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SERIAL: MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIGEST (MID) 048-6A

SECTION 1 OF 3

/******* THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *********/

BODY

SUBJ: EAST TIMOR: TRANSITIONING TO INDEPENDENCE (U)

DOI: JAN 99 (AS OF 1000 EST)

TEXT: 1. (O) AFTER 23 TURBULENT YEARS OF INDONESIAN RULE, EAST TIMOR IS NOW SET ON A COURSE LIKELY TO RESULT IN SEPARATION FROM INDONESIA EARLY NEXT YEAR. ALTHOUGH JAKARTA'S FOLLOW-ON ACTIONS WILL BE CRITICAL, THE UNITED NATIONS WILL PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE COMING MONTHS, ASSESSING TIMORESE WISHES AND OVERSEEING THE PEACE PROCESS AND INDONESIAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL. TO FILL THE VOID, A MODEST INTERNATIONAL POLICE CONTINGENT IS UNDER CONSIDERATION, BUT THE SCOPE OF FOREIGN SECURITY INVOLVEMENT WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON CONTINUED PROGRESS IN THE RECONCILIATION EFFORTS AMONG THE WARRING TIMORESE FACTIONS.

2. (C) SEPARATING FROM INDONESIA. PRESIDENT HABIBIE'S SURPRISE OFFER IN LATE JANUARY TO PERMIT EAST TIMOR WIDE-RANGING AUTONOMY OR QUICK SEPARATION FROM INDONESIA HAS SHARPLY ALTERED THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE. ALTHOUGH CABINET OPPOSITION TO CERTAIN AUTONOMY PROVISIONS HAS DELAYED FINAL GOVERNMENT APPROVAL, AGREEMENT STILL IS EXPECTED, WITH PORTUGAL AS THE UN-RECOGNIZED ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY OF EAST

TIMOR. THE SIGNING, NOW EXPECTED BY APRIL, WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A PERIOD FOR THE TIMORESE TO DEBATE THE AUTONOMY PACKAGE. THE UN THEN HOPES TO CANVASS TIMORESE PREFERENCES THROUGH A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED TIMORESE COUNCIL IN JULY. ALTHOUGH SOME INDONESIAN OFFICIALS BELIEVE AUTONOMY MAY PREVAIL, MOST ANTICIPATE ITS REJECTION, OWING TO THE STRONG ANTI-INDONESIAN FEELINGS IN EAST TIMOR. WITH SUCH AN OUTCOME, HABIBIE WOULD ASK INDONESIA'S SUPREME LEGISLATIVE BODY, THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY, WHEN IT CONVENES IN AUGUST TO RESCIND THE 1976 INTEGRATION DECREE, RETURNING THE PROVINCE TO A "NONSELF-GOVERNING" TERRITORY UNDER PORTUGUESE AUTHORITY. AN OVERWHELMING PROINDEPENDENCE TIMORESE MANDATE WOULD COMPLICATE ANY EFFORT BY A NEW INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT AND ASSEMBLY, TO BE FORMED LATER THIS YEAR, TO COUNTERMAND TIMOR'S DESIRES.

- 3. (C) JAKARTA INTENDS TO DELEGATE INCREASING OVERSIGHT TO THE UNITED NATIONS AS THE PROCESS PROCEEDS, INCLUDING ASSESSING TIMORESE WISHES. UN OFFICIALS ALSO ARE FORMING A "FRIENDS OF EAST TIMOR" GROUPING TO COORDINATE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND WEIGH OTHER ASPECTS OF THE TRANSITION. ALTHOUGH MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE TIMOR WILL REMAIN UNDER SOME UN/PORTUGUESE OVERSIGHT FOR 2 OR 3 YEARS, UN OFFICIALS HOPE TO AVOID A CULTURE OF DEPENDENCY BY FORMING AN UMBRELLA AUTHORITY THAT WOULD DELEGATE EXTENSIVE POWER TO THE TIMORESE BASED ON THE AUTONOMY MODEL.
- 4. (C) MIXED SECURITY PICTURE. EAST TIMOR FACES LOOMING SECURITY PROBLEMS AND UNCERTAINTIES AS IT ENTERS THIS TRANSITION PERIOD. ALTHOUGH VIOLENCE HAS BEEN LOCALIZED AND HAS LED TO FAIRLY FEW DEATHS, THE SITUATION IS VOLATILE. MILITANTS ON BOTH SIDES HAVE INSTIGATED VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION, BUT PRO-INDONESIAN MILITIAS RECENTLY HAVE BEEN MOST DISRUPTIVE IN THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICTS. THE POTENTIAL FOR UNREST IS LIKELY TO REMAIN HIGH AS BOTH SIDES COMPETE TO INFLUENCE THE INDEPENDENCE OUTCOME.

