1. SUMMARY. NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS CONTINUE TO REPORT ISOLATED INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE IN ACEH. INCIDENTS INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THE POLICE ARE ATTRIBUTED TO PERSONAL MOTIVES. AMCITS AND HAVE REPORTED OTHER INCIDENTS WITHIN THE PAST FEW DAYS: A FAILED ATTEMPT IN BANDA ACEH TO RAID A MILITARY STORE OF WEAPONS; THE SHOOTING OF AN INDONESIAN PROFESSOR'S CAR BY OUT-OF-UNIFORM SOLDIERS MANNING A ROADBLOCK; AND ANOTHER FAILED WEAPONS RAID ON A POLICE INSTALLATION NEAR LANGSA, CLOSE TO THE SOUTHERN BORDE WITH NORTH SUMATRA PROVINCE. AN AMCIT IN LHOKSEUMAWE DESCRIBED A RECENT MILITARY BRIEFING OF EXPATS THAT INCLUDED DISTURBING CONTRADICTIONS AND AN OUTRIGHT DENIAL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02  MEDAN  00267  01 OF 03  081017Z

THAT WEAPONS HAD EVEN BEEN STOLEN - TO THE AMAZEMENT OF THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS. NEVERTHELESS, SEVERAL AMCITS HAVE SAID THAT THEY FEEL PERSONALLY SAFE, IN LIGHT OF VISIBLY TIGHTENED MILITARY SECURITY. OTHER EVIDENCE FROM AMCITS AND

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: DONALD A JOHNSTON
DATE/CASE ID: 13 JUL 2005  200502290

UNCLASSIFIED
2. IN THE PAST WEEK, THREE ARTICLES REGARDING RELATED VIOLENCE IN ACEH HAVE APPEARED IN THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER WASPADA. THE JUNE 5 ISSUE CARRIED THE STORY THAT A LOCAL FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER HAD BEEN MURDERED, WHILE DRINKING AT A STALL IN EAST ACEH, BY A MASKED ASSAILANT WITH A CHOPPER, MOTIVE UNKNOWN. THE JUNE 6 EDITION CARRIED AN ACCOUNT OF THE SENTENCING OF THREE BANDA ACEH POLICE FOR RAPE A FEMALE DETAINEE LAST DECEMBER AND THE SENTENCING OF ANOTHER POLICEMAN FOR ACCIDENTALLY SHOOTING A COLLEAGUE WHILE CLEANING HIS GUN. THE JUNE 7 ISSUE REPORTED A SWORD ASSAULT BY LOCAL RESIDENTS ON A POLICEMAN IN BANDAR BARU AS HE APPROACHED HIS HOME, AND THE DISCOVERY IN SIGILI OF THE BODY OF A SOLDIER, AN ACEH RESIDENT, WHO HAD BEEN STABBED. BOTH VICTIMS WERE SAID TO BE HEAVY DRINKERS AND GAMBLERS, INDICATING PERSONAL MOTIVES FOR THE ATTACKS.

3. A LOCAL CONTACT RECOUNTED THAT TWO WEEKS AGO SHE SAW A LARGE NUMBER OF SOLDIERS GETTING INTO TRUCKS IN MEDAN, WHILE FAMILY MEMBERS CRIED AND WAVED GOOD-BY. SHE ASKED WHAT WAS GOING ON. THEY ANSWERED THAT THESE SOLDIERS WERE BEING SENT UP TO ACEH.

4. THREE AMCITS RESIDENT IN BANDA ACEH DESCRIBED TWO RECENT INCIDENTS. A FRIEND WAS ON OR NEAR THE SCENE, A FEW NIGHTS AGO, OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL RAID ON A WEAPONS STORE AT A BANDA ACEH MILITARY INSTALLATION BY ARMED MEN IN A TRUCK. THE AMCITS CONFIDENTIAL.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03    MEDAN 00267 01 OF 03 081017Z

HAD HEARD THAT TWO OF THE ATTACKERS ESCAPED, ONE WAS CAUGHT. HE WAS SAID TO BE AN EX-SOLDIER FROM NORTH SUMATRA. THE OTHER INCIDENT ALSO OCCURRED A FEW NIGHTS AGO. A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR WAS DRIVING BACK TO BANDA ACEH FROM MEDAN, WHEN HE MET A ROADBLOCK MANNED BY MEN NOT IN UNIFORM. AFRAID, HE DROVE ON. THE MEN OPENED FIRE - THE VEHICLE HAS ABOUT 15 BULLET HOLES, ACCORDING TO THE AMCIT - FORCED HIM OUT AND SEARCHED HIM. THE MEN IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS SOLDIERS. THE PROFESSOR ASKED WHY THEY DID NOT WEAR UNIFORMS. THEY ANSWERED THAT THEY WERE AFRAID OF ARMED LOCALS.

