



Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/1025
4 October 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 4 OCTOBER 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 29 September 1999 (see annex), which I have received from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations attaching the first periodic report on the operations of the multinational force in East Timor.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

Annex

Letter dated 29 September 1999 from the Permanent Representative of
Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1264 (1999) of 15 September 1999, I attach the first periodic report on the operations of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) (see appendix). I would appreciate your making the report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Penny WENSLEY

Appendix

First periodic report on the operations of the multinational
force in East Timor

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to the request of the Government of Indonesia conveyed to the Secretary-General on 12 September 1999, in its resolution 1264 (1999) of 15 September 1999, the Security Council authorized the establishment of a multinational force under a unified command structure, with the following tasks: to restore peace and security in East Timor, to protect and support the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) in carrying out its tasks and, within force capabilities, to facilitate humanitarian assistance operations. The Council also authorized the States participating in the multinational force to take all necessary measures to fulfil that mandate.

2. Further to the letter from the Foreign Minister of Australia to the Secretary-General (S/1999/975) Major General Peter Cosgrove of the Australian Defence Force has been appointed Commander of the multinational force, known as the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET), with Major General Songkitti Jaggabattara of Thailand appointed as Deputy Force Commander.

3. Prior to the commencement of the deployment of INTERFET, the Commander and Deputy Commander visited Dili to discuss the broad plans for the deployment with senior Indonesian military commanders in East Timor. The consultations were cordial and provided a basis for cooperation between INTERFET and Indonesian armed forces for the initial deployment.

4. Following those consultations, the first deployment of personnel to East Timor commenced on 20 September 1999. The initial aim was to secure points of entry and the UNAMET compound. Those actions were carried out successfully and without incident.

5. Member States that have now committed forces or liaison teams to INTERFET are Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Some national contingents are conducting acclimatization training. A number of other Member States have indicated that they intend to contribute forces to INTERFET in due course, including Ireland and Kenya.

6. Other Member States are actively considering a contribution to INTERFET at a later time, and the leadership of the multinational force remains engaged with them to assist with their decisions. Many of those Member States have indicated that they would like to make a contribution, subject to sufficient funds being available from the United Nations trust fund established pursuant to resolution 1264 (1999).

II. COOPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA

7. Consultations with Indonesian officials in New York, Jakarta and East Timor have been positive. The Force Commander has expressed satisfaction with the cooperation of the Indonesian armed forces in facilitating the orderly deployment of INTERFET. Indonesia has been helpful in providing speedy consideration of a significant number of diplomatic clearances and the status-of-forces arrangement.

III. RESTORATION OF PEACE AND SECURITY

A. Pre-deployment preparation and activities

8. The Force Commander has developed a four-phase concept of operations. Phase I, establishing the preconditions for deployment, has been completed. Phase II, insertion of INTERFET, commenced on 20 September. In phase III, INTERFET will take measures to implement its mandate to restore peace and security to enable the transfer as soon as possible to a United Nations peacekeeping operation (phase IV).

9. In addition to the activities to restore peace and security in East Timor, INTERFET has taken steps to facilitate humanitarian assistance operations. Following Indonesian diplomatic clearances, and with the assistance of the World Food Programme (WFP), initial airdrops consisting of food and other relief items were completed on 17 September (Ermera, Manatuto and Uamori) and 18 September (to a location south-east of Monte Maulo). Regular airdrops have been conducted since 22 September. The aircraft leased by WFP is now also operating in this role. Large quantities of food and emergency supplies have been unloaded by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Dili.

B. Deployment of the International Force, East Timor

10. As at 29 September, INTERFET had around 3,700 personnel deployed in East Timor. The immediate intention is to build up the Force and to further expand its operations beyond Dili. Of significance will be the requirement to establish a secure environment to facilitate humanitarian assistance. Bacau airfield was secured on 22 September. Patrols have been undertaken to Dare and Uamori and air mobile operations carried out to Liquica and Com.