 5. (S) THE VIOLENCE AND EXPECTATION OF INDONESIA'S DEPARTURE ALSO ARE
- 5. (S)-THE VIOLENCE AND EXPECTATION OF INDONESIA'S DEPARTURE ALSO ARE CREATING NOTABLE DISLOCATIONS AND SOME REFUGEES. JAKARTA HAS GIVEN ASSURANCES IT WILL AVOID A HASTY DEPARTURE, BUT IT IS EAGER TO WITHDRAW ALL GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL AND BUDGETARY SUPPORT BY EARLY NEXT YEAR IF TIMOR CHOOSES INDEPENDENCE. CIVIL SERVANTS, SCHOOLTEACHERS, HEALTH WORKERS, RETAIL MERCHANTS, AND OTHER NONNATIVE TIMORESE ARE DEPARTING, LEADING TO CLOSURES OF SERVICES, PRICE INCREASES, AND TEMPORARY SHORTAGES OF BASIC COMMODITIES.
- 6.(0)DESPITE THE GROWING PROBLEMS, RECONCILIATION EFFORTS ARE UNDER WAY, WITH RECENT PROSPECT FOR EASING TENSION. SEPARATE PEACE INITIATIVES ARE BEING PURSUED BY RESISTANCE AND INTEGRATION GROUPS, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND INDONESIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.

IMPRISONED REBEL LEADER JOSE "XANANA" GUSMAO IS THE CENTRAL PLAYER IN THE PROCESS, UNDERTAKING A SERIES OF DIALOGUES WITH TIMORESE FROM ALL PERSPECTIVES. IN AN APPARENT BREAKTHROUGH, GUSMAO AND THE LEADER OF THE MILITIA GROUPS ANNOUNCED A CEASE-FIRE ON 11 MARCH. ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY GUSMAO, A "PEACE AND STABILITY COMMISSION" IS STILL UNDER DISCUSSION AS A CENTRAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISM.

7. (G) GUSMAO AND THE MILITARY ALSO HAVE INITIATED DISCUSSIONS. ONE UN IDEA ACCEPTABLE TO GUSMAO WOULD ENTAIL CONFINING THE ARMED FORCES TO THEIR BARRACKS IN PREPARATION FOR THEIR WITHDRAWAL WHILE REBEL FIGHTERS ASSEMBLE IN ISOLATED CANTONMENT AREAS. ALL PARTIES PUBLICLY FAVOR DISARMAMENT BUT DISAGREE ON TIMING. NONETHELESS, REMOVAL OF FIREARMS ALONE IS UNLIKELY TO LOWER VIOLENCE CONSIDERING THE PREVALENT USE OF TRADITIONAL WEAPONS, WHICH TIMORESE WILL NOT EASILY SURRENDER.

8. (6) PEACEKEEPING PROSPECTS. IN VIEW OF THE LONG-TERM SECURITY DIFFICULTIES, ALL SIDES ACCEPT THE NECESSITY OF INSTALLING A UN SECURITY PRESENCE WHEN THE MORE THAN 11,000 NON-TIMORESE MILITARY AND POLICE PERSONNEL NOW ON THE ISLAND DEPART. CURRENTLY MAINTAINING A LOW PROFILE, THESE FORCES PLAN A PHASED PULLOUT LATER THIS YEAR, EVEN IF AUTONOMY IS ACCEPTED. ALTHOUGH THE TIMING MOST LIKELY WILL DEPEND ON MULTIPLE FACTORS, JAKARTA WILL REMAIN RELUCTANT TO PERMIT A SIZABLE FOREIGN PRESENCE BEFORE IT MAKES THE FINAL DETERMINATION ON EAST TIMOR'S FUTURE.