5. THE AMCITS HAD HEARD OF SOME OF THE EVENTS IN LHOKSEUMAWE, AND OF OTHER, SCATTERED INCIDENTS IN THE PROVINCE. VIOLENCE IS OFFICIALLY ATTRIBUTED TO DISGRUNTLED SOLDIERS OR CRIMINALS FROM MEDAN. GENERALLY, BANDA ACEH HAS BEEN FREE OF INCIDENTS, THEY
SAID, although there is the sense that Aceh has heated up. Security has been visibly stepped up in recent weeks, and they feel unthreatened. However, two asked if the consulate had evacuation plans for them if the situation got too dangerous.

6. A long-time AMCIT employee at the PT Arun complex in Lhokseumawe was undaunted by recent incidents in the area - a feeling he said is shared more by oldtimers than newcomers. He expressed concern that if some employees panicked and asked to have themselves or their families transferred to Medan, it could "fuel the fire." He said that over the past eight or nine years he has been in Aceh there has been periodic violence, mostly in Sigli rather than Lhokseumawe. He did recall, however, hearing of the 1978 or 1979 shooting of two expats, one of whom died, who had been working for Bechtel at the complex. Expats there today who exercise common sense caution are not in danger, he said. Bodies that had been found near plant facilities appeared to be those of military personnel in civilian clothes. One, for example, found with a ticket for Jakarta, was that of a young man with close-cropped hair. On June 5, the AMCIT said, the military issued confidential

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MEDAN 00267 01 OF 03 081017Z

A statement saying that no weapons had been stolen in the May 28 incident.
UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01   MEDAN 00267 02 OF 03 081011Z
ACTION EAP-01

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-05 SS-01 CIAE-00 EB-01 DODE-00
H-01 NSCE-00 NSA-00 HA-09 L-03 TRSE-00 FM-01
PA-01 OMB-01 INRE-00 OGS-06 CA-02 ANAE-00 ACDA-13
USIE-00 SP-01 SNF-01 PRS-01 DS-01 SCT-03 E-01
P-02 T-01 DPR-01 /057 W

P 080935Z JUN 90
FM AMCONSUL MEDAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4336
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL SURABAYA PRIORITY
USCINCPAC PRIORITY 0018

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 02 OF 03 MEDAN 00267

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, ID
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON ACHE VIOLENCE - JUNE 8, 1990.

UNCLASSIFIED
7. An AMCIT contact from the Lhokseumawe fertilizer plant (Ref B) described in detail the June 5 briefing of expats by [redacted] as follows. The [redacted] began the briefing in a frank manner and, contrary to most briefings, was flanked by only one other Indonesian, who appeared to be a Javanese civilian official. When, in response to a question about the stolen guns, he responded that none had been stolen, the civilian official, who up to then had been nodding agreement to all that had been said, let his mouth fall open. The mood of the expat audience changed; their intelligence was now being insulted. A follow-up question asked, "If weapons had been stolen, what would be the situation?". "Bad," answered confidential.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02

MEDAN 00267 02 OF 03 081011Z

8. [redacted] said there were three interpretations of who the "criminals" of the May 28 incident were: disgruntled ex-soldiers who had been dishonorably discharged; ganja traffickers angry at the loss of USD 50 million in destroyed produce; or Aceh Merdeka. He confidently ruled out the last interpretation, and said it was ten or so ex-soldiers who were responsible. He implied that other murders in the Lhokseumawe area were unrelated, isolated incidents.

9. [redacted] the missing driver of the missing mobil contract van, it turns out, had a long criminal record before joining mobil contract employ. [redacted] said they now knew where the van was. When someone asked why have they not retrieved it, [redacted] ducked the question. Someone asked about rumors that 200 Libyan-trained Acehnese guerrillas were at large. [redacted] laughed off the question, saying Libyan training means nothing; he did not deny the rumor. (Note: the AMCIT contact, who said he has worked in Libya and seen Gaddafi's training camp - which he described as a hellish place - personally doubts the rumor. Stories get exaggerated quickly in Aceh, he said.)

