

International Message Form

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AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMATIC NETWORK

JAC542

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Reference No. O. JA2592	Time/date of lodgment 1720 22.10.75	UNC	CLA CLA	
TO. ACTION POSTS (TO)				
II	CANBERRA	/ 1152	/	/
RP. INFORMATION POSTS (REPEATED TO)				
FM. Originating post	JAKARTA	/	FILE 860/119/1	REF O.
Security classification	CONFIDENTIAL			
Subject heading	PORTUGUESE TIMOR : MISSING JOURNALISTS			

ABC office in Jakarta has a tape recording of a press conference by Foreign Minister Adam Malik this morning. In reply to questions about the missing Australian journalists, Malik used the words "tukang Kuburan" on three occasions. The ABC staff has translated these words as "grave digger". Our Embassy linguists agree with this translation although "grave attendant" or "grave worker" would be equally correct.

2. The ABC office proposes to file a report on Malik's comments. If it is broadcast in Australia it will cause great offence. We have so far been unable to obtain any comment or clarification from the Foreign Ministry. We shall of course cable any comment when we receive it, but this may not be until tomorrow. 3

3. The ABC office's translation of the questions and answers relating to the five Australian journalists is as follows (not necessarily in chronological order):

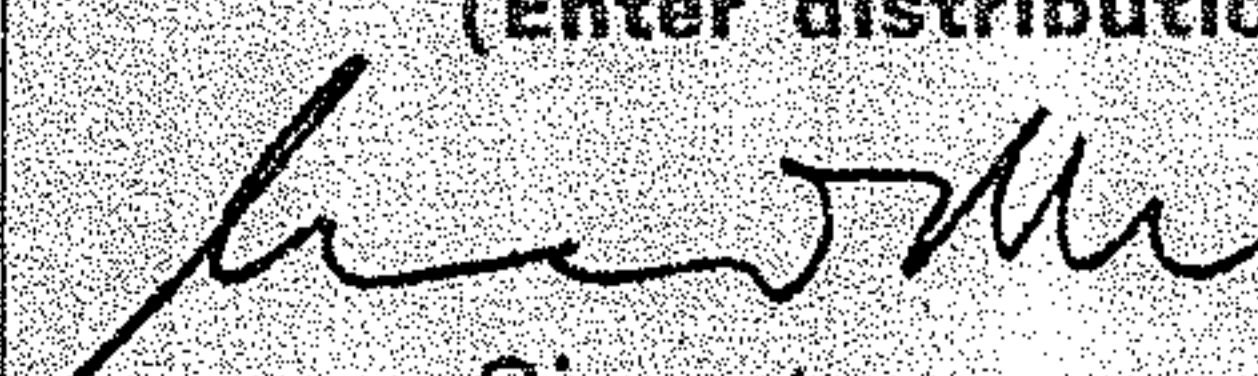
Q. Any information on those five that died?
Malik: Ah, information on those that died. I'm not a grave digger. How would I know? (Laughter)

Q. What can Indonesia do, Sir?
Malik: We can only regret it and secondly we can only pray that they can be accepted by God...

Q. Have they definitely died, then?
Malik: Well IF, IF they died...

Q. What efforts have been made to find the four Australians?
Malik: Well, we're not grave diggers. Why should we go looking for...? .../2.

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2.

- Q. It is said that the Whitlam Government has specifically asked for our help.
- Malik: Not our help. We've been asked for information and where can we get information from? We can't...
- Q. Concerning the bodies?
- Malik: They ask me how are the bodies. I say I'm not a grave digger.
- Q.(AFP): What steps are being taken about the fighting in Portuguese Timor?
- Malik: We open our eyes. It's clear that this is not Australia's business. Nor is it Indonesia's. This is a matter for other people fighting over there. Now so that this fighting does not get any bigger don't heat it up. That's what we should be doing, isn't it?

4. Malik apparently stopped further questions about Australia (including those about an Indonesian vessel apparently refused loading facilities in Darwin) by commenting "...why should we talk about Australia any more?"

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