9. (C) INDONESIAN INTEREST IN MAINTAINING STABILITY ON ITS BORDERS IS LIKELY TO ENSURE FUTURE COOPERATION WITH ANY UN FORCE, BUT THE MILITARY'S ARMING OF THE MILITIAS POSES A DILEMMA, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE DESTABILIZING POTENTIAL OF THESE GROUPS. AUSTRALIA, WHICH ANTICIPATES CONTRIBUTING A MAJOR ELEMENT OF THE UN FORCE, MAY WELL PERSUADE JAKARTA OF THE NEED TO NEUTRALIZE ITS TIMORESE SUPPORTERS. ULTIMATELY, HOWEVER, STABILITY WILL DEPEND ON THE RECONCILIATION EFFORTS OF THE TIMORESE THEMSELVES. ALTHOUGH NOT EASY, AUSTRALIA AND OTHERS HOPE THIS PROCESS WILL BE SUCCESSFUL, NECESSITATING ONLY A FAIRLY MODEST UN POLICE CONTINGENT TO MONITOR THE PEACE AND TRAIN AN INDIGENOUS TIMORESE FORCE. NONETHELESS, CANBERRA IS PREPARING CONTINGENCIES FOR A MILITARY DEPLOYMENT IF A MAJOR DISORDER ERUPTS.

10.-(0) BUILDING AN INDEPENDENT EAST TIMOR POLICE. THE KEY PLAYERS, INCLUDING RESISTANCE LEADER JOSE GUSMAO, REJECT THE NEED FOR AN EAST TIMOR ARMED FORCES AND INSTEAD FOCUS ATTENTION ON AN INDEPENDENT EAST TIMOR NATIONAL POLICE, ABLE TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER AMONG TIMOR'S DIVIDED POPULATION. THE 4,000-PERSON INDONESIAN POLICE CONTINGENT IN

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THE PROVINCE, WHILE LARGELY CHRISTIAN, CONTAINS ONLY 570 NATIVE /****** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 ******/

TIMORESE, MOST OCCUPYING LOW-RANKING POSITIONS. MANY TIMORESE POLICE OFFICERS INITIALLY ENTERED THE FORCE AS POLICE AUXILIARIES, A FORCE NOW BEING EXPANDED BY SOME 1,000 MEMBERS TO HELP SAFEGUARD COMING ELECTIONS.

- 11. (G) GUSMAO ENVISIONS A 2,600- TO 3,000-PERSON POLICE FORCE, BUILDING ON THE EXISTING INDIGENOUS CONTINGENT AND FILLED OUT WITH TIMORESE FROM THE INDONESIAN MILITARY, REBEL FORCES, AND EVEN MILITIA PERSONNEL. KEY ASPECTS OF THE NEW FORCE WOULD BE ITS NEUTRALITY AND ACCEPTANCE BY ALL SIDES. IN TRAINING THIS FORCE, INDONESIAN POLICE ASSISTANCE WOULD BE SOUGHT, ALONG WITH A NUCLEUS OF UN POLICE ADVISERS. IN ADDITION TO SELECTING, TRAINING, AND ADVISING A TIMORESE FORCE, UN PERSONNEL SEEMINGLY WOULD EXERCISE SOME DIRECT LAW-AND-ORDER RESPONSIBILITIES, AT LEAST INITIALLY.
- 12. (C) INDONESIAN OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED OPENNESS TO A UN POLICE TRAINING EFFORT WHETHER AUTONOMY OR INDEPENDENCE IS ADOPTED, ALTHOUGH THEY APPARENTLY WOULD PREFER ANY INITIAL TRAINING BE CONDUCTED OUTSIDE THE PROVINCE, OWING TO SOVEREIGNTY CONSIDERATIONS. A RESIDUAL INDONESIAN POLICE CONTINGENT PRESUMABLY WOULD HAVE SOME POPULAR ACCEPTABILITY BECAUSE THE POLICE HAVE A SOMEWHAT BETTER HUMAN RIGHTS REPUTATION IN EAST TIMOR AND HAVE OPENLY CRITICIZED THE UNPOPULAR MILITIAS.

