

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

189

OUTWARD CABLEGRAM

22/0/01

O. CH273298 1019 1.10.75 UNC  
TO.  
PP JAKARTA/6065 LISBON/1024  
FM. CANBERRA / FILE 558/11/1  
UNCLASSIFIED  
PORTUGUESE TIMOR

O. CH273298 KK3 / JM  
Mr. Whitlam  
Mr. Speaker  
Mr. Anthony  
Mr. Speaker

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE AND OF ANSWER  
TO IT IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON 30 SEPTEMBER :

BEGINS:

MR ERWIN - HAS THE PRIME MINISTER BEEN MADE AWARE THAT CERTAIN TRADE UNIONS IN AUSTRALIA HAVE DURING THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS CANVASSED MEMBERS FOR MONETARY DONATIONS WHICH WERE TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNIST FRETILIN FORCES IN PORTUGUESE EAST TIMOR? IS THE PRIME MINISTER IN A POSITION TO KNOW WHETHER MONEY OR MATERIALS HAVE LEFT AUSTRALIA TO AID THE FRETILIN FORCES?  
MR WHITLAM - I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THERE HAVE BEEN CONTRIBUTIONS BY ANY UNIONS OR WHETHER CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN SOUGHT BY ANY UNIONS FOR FRETILIN IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. I WOULD ONLY LIKE TO ADD THAT I DEPLORE THE TAG 'COMMUNIST' BEING ATTACHED TO FRETILIN. A MONTH AGO IT WAS ATTACHED TO FRETILIN BY THE LEADER OF THE NATIONAL COUNTRY PARTY OF AUSTRALIA, AND FOLLOWING HIM -  
MR ANTHONY - PRO-COMMUNIST  
MR WHITLAM - THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN NOW INTERPOSES THE WORD 'PRO-COMMUNIST'.  
MR ANTHONY - I USED THE SAME WORD BEFORE, AND I STILL DO. WHY DO YOU NOT FACE UP TO IT?  
MR WHITLAM - THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN IS ASKING ME TO FACE UP TO THE QUESTION.  
MR ANTHONY - YOU SAID BEFORE THAT THEY WERE EXTREME.  
MR SPEAKER - ORDER. THE LEADER OF THE NATIONAL COUNTRY PARTY WILL REMAIN SILENT. OTHER HONOURABLE MEMBERS WILL ALSO REMAIN SILENT.  
MR WHITLAM - MR SPEAKER, THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN STARTED THIS MISCHIEF BY ASKING ME A QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE REFERRING TO FRETILIN AND USING THE TERM 'COMMUNIST'. LATER DURING THE SAME QUESTION TIME THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, TO THE PALPABLE DISCOMFITURE OF HIS FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN, USED THE WORD 'COMMUNIST' WHEN REFERRING TO FRETILIN HIMSELF. I RESPONDED IN PRETTY MODERATE TERMS IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES TO THEIR QUESTIONS. NOW THE HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN FROM BALLARAT USES THE TERM AGAIN. I SUPPOSE THERE MAY BE PRO-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS IN FRETILIN. I DO NOT BELIEVE, ON THE BASIS OF THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO ME, THAT FRETILIN IS TOTALLY OR PREDOMINANTLY COMMUNIST. WHAT I DO WANT TO BRING HOME TO HONOURABLE

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GENTLEMEN IS THAT THE USE OF TERMS LIKE 'COMMUNIST' ABOUT FRETILIN, THE INSINUATION THAT FRETILIN IS TOTALLY, PREDOMINANTLY OR LARGELY COMMUNIST, JUST AROUSES THE SUSPICIONS THAT THERE ARE IN ALL THE MUSLEM COUNTRIES IN OUR AREA. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT MAKES IT VERY DIFFICULT TO DO WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO DO, THAT IS, TO BRING HOME TO THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT A SENSE OF ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS COLONY AND, SECONDLY, TO BRING TOGETHER THE CONTENDING FORCES, OF WHICH FRETILIN IS NOW THE DOMINANT ONE, IN EAST TIMOR. THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO THE IDEA THAT PEOPLE IN TIMOR, OR ANYWHERE ELSE FOR THAT MATTER, SHOULD BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF-DETERMINATION. TO INTRUDE COLOURFUL TERMS WHICH WERE RAMPANT IN THIS PARLIAMENT IN THE 1950S AND INTO THE 1960S DOES NOTHING TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF TIMOR OUT OF THEIR TRAVAIL. VERY CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN GIVEN BY THE AUSTRALIAN TAXPAYERS TO THE PEOPLE OF EAST TIMOR. IT HAS BEEN GIVEN THROUGH INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES AFFILIATED WITH THE RECOGNISED CO-ORDINATING BODY, THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR OVERSEAS AID. THE AUSTRALIAN TAXPAYERS HAVE ALSO MADE THEIR OWN FACILITIES - THEIR OFFICIAL AIRCRAFT AND COMMUNICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR PORTUGUESE ENVOYS AND A PORTUGUESE MINISTER. IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS DOING A VERY GREAT DEAL TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF EAST TIMOR. I URGE HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN TO ENABLE THE WHOLE QUESTION TO BE DISCUSSED AND ONE WOULD HOPE, SOLVED IN A RATIONAL, CALM MANNER.

... ENDS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ACTION: INF

SEC DEPSECS EX MCO FAS(SEP) SEA PNG FAS(NSA) FAS(WES) EUR FAS(DEF)  
FAS(IOP) IO FAS(PCR) FAS(ER) FAS(LT) FAS(MFS) FAREP(S-P-M)  
GENEVA KUALALUMPUR LONDON MANILA MOSCOW NEWYORK/UN OTTAWA PARIS/EMB  
PEKING SINGAPORE WASHINGTON WELLINGTON