant United Nations resolutions.
43. Mr. JANI (Zimbabwe) asked Mr. Whitlam to comment on reports that he personally had overridden the considered advice of the Australian Departments of Foreign Affairs and Defence that self-determination should be Australia's essential policy in relation to East Timor.
44. Mr. WHITLAM said that the allegation was untrue. No such allegation had been made when he had appeared before the Australian Joint Committee on East Timor in March 1982 or before the Australian Senate Committee in May 1982. As Prime Minister he had been in constant communication with members of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs; he had sought their advice and acted in accordance with it. Officers of the Department had been involved in discussions with visitors from East Timor, including Mr. Ramos-Horta. The two individuals who had been described by a petitioner on the previous day as his advisers had never worked for him; some years previously people seeking to get publicity had made pronouncements on the subject of East Timor but they had never been his advisers.
45. On occasion there had been discussions in the Department of Foreign Affairs on what course should be taken in relation to East Timor; some members of the Department had felt that the issue should be taken to the United Nations and some people, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal, had wanted Australia to take over East Timor. He had indicated that Australia would undertake administrative or military activities overseas only under United Nations auspices and that there had been no prospect of the United Nations setting up a trusteeship in 1975. Some senior members of the current Australian delegation to the United Nations had been his advisers when he had been Prime Minister, and they clearly had the confidence of the current Government of Australia.
46. Mr. JANI (Zimbabwe) asked Mr. Whitlam to comment on the allegation by a member of the Australian Government who had been Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs at the time when Mr. Whitlam had been Prime Minister that, although it had been agreed that Australia should follow a policy of self-determination for East Timor and that course had been approved by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Whitlam had changed that position in talks with President Suharto in Indonesia.
47. Mr. WHITLAM said that the former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs had never served in South-East Asia and had not been involved in discussions on the question of East Timor; he had suggested taking the matter to the United Nations but had put forward no specific proposition on the subject.
48. He had recently been to Zimbabwe and had had discussions with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Legal Affairs and had also met the Prime Minister of Portugal. The question of East Timor had been discussed and the members of the Government of Zimbabwe had indicated that, although the Governments of the former Portuguese colonies of Africa took the view

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that East Timor should achieve independence and become a Member of the United Nations and that the world should recognize FRETILIN as the Government of the independent State of East Timor, Zimbabwe had not recognized FRETILIN, because it could not accept its unilateral declaration of independence. In his discussions with Zimbabwe and with Governments of other front-line States he had found a simplistic equation between FRETILIN and the liberation movements of the former Portuguese colonies; that was a false analogy. In East Timor the various parties had fallen out and FRETILIN had gained power with Portuguese weapons and then made a unilateral declaration of independence.

49. Mr. JANI (Zimbabwe) asked Mr. Whitlam to comment on reports that after his meeting with President Suharto in Jakarta in September 1974 the Indonesian leadership had drawn up plans for the possible annexation of East Timor if it failed to gain control by other means and that Mr. Whitlam had had access to the details of that plan.

50. Mr. WHITLAM said that the individual who had made those allegations was a former officer of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs who had left the Department because he had been dissatisfied with the Australian Government's policy regarding the recognition of China, and had later unsuccessfully sought a post in the Australian Embassy in Japan. Subsequently he had made many criticisms of the Department over the years. For a year he had been an adviser on Japanese matters to the head of the Department of Foreign Affairs but he had never been an adviser to the Prime Minister. Nor was he in the employ of the current Government, so he was scarcely an authority on East Timor.

51. He had visited President Suharto in September 1974 at the President's request, and President Suharto had visited him in April 1975 at his own invitation. They had not discussed any plan to take over East Timor. He resented the glib references to President Suharto, a man of honour and propriety who had always sought to act in a legal manner and regretted the damage done by President Soekarno in his last years. He had last seen President Suharto in April 1975 when the UDT and FRETILIN had been in coalition and they had discussed the question of Viet Nam. The suggestion that he and President Suharto had taken time off during the Viet Nam crisis to discuss how Indonesia could take over East Timor was a monstrous fabrication and an unworthy allegation against the President of Indonesia, who was widely respected.

52. Mr. JANI (Zimbabwe) said that the former Secretary of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs had alleged that he had recommended that Mr. Whitlam should not identify himself too closely with the Indonesian régime, but Mr. Whitlam had ignored that advice. In 1976 Mr. Malik, then the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, had said that personal acquaintance among statesmen was sometimes more fruitful than official contacts. He asked whether the relations between Mr. Whitlam and President Suharto had influenced Mr. Whitlam's policy on East Timor.

53. Mr. WHITLAM said that he had met President Suharto 8 or 10 times over the past 17 years. He did not agree with President Suharto on every matter of foreign

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policy; for example, he felt that Indonesia was wrong in not normalizing relations with China. Every conversation he had had with President Suharto had been in the presence of Australia and Indonesian interpreters and had been placed on record; those records were all available to the current Australian Government but none of them had been published; it was therefore feasible to infer that there was nothing in any of them that would bear out the allegations made by the petitioners who had appeared before the Committee on the previous day and by the speakers at the current meeting. He and President Suharto had both been frustrated at the pusillanimity of the Portuguese Government and the folly of the political parties of East Timor. No plan to take over East Timor had ever been discussed.

54. Mr. JANI (Zimbabwe) said that it had been reported that prior to Indonesia's invasion of East Timor Mr. Whitlam had had a meeting with President Suharto, details of which had not been released. One of Mr. Whitlam's foreign policy advisers had said that Mr. Whitlam had not consulted any member of his cabinet on the issue.

55. Mr. WHITLAM said that the foreign policy adviser in question worked for the Australian Development Assistance Agency and was not an authority on decolonization or diplomacy. President Suharto had been keen to establish personal relations with all leaders of the ASEAN countries and those relations were to the advantage of everyone concerned; but everything he had discussed with President Suharto was on record.

56. Mr. CASSANDRA (Sao Tome and Principe) said that, by taking the liberty of appearing before the Committee to defend colonialism and the annexation of East Timor, Mr. Whitlam, as the former Prime Minister of Australia, would diminish his reputation all over the world. It seemed that he was isolated in Australia and even in his own party, since 96 per cent of the members of the Australian Labour Party had signed a petition to the Chairman of the First Committee concerning Mr. Whitlam's appearance before the United Nations.

57. Mr. WHITLAM said that he had been the leader of the Australian Labour Party for 11 years; he was no longer a Member of Parliament and did not purport to be a spokesman for the Party, although he still supported it. The petition in question had not been signed by the leader of the Party. At the Party's past three national conferences, in 1977, 1979 and 1982, there had been three different policies on East Timor. At the Party's 1982 conference, discussions had centred on nuclear weapons and United States bases in Australia. The leader, the Minister-designate for Foreign Affairs and the majority of the Party had supported what had become party policy on those matters and a concession had been made to the minority on the question of East Timor in the expectation that it would no longer be on the agenda of the General Assembly by the time of the next general election in Australia. On hearing that he was to appear before the Fourth Committee, some members of the Party who had been obsessed with events of 1975 and had ignored everything that had happened since then had organized a petition and had induced people to sign it by linking the signing of the petition with votes to select candidates for overseas trips.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.