



Submission No 58

Inquiry into Australia's Relations with Indonesia

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**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE**

**“BUILDING AUSTRALIA’S
RELATIONSHIP WITH INDONESIA”**

**PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
NOVEMBER 27, 2002**

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Appendices

1. "Paradise Betrayed" West Papua's Struggle for Independence
John Martinkus
Quarterly Essay Issue 7, 2002
2. "The People, the Ideas, the Action in the Fight for Global Justice"
New Internationalist 344 April, 2002
3. "West Papua: Towards a new Papua"
Inside Indonesia July-Sept 2001 No 67

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
“Building Australia’s Relationship with Indonesia”
Parliament of Australia - 2002

History

Central Highlands is in central Victoria extending outwards from Ballarat to Ararat, across to Daylesford. Central Highlands branch is linked to branches of the Australian West Papua Association throughout Australia; Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne and Southern Victoria.

The goal established by Central Highlands AWPAA at the beginning of 2002 was to educate ourselves and the wider community about Australian Indonesian relations particularly in relation to West Papua. Several members of the Committee have also worked with the local East Timor Association and with the Sisters of Mercy who are providing accommodation and continuing support for East Timor students studying at tertiary institutes in Victoria.

Reading the history and listening to the stories and the longings of the people of West Papua has moved us to action that will help the people of West Papua achieve their ultimate desire, that is, through peaceful negotiations to live in peace in their land in harmony with their neighbours while having control of the resources of their country.

1. Support for Strategies that Promote Regional Stability

In response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, “Building Australia’s Relationship with Indonesia” we propose that in rebuilding links with the Indonesian government, the Australian government may wish to consider the following points -

- establish a relationship that is based on justice, peace and love in accordance with fundamental truths and human rights.
- give recognition to the legitimacy of the United West Papua National Front for Independence, a body formed during a meeting in Wewak in February 2002, a meeting attended by sixty key leaders from West Papua.
- set up a public forum in which the voice of the leaders of the West Papuan people, both within West Papua and those in exile, are able to be heard and become part of the negotiations in rebuilding relationships with Indonesia and Australia
- that the Australian parliament invite a West Papuan representative to participate in any debate or review of Australian foreign policy that involves West Papuan interests
- that the Australian Government urge the Pacific Island Countries to list West Papua as observers before the next Pacific Island Forum in New Zealand in August 2003

- establish an agreement that the so called “Act of Free Choice” be formally disregarded as a legitimate indicator of the will of the majority of the West Papuan people.

2. Australian/Indonesian Bilateral Relations

Bilateral agreements between countries have an agenda for human rights and economic development as well as trade. At present Australian/Indonesian relations appear to relate to trade only. In the interests of a good relationships between the Indonesian and Australian governments it is desirable that the relations be expanded to a wider agenda so that human rights and economic development are included.

Culturally West Papua is Melanesian and a part of Oceania but politically it is part of Indonesia. In the light of cultural diversity in this region we propose that the Australian government establish a cultural forum in which there is representation from Papua New Guinea, Pacific Islands and Australia. A new Federation of nations from this region could be established of which West Papua, while not a separate nation, could be included as a member of a Melanesian regional cultural group.

3. Special Forum

We propose the establishment of a Special West Papuan Advisory Group with the Australian Indonesian Institute to address social, cultural, and educational projects. This could also be a vehicle for ongoing negotiations and resolution of conflict.

4. Education

AUSAID programs are highly beneficial in providing opportunities for overseas students but AUSAID has no education programme in Australia specifically targeting West Papuans as a disadvantaged Indonesian ethnic minority. West Papuans who have had opportunities to do study at the tertiary level have compared well with other Indonesian students in spite of historical educational disadvantages experienced by them in terms of equal access to Indonesian educational institutions at all levels. To help ameliorate this injustice AUSAID could also consider funding a special affirmative action program for West Papuans in the form of an English Study Program for Tertiary Level which could be attended in West Papua prior to beginning studies in Australia.

Following the success of students from East Timor who studied at the secondary and later at the tertiary level in Ballarat, AWPA Central Highlands aims to assist some students from West Papua to study in Ballarat. The Ballarat community has given great support to the East Timor students and strong inter-cultural links have been established, links that have been mutually beneficial. Students have been absorbed into sporting activities, have shared their music, and have helped people in rural Victoria to understand and

strong inter-cultural links have been established, links that have been mutually beneficial. Students have been absorbed into sporting activities, have shared their music, and have helped people in rural Victoria to understand and appreciate a different culture. Currently there are several Indonesian students at Ballarat University. To have Indonesian and West Papuan students studying together in the same Australian tertiary institute would be a means by which a younger generation of Indonesians and Australians could establish desirable cross-cultural links. This opportunity could also act to enhance cooperation and understanding between representatives of different ethnic groups from Indonesia.

5. Peaceful Negotiations

It was largely through the involvement of the Australian government in East Timor that the wishes of the people were heard and self-determination became a reality. Australia again is in a position to hear the wishes of the West Papuan people for self-determination and to do so by peaceful means. To repeat the bloodbath of East Timor is even beyond a last resort move, but unless there is intervention the present on-going level of oppression and violence at the hands of occupying Indonesian Military forces is likely to counteract negotiations for a peaceful movement to independence.

We ask that attention be given to a matter of immediate concern; the report that the Australian government will reassume ties with the Indonesian military and in particular with the Indonesian special forces unit Kopassus. There are numerous reports of the TNI's involvement in human rights abuses in East Timor and now in West Papua. There is well documented evidence that the Kopassus and the Indonesian military co-ordinated the East Timorese anti-independence militias which caused so much bloodshed in East Timor, and Kopassus officers are on trial for the assassination of the West Papuan independence leader Theys Eluay. We urge the Australian Government to reconsider such commitments and to redirect any funds that might be earmarked for future military activities involving Indonesian troops into educational and community development programs targeted at disadvantaged and exploited territories in Indonesian, and in line with this submission, to focus attention on West Papuans.

6. Conclusion

Australia is in a position within the geographic region to work with the Indonesian government towards a homogenous federation in which individual member countries trade, interact and negotiate from their particular cultural, economic and political bases. Australia relates to and respects vastly different cultures in countries with whom it trades and negotiates, and we in Australia know from experience that cultural diversity is enriching. We urge that in negotiating with the Indonesian government Australia will support the rights of ethnic minorities like West Papuans to maintain their cultural heritage and to exercise the right to independence.