- 13.-(C)-IDEAS ON A PEACEKEEPING FORCE. UNITED NATIONS. UN OFFICIALS ANTICIPATE THE NEED FOR A FAIRLY SMALL UNARMED POLICE OBSERVER AND TRAINING PRESENCE, BACKED BY FRIENDLY INVOLVED STATES. ONE REPRESENTATIVE FORESEES THIS FORCE COMPRISING "REGIONAL NONPOWERS WITH EXPERIENCE," SUCH AS FIJI. THE ACTUAL SIZE AND MISSION WOULD BE DETERMINED BY A UN TEAM OF EXPERTS SENT TO ASSESS THE SITUATION AT AN EARLY DATE.
- 14. (C) TIMOR RESISTANCE. REBEL LEADER GUSMAO HAS CONTEMPLATED SOME 200-400 UN CIVILIAN POLICE PERSONNEL, BUT HE WOULD LIKE SUCH A CONTINGENT PRESENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND BEFORE THE CONSULTATIONS TAKE PLACE. INFLUENCED BY THE CURRENT TENSION, HE HOPES THIS FORCE WOULD PROVIDE AN ADDED INCENTIVE FOR THE INDONESIAN MILITARY TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH ITS COMMITMENT TO DISARM THE MILITIAS. SUCH A UN FORCE ALSO WOULD SUPERVISE THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND HELP GUARANTEE A CEASE-FIRE. ALTHOUGH GUSMAO HAS SUGGESTED THE UN FORCE BE UNARMED, FELLOW REBEL SPOKESMAN RAMOS HORTA RECENTLY IMPLIED THAT ANY FOREIGN CONTINGENT BE LIGHTLY ARMED.

15.(C)INDONESIA. JAKARTA HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO CONSIDER A SIZABLE UN SECURITY PRESENCE AT THIS STAGE, VIEWING IT AS AN UNACCEPTABLE INFRINGEMENT ON INDONESIAN SOVEREIGNTY. STILL, THE GOVERNMENT WILL ACCEPT FOREIGN OBSERVERS DURING THE UN CONSULTATION STAGE. AT SOME POINT, JAKARTA INTENDS TO SURRENDER ALL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AND JAKARTA EVEN HAS SHOWN WILLINGNESS TO SUBORDINATE SECURITY PERSONNEL UNDER SUCH A UN MANDATE. 16. (S) AUSTRALIA. AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS HOPE TO AVOID THE NEED FOR AN ARMED PRESENCE IN THE TERRITORY, FAVORING INSTEAD AN UNARMED POLICE FORCE ON THE GROUND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. CANBERRA DISTRUSTS THE ABILITIES OF THE UN PEACEKEEPING DEPARTMENT AND SEES POTENTIAL PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM A POORLY MOTIVATED AND INEFFECTUAL THIRD-WORLD FORCE. AUSTRALIA HOPES ITS IDEAS WILL BE ACCEPTED QUICKLY, CONSIDERING THE TIME NECESSARY TO ORGANIZE A FORCE. CANBERRA CONTEMPLATES SENDING MEMBERS OF ITS FEDERAL POLICE, WHICH PRESUMABLY WOULD MAKE UP A LARGE COMPONENT OF THE UN FORCE. AS A CONTINGENCY, THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ALSO IS READYING TWO BRIGADES CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH MORE SERIOUS UNREST. NONETHELESS, CANBERRA

REMAINS STRONGLY DISINCLINED TO SEND TROOPS INTO SERIOUS HOSTILITIES

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WITH PROSPECTS FOR SERIOUS CASUALTIES.

