

PERIODIC REPORT ON THE U.S. MILITARY FORCE IN
EAST TIMOR

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

A PERIODIC REPORT, CONSISTENT WITH THE WAR POWERS RESOLUTION, ON THE U.S. MILITARY FORCES SUPPORTING THE INTERNATIONAL FORCE EAST TIMOR (INTERFET)



SEPTEMBER 6, 2000.—Referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed

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THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, August 25, 2000.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: On October 8, 1999, I reported to the Congress, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, the deployment of a limited number of U.S. military forces to provide support to the International Force East Timor (INTERFET). This multinational force, established by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1264, was given a mandate to restore peace and security in East Timor, protect and support the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), and, within force capabilities, facilitate humanitarian assistance operations. The U.S. support to INTERFET consisted of planning and staff, communications, humanitarian, intelligence, and logistics support (including theater and strategic lift).

The INTERFET was formally replaced in East Timor on February 23, 2000, by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Consequently, the U.S. personnel who were the subject of my October 8, 1999, report redeployed from East Timor. The UNTAET, which was established by Security Council Resolution 1272, has a mandate that includes providing security and maintaining law and order throughout East Timor; establishing an effective administration; ensuring the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance; and supporting capacity-building for self-government. To implement this plan, the Security Council authorized UNTAET to deploy up to 8,950 military personnel, 200 military observers, and 1,640 civilian police.

The United States currently contributes three military observers to UNTAET. These personnel are assigned to the United Nations pursuant to the United Nations Participation Act (Public Law 79-264), and operate under U.N. operational control. During June and July 2000, the U.S. contribution to UNTAET also included one judge advocate officer.

As I reported to the Congress on February 25, 2000, the United States also maintains a credible and visible military presence in East Timor that is separate from UNTAET. This military presence consists of the U.S. Support Group East Timor (USGET), comprised of approximately 30 U.S. personnel who facilitate and coordinate U.S. military activities in East Timor, and the rotational presence of U.S. forces through temporary deployments to East Timor. These rotational presence operations include periodic ship visits during which U.S. forces conduct humanitarian and civic assistance activities in areas critical to East Timor's citizens. United States forces, whether assigned to USGET or conducting rotational presence operations, operate under U.S. command and control, and U.S. rules

of engagement. The United Nations has indicated that East Timor has benefited greatly from U.S. military deployments to, and engagement activities in, East Timor and supports the continued U.S. presence there.

At this point, our rotational presence operations are envisioned to continue through December 2000. Future rotational presence operations will likely include rotation of naval assets and embarked aircraft, and small medical/dental and engineering civic action programs. Certain of these forces will be equipped with the normal complement of defensive weapons. The duration of our support depends upon the course of events in East Timor. At present, it is my intention to continue operations generally at the current levels to the end of the calendar year. It is, however, our objective to reduce the rotational presence operations, as well as to redeploy USGET as soon as circumstances permit.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

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