11. Increasing numbers of internally displaced persons returning to Dili from the surrounding areas support the growing sense of security in the Dili environment. Apart from improvements in the security situation in Dili, the general security situation in East Timor remains poor. The security and humanitarian situation in the Ambeno enclave is uncertain and access by air and sea will be gained at a later time.

C. Activities of the militia

12. INTERFET has sought to take an even-handed approach towards all groups in East Timor. The INTERFET leadership is concerned about ongoing "militia" activity in East Timor and about reports of those groups' continued operation in West Timor. Reports of external assistance to the groups are of particular concern, as are continuing reports that they are making threats of violence against INTERFET.

IV. PROTECTION AND SUPPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION
IN EAST TIMOR

13. Following the general evacuation of UNAMET and other personnel from East Timor, only 12 staff remained in Dili. On 20 September, the head of UNAMET, Ian Martin, and 10 other UNAMET staff were flown to Dili on INTERFET aircraft. INTERFET secured the UNAMET compound on 21 September. A total of 23 UNAMET staff were in Dili as at 23 September.

14. On 21 September, INTERFET escorted UNAMET staff to assess the humanitarian situation in Dare. Both INTERFET and UNAMET personnel were well received by the local population.

V. FACILITATION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS

15. Ross Mountain of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat was flown to Dili on 20 September.

16. INTERFET aircraft carried 18 representatives of non-governmental organizations to an aid agency conference in Dili on 22 September to coincide with a visit by the Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs of the United States of America.

17. The number of non-governmental organizations able to operate effectively in East Timor remains limited by the security situation. Although they are anxious to establish, or re-establish themselves in East Timor, INTERFET is concerned that sufficient personal security is not yet available to those organizations.

18. Airdrops of humanitarian supplies will continue using leased aircraft and INTERFET assets when spare capacity is available.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

A. Management of the trust fund for the multinational force

19. It is important that the trust fund operate transparently, simply and with maximum flexibility. For this reason it is desirable to adopt existing United Nations peacekeeping practice wherever feasible. The terms of reference for the trust fund should be completed shortly.

20. The trust fund should be available primarily to fund the contributions of those troop contributors who do not have the capacity to fund their own contribution. It is important to obtain as diverse a range of contributors as possible and to include as many countries of the region as possible. Many of those countries will not be able to fund their own contributions and will therefore need to have their costs reimbursed.

B. Transition to phase III

21. In resolution 1264 (1999), the Security Council invites the Secretary-General to plan and prepare for a United Nations transitional administration in East Timor, incorporating a United Nations peacekeeping operation, to be deployed in the implementation phase of the popular consultation (phase III) and to make recommendations as soon as possible to the Council. Prompt Security Council action on the Secretary-General's report is essential.

C. Civil administration

22. On deployment, INTERFET encountered an environment where civil infrastructure had been seriously degraded and where there was no effective civil administration. The scope of the problems that will be generated by those conditions will quickly outstrip the very limited capacity available, especially with respect to the administration of law and order in East Timor. The situation has been exacerbated by the effective cessation of Indonesian civil administration in East Timor and the ending of Indonesian martial law in the territory.

23. At the operational level, INTERFET is able, within its force capacity and consistent with its mandate under resolution 1264 (1999), to take certain action such as apprehension and detention, but it cannot undertake broader responsibilities beyond that for the administration and enforcement of the legal system and detention of individuals. There is an urgent need to address what interim legal and police system should operate in East Timor pending the implementation of phase III. It is imperative that urgent steps be taken to address the issues of civil administration and lack of infrastructure, and that adequate resources are available to the United Nations to fill the current vacuum in civil administration in East Timor.

VII. OUTLOOK

24. It is important that the Security Council agrees on arrangements for the transition to phase III of the tripartite agreement (see A/53/951-S/1999/513) as a matter of priority. Similarly, urgent steps to address the issues of civil administration and lack of infrastructure are critical to the success of INTERFET operations.

25. Further periodic reports will be provided every 14 days.