17.-(6) THE MILITARY'S MIXED SIGNALS. INDONESIA'S MILITARY POLICIES TOWARD EAST TIMOR REFLECT CONFLICTING PRESSURES AND MOTIVATIONS, NOT SURPRISING CONSIDERING JAKARTA'S LONG AND TROUBLED HISTORY IN THE PROVINCE. ALTHOUGH FAVORING AUTONOMY, ARMED FORCES COMMANDER GENERAL WIRANTO CHOSE NOT TO CHALLENGE THE CABINET'S JANUARY DECISION PROVIDING FOR POSSIBLE INDEPENDENCE. WIRANTO INSISTED ONLY THAT THE GOVERNMENT AVOID THE SUGGESTION THAT INTEGRATION HAD BEEN A MISTAKE SO AS TO PRESERVE THE HONOR OF THE MILITARY AND THE MORE THAN 1,900 TROOPS WHO HAD DIED THERE. SEEKING TO ASSIST A STABLE DEPARTURE, WIRANTO HAS SINCE GIVEN HIS APPROVAL FOR A PEACE COMMISSION AND MUTUAL DISARMAMENT OF THE TIMORESE PARTIES. CONSISTENT WITH THIS APPROACH, LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDER COL TONO SURATMAN ALSO RECENTLY SIGNED A PEACE PROCLAMATION WITH THE RESISTANCE AND PRO-INTEGRATIONIST ELEMENTS. HE ALSO GREATLY SCALED BACK ACTIVITIES, LARGELY REFRAINING FROM OPERATIONS AGAINST THE REBELS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS.

18. (S) NONETHELESS, MANY SENIOR OFFICERS STILL HAVE SERIOUS
RESERVATIONS ABOUT EAST TIMOR INDEPENDENCE, AND SOME REMAIN CONVINCED
SEPARATION SOMEHOW CAN BE AVOIDED. STRONG EMOTIONAL BONDS EXIST,
PARTICULARLY AT THE LOCAL COMMAND LEVEL IN TIMOR, WITH OFFICERS

RELUCTANT TO ABANDON TIMORESE ALLIES THEY HAVE LONG RELIED ON TO HELP NEUTRALIZE THE RESISTANCE. WITH REBELS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS INCREASINGLY TARGETING PARAMILITARY PERSONNEL LAST YEAR, GEN WIRANTO APPROVED ARMING MILITIA ELEMENTS, DISTRIBUTING APPARENTLY HUNDREDS OF SURPLUS RIFLES. ALTHOUGH SUPPORT VARIES, DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS ALSO HAVE PROVIDED AMMUNITION, LOGISTICS, AND ADVICE TO THE MILITIAS. SUCH BACKING HAS ENABLED THE MILITARY TO TAKE A MORE HANDS-OFF APPROACH, SUGGESTING TO THE TIMORESE THEY ARE NOW ON THEIR OWN. THE RESULT, HOWEVER, HAS ONLY BEEN HEIGHTENED UNREST AS MILITIAS HAVE SOUGHT TO BOLSTER THEIR POSITION BY ATTACKING THEIR ADVERSARIES. 19. (S) COL SURATMAN HAS SINCE ORDERED THE COLLECTION OF THE MILITIAS' WEAPONS, PROMISING TO DISARM THEM FOLLOWING GUSMAO'S PLEDGE TO REFRAIN FROM REBEL VENDETTAS AGAINST THOSE GROUPS. EVEN SO, THE COMMAND'S RELUCTANCE TO RESTORE ORDER OR PUNISH MILITIA TRANSGRESSIONS RAISES QUESTIONS OF THE MILITARY'S CONTROL OR INTENTIONS, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING SUPPORT TO THESE GROUPS BY LOCAL COMMANDS AND SPECIAL FORCES INTELLIGENCE. THE MILITARY NOW FACES A NEW DILEMMA POSED BY THE PUBLIC THREATS OF THESE GROUPS AGAINST AUSTRALIAN INTERESTS. THE OVERRIDING IMPERATIVE TO ENSURE A SMOOTH HANDOVER TO UN FORCES MOST LIKELY WILL COMPEL THE LOCAL COMMAND /****** BEGINNING OF SECTION 003 ******/

EVENTUALLY TO REIN IN THESE GROUPS IF STILL POSSIBLE.

20.-(8) TIMORESE MILITIAS. MILITANT TIMORESE MILITIA GROUPS HAVE THEIR ORIGINS IN MILITARY EFFORTS TO BUILD AN INDIGENOUS COUNTERWEIGHT AGAINST THE PROINDEPENDENCE REBELS AND THEIR CLANDESTINE SUPPORTERS. SOME OF THESE MILITANT MILITIAS ARE THREATENING WAR IF INDEPENDENCE IS GRANTED. THEY GENERALLY ARE LED BY CLAN-BASED CHIEFS WHO HAVE BENEFITED FROM THEIR LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND FEAR THEIR LOSS OF AUTHORITY, AS WELL AS RETRIBUTION BY THE OTHER SIDE. SOME MILITIAS ARE NEWLY ORGANIZED, BUT OTHERS WERE FORMED IN EARLIER YEARS BY INDONESIA'S SPECIAL FORCES INTELLIGENCE TEAMS. THESE ORIGINAL GROUPS, WHICH TOTALED 1,200 TIMORESE LAST YEAR, HAVE SINCE BEEN RESUBORDINATED TO LOCAL DISTRICT COMMANDS, ALTHOUGH INTELLIGENCE ELEMENTS STILL PROVIDE SUPPORT AND USE THEIR SERVICES.

