

@CHAPTER = INDONESIA AND EAST TIMOR

The closest the Bush administration came to acknowledging the severity of the human rights situation in Indonesia was to have Vice President Quayle meet with three leading human rights activists during his visit to Jakarta in May. That gesture was welcome, as was departing Ambassador Paul Wolfowitz's farewell address, also in May, in which he stressed the need for more political openness. But as an embassy spokesman said when questioned about the human rights issues that the Vice President had raised with the government, "specifics were not discussed." Unfortunately, ignoring specifics meant refraining from pointed criticism, and such criticism is what the Bush administration needs to offer to affect human rights practices in Indonesia.

There was no lack of specific human rights issues to discuss in 1989. Some 450 political prisoners are in Indonesia's jails, most convicted after unfair trials. An increase in student activism led to arrests and detention without charge of several dozen students in Jakarta and in Bandung, West Java. Eleven students in Bandung were held in the local army headquarters by the internal security apparatus for over three months and denied access to counsel before being turned over to judicial authorities for trial. At least two are reported to have been beaten after their arrest. In Yogyakarta, Central Java, two students were convicted of subversion and sentenced to seven- and eight-year prison terms for selling banned books and criticizing the government. A third is currently awaiting trial. All have been forbidden access to newspapers and radio. In Lampung, South Sumatra, an estimated 100 civilians were killed in a military assault on a religious school where an army officer had been taken hostage and slain. In apparently unrelated incidents in the same province, the military torched almost 500 homes of peasants living in a protected forest area, giving them little or no warning of the destruction. Some four dozen Muslim radicals suspected of trying to establish an Islamic state went on trial in West Java, Madura, Sumbawa, Jakarta, Lampung and elsewhere; many had allegedly been tortured after their arrest. Arbitrary detention and torture were reported from East Timor, with close to 100 political arrests between April and June and 40 more following the Pope's visit there in October; most of those arrested in both waves are believed to have been released. Several books were banned during the year, including one describing the military assault on the Lampung school mentioned above. And the Indonesian members of the International NGO Forum on Indonesia ("INGI") were called in by the Minister of Home Affairs and warned about an INGI statement that was perceived as "blackening" the Indonesian government's name. It was a clear reminder of the lack of freedom of expression and association in Indonesia. Censorship also continues: the Indonesian government removed five pages from the November 6 issue of *Newsweek* which contained an article about opposition to President Suharto.

The Bush administration had two unprecedented opportunities to raise serious human rights concerns with Indonesian officials: when Vice President Quayle visited Indonesia in May and when President Suharto visited Washington in June. Both opportunities were apparently wasted.

Before the Vice President left for Southeast Asia, 26 members of Congress wrote him a letter urging him to raise human rights concerns in Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore. In reply, his office thanked them for their letter and said: "As you know, the Vice President is very interested in humanitarian issues." The failure to distinguish between human rights and humanitarian issues presaged the decidedly mixed signals that the Vice President sent to Indonesian officials during his visit.

Despite his meeting with the three human rights activists, the Vice President

"didn't ask anything about human rights" when he met President Suharto, according to Antara, the Indonesian news agency. A White House official said the Vice President had raised the subject by saying there was a great deal of interest in the United States in East Timor and press freedom. But "interest" could mean anything. The Vice President did not explain that the interest of the U.S. Congress was in human rights violations, and the brief invocation of press freedom is hardly the same as raising specific cases of political prisoners. Moreover, the Vice President then undercut any implicit criticism by praising Indonesia's "tremendous progress" in human rights through President Suharto's economic policies. He firmly rejected the suggestion of the three activists that U.S. development aid be conditioned on the Indonesian government's human rights performance.

A similar opportunity was missed when President Suharto visited Washington the following month. Asia Watch and members of Congress sent President Bush letters urging him to raise a wide range of issues, from torture and political arrests in East Timor, to political prisoners and the banning of books by Indonesia's greatest novelist, Pramoedya Ananta Toer. President Bush said nothing about any of these. He addressed only Indonesia's economic situation and the Cambodian question, on which Indonesia has taken a leading role.

Many of the criticisms we raised in last year's report on the Reagan administration's human rights policy toward Indonesia remain valid. There is no indication that the Bush administration encouraged the promotion of labor rights in Indonesia by activating provisions of the U.S. Trade Act that require respect for labor rights as a condition for trade benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences. There is also no indication that the administration raised concerns over the discrimination and harassment of former political prisoners.

It is not as though the U.S. lacks leverage in Indonesia. In fiscal year 1989 the U.S. supplied \$2.9 million in military assistance and officials announced in April that this figure would be more than doubled in fiscal year 1990 to \$7 million. The U.S. also provided \$68 million in development aid, trained 79 members of the military through the International Military Education and Training program, and sold some \$18 million worth of military exports to the country. With close military and economic cooperation and mutually supportive positions on regional foreign policy issues, it ought to be possible for the Bush administration to speak out far more forcefully on human rights issues.