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File No. 3038/11/52

**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Record of Conversation with Mr Pesch, Counsellor, Netherlands Embassy  
on 16 February 1977  
Officers Present Mr A.R. Taylor, Indonesia Section

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MAIN SUBJECTS (S): EAST TIMOR: ALLEGATIONS OF ATROCITIES

Mr Pesch explained that Dutch aid to Indonesia was presently being examined in The Hague. The Government had in mind an increase in its aid; Indonesia being one of the chosen countries of concentration for Dutch aid. Some members of parliament, however, were against giving any aid if allegations of atrocities in East Timor were correct. Mr Pesch stressed that these members were not concerned with the politics of the issue including the means of the integration of East Timor but solely with the humanitarian aspect.

2. Against this background Mr Pesch said his Embassy had been instructed to ask for our assessment of the allegations, in particular how the Government had responded to a report on atrocities referred to in the Sydney Morning Herald of 9 December 1976 and to letters to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister from the Roman Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace also referred to in the SMH of 9 December last.

3. I said that the report referred to was not in fact addressed to the Government. The Department had received a copy of this anonymous document which had been the basis for several press reports. I said that when answering queries on the report we said that we were not in a position to comment on the details although there seemed little doubt that some of its data was exaggerated. We had of course, no representation in East Timor.

4. I noted that the letters from the Roman Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace were directed at Australian Government policy on Timor. They did not raise the question of atrocities, although the way they had been reported in the press had been confusing.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

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**ACTION:**

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5. I said that, as Mr Pesch would know, further reports of alleged Indonesian atrocities had appeared in the news media following Mr Dunn's visit to Lisbon in January. Mr Dunn, who was not now an official of the Department of Foreign Affairs, had been on a private visit. His report had no official status whatsoever. We had a copy of the report which covered two main subjects, the alleged atrocities and the death of the journalists at Balibol. We were now studying it and preparing recommendations for the Minister. But as with the previous allegations of atrocities in East Timor we were not now, nor were we likely to be, in a position to comment in detail. I suggested to Mr Pesch that we get in contact later, when the Government's approach to the Dunn report had been determined. Mr Pesch agreed. He said his Ambassador was prepared to call on Mr Parsons on this question, if we thought it necessary.

6. Mr Pesch confirmed that his Government did not want our comments on the allegations for public use.

7. In general comments at the end of our meeting Mr Pesch commented favourably on the consultations between the respective departments of Foreign Affairs and our Embassies in The Hague and in Canberra.

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