21.-(8) DESPITE EXAGGERATED CLAIMS OF UP TO 15,000 RECRUITS, MOST INDIVIDUAL MILITIAS ARE LIKELY TO HAVE FEWER THAN SEVERAL HUNDRED HARDCORE MEMBERS, ARMED PRIMARILY WITH TRADITIONAL WEAPONS. EARLIER THIS YEAR, THEY FORMED A POLITICAL WING - THE FORUM FOR UNITY, DEMOCRACY, AND JUSTICE - TO PRESS THEIR INTEGRATION DEMANDS. EIGHT CORE MILITIAS ALSO MERGED UNDER A UNIFIED COMMAND UNDER JOAO TAVARES,

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A PROMINENT LANDOWNER. SOME BELIEVE THE GROUP'S OBJECTIVE IS TO EVENTUALLY BREAK OFF THE WESTERN DISTRICTS OF EAST TIMOR.

NONETHELESS, THEY HAVE PUBLICLY WELCOMED A UN PRESENCE AND RECENTLY BEGAN TALKS WITH GUSMAO. MORE IMPORTANT, TAVARES THIS WEEK ANNOUNCED PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT WITH GUSMAO TO HALT THE FIGHTING, ALTHOUGH IMPLEMENTATION MAY WELL PROVE DIFFICULT.

22.(S)THE FOUR MOST PROMINENT GROUPS NOW ACTIVE INCLUDE: **BESI MERAH PUTIH** (RED AND WHITE IRON), LED BY ILIDIO DOS SANTOS. IT

CLAIMS TO HAVE 2,890 MEMBERS BUT MOST LIKELY HAS FEW SUPPORTERS AND

FEW IF ANY FIREARMS. THE GROUP RECENTLY ATTRACTED NEWS MEDIA

ATTENTION BY SETTING UP ROADBLOCKS MANNED BY ELDERLY MEN AND

CHILDREN.

MAHIDI (LIVE OR DIE INTEGRATED WITH INDONESIA), COMMANDED BY CANCIO DE CARVALHO. THIS GROUP IS ONE OF THE MOST MILITANT MILITIA GROUPS FORMED THIS YEAR, AND IT IS LINKED TO A SERIES OF VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS WITH PROINDEPENDENCE SUPPORTERS. MAHIDI HAS ACQUIRED AT LEAST 20 FIREARMS FROM THE MILITARY AND RETAINS AT LEAST SOME TIES TO MILITARY OFFICIALS.

HALILINTAR (THUNDER), LED BY JOAO TAVARES. TAVARES IS A FORMER REGENT IN THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF BOBONARO, WITH LONGSTANDING TIES TO THE GOVERNMENT AND SPECIAL FORCES. HALILINTAR ORIGINATED AS A SPECIAL-FORCES-LED UNIT NUMBERING A LITTLE OVER A 100 MEMBERS. SOURCES BELIEVE TAVARES HAS AMASSED HIS OWN ARMS SUPPLY.

AITARAK (THORN), LED BY EURICO GUTERRES. GUTERRES IS A LEADER OF THE YOUTH GROUP GADAPAKSI, ORGANIZED SEVERAL YEARS AGO BY SOEHARTO SON-IN-LAW LT GEN PRABOWO. EARLY THIS YEAR, EURICO ASSEMBLED 200 TO 400 YOUTH, A FEW OF WHOM WERE ARMED, TO SURROUND THE PROINDEPENDENCE OFFICES IN DILI. AITARAK ALSO REPORTEDLY WAS INVOLVED IN THE RECENT FATAL WOUNDING OF TWO TIMORESE IN DILI.

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