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CIAPASS... SEIB 99-090CX

Senior Executive Intelligence Brief

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Tuesday, 20 April 1999

National Security Information

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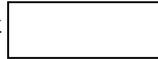


Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| | 1 |
| | 3 |
| | 5 |
| | 6 |
| | 7 |
| | 8 |
| | 10 |

East Asia

East Timor: Independence Not a Sure Bet
Analytic Perspective



11

| | |
|--|----|
| | 13 |
| | 14 |



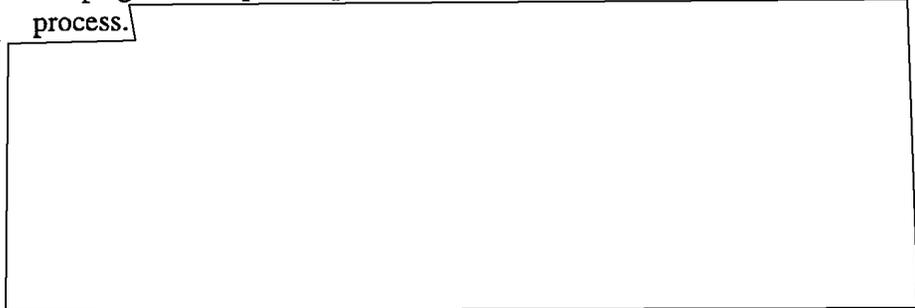


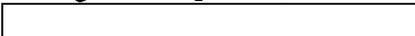
EAST ASIA

East Timor:
Analytic Perspective

Independence Not a Sure Bet 

A lack of broad support in Jakarta for President Habibie's commitment to independence for the province by yearend if its citizenry rejects autonomy will encourage prointegration militias to continue their violent campaign to cow proindependence advocates and delay the consultation process.



Support for Habibie's East Timor initiative also appears tenuous among senior military officers, including Armed Forces Commander Wiranto who has taken no action against the prointegration militias or complicit local military units.  the military may be seeking to manipulate the polling process in favor of the autonomy option by allowing the militias to create disturbances. 

Possible Outcomes 

Continued violence could indefinitely delay a vote on the autonomy proposal. UN officials recently postponed the polling from July to 12 September, 

- If the militia activities continue unchecked, the situation could degenerate into a protracted conflict.  the various militias are poised to begin assaults in areas outside of their strongholds. 

To restore stability, the Indonesian security forces must stop supporting the militias and adopt a neutral posture. This would increase the prospects for a resumption of the reconciliation talks between pro-Jakarta and proindependence leaders and for an eventual disarmament of both sides. 

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A close vote in the UN ballot, however, could spark renewed violence. Indonesia nationalists in the newly elected People's Consultative Assembly—which has ultimate authority to relinquish sovereignty over East Timor—also might be emboldened by such a vote to try to abort the process and retain the province.

- Proindependence leaders—who expect to win by a wide margin—would reject any result favoring autonomy as evidence of manipulation by prointegrationists.
- A strong rejection of autonomy would deflate the momentum of the militias, who, without military support, would be hard pressed to mount a serious armed challenge.