10. [redacted] advised the audience that it is only safe to drive on the roads in daylight, but that even then, he could not guarantee against common criminals. [redacted] said that, actually, there is more crime on the streets of Jakarta than in Aceh. Members of the audience broke in, saying the level of
VIOLENCE IN THEIR VICINITY WAS UNPRECEDENTED. BRUSHED ASIDE A QUESTION AS TO WHETHER IT WAS SAFE FOR OVERSEAS RELATIVES TO VISIT LHOKSEUMAWE. HE ALSO LAUGHED OFF A QUESTION
CONFIDENTIAL

ABOUT RUMORED CLASHES BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL POLICE AND THE ARMY. SOME OF THE EXPATS REFERRED TO STORIES OF SOLDIERS IN CIVILIAN DRESS SETTING UP ROADBLOCKS - WHICH THE COLONEL DENIED - AND SAID THEY WOULD NOT STOP AT ROADBLOCKS MANNED BY MEN IN CIVILIAN DRESS. (COMMENT: ACTING P.O. INFORMED THE AMCIT CONTACT OF THE RECENT BANDA ACEH PROFESSOR'S EXPERIENCE, AND ASKED HIM TO WARN OTHER EXPATS IN LHOKSEUMAWE OF THE RISK OF IGNORING ROADBLOCKS OF ARMED MEN. END COMMENT.)

11. THE AMCIT SAID HE HAD HEARD FROM LOCAL CONTACTS THAT UNDERGROUND LEAFLETS HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED. THESE REPORTEDLY BLAMED THE ARMY - NOT THE GOVERNMENT - FOR OPPRESSING ACEHNES AND KILLING ORDINARY PEOPLE. THE AUTHORS CLAIMED TO FIGHT ONLY ARMY MEMBERS, NOT CIVILIANS. LOCALS SAY THEY ARE CAREFUL OF WHAT THEY SAY, BECAUSE BOTH SIDES HAVE SPIES SAID THE ARMY HAS MANY PLAINCLOTHES PEOPLE IN THE AREA). A LARGE NUMBER OF TROOPS ARE VISIBLE, AND THE MORE "SETTLED" AREAS APPEAR SAFE. ALTHOUGH MANY EXPATS' PERCEPTIONS WERE THAT THE BRIEFING CONTAINED NUMEROUS SMALL CONTRADICTIONS AND SOME OUTRIGHT LIES, THEY GENERALLY FEEL SAFE.

12. SHARED WITH ACTING P.O. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION HE HAD RECENTLY GLEANED ON ACEH. EARLIER THIS WEEK HE TRAVELED TO THE ACEH CITY OF LANGSA, NEAR THE SOUTHEASTERN BORDER WITH NORTH SUMATRA, WHERE HE LEARNED OF AN ATTACK ON LOCAL POLICE THAT HAD JUST TAKEN PLACE. A SENIOR POLICE OFFICER ANSWERED HIS FRONT DOOR AT ABOUT 9:00 A.M. TO A MAN WHO POINTED A PISTOL AT HIS HEAD AND PULLED THE TRIGGER. THE GUN MISFIRE, AND THE OFFICER WAS ABLE TO KILL THE ASSAILANT WITH A BAYONET. HE THEN ALERTED OTHER UNITS, WHO ROUNDED UP TWO OR THREE OTHERS WHO WERE REPORTEDLY ON THEIR WAY TO ATTACK A POLICE STATION. THEY WERE ARMED WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND HAND GRENADES. THIS GROUP INCLUDED LOCAL RESIDENTS. NOTICED EXTREME NERVOUSNESS ON THE PART OF HIS DRIVER AND GUIDE AS LONG AS THEY WERE IN ACEH PROVINCE. AS SOON AS THEY CROSSED CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04  MEDAN 00267 02 OF 03 081011Z
INTO NORTH SUMATRA, THE DRIVER TURNED AROUND AND, SMILING BROADLY, SAID, "WE'RE SAFE NOW."

13. IN MID-MAY VISITED BANDA ACEH AND SABANG FOR SEVERAL DAYS. HIS VISIT, FROM BEGINNING TO END, WAS CLOSELY COORDINATED BY HIS OFFICIAL HOSTS. HE DESCRIBED THE [ ] WHO AT ONE POINT BLUNTLY ASKED HIM THE PURPOSE OF HIS COMING AT THAT TIME, AS "POLITELY HOSTILE" TO HIS PRESENCE. AT ANOTHER POINT, [ ] ASKED IF HE WAS INTENDING TO VISIT LHOKSEUMawe, AND WAS VISIBLY RELIEVED

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AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL SURABAYA PRIORITY
USCINC PAC PRIORITY 0019

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 03 OF 03 MEDAN 00267

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, ID
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON ACEH VIOLENCE - JUNE 8, 1990

REFS: A) JAKARTA 07994 B) MEDAN 00256 AND PREVIOUS

WHEN HE ANSWERED "NO." FURTHER UPSET HIS HOSTS
BY REQUESTING VISITS TO THE ISLAND OF SABANG OFF THE NORTHERN
COAST, AND THE SITY OF SIGLI, RUMORED TO BE THE SEAT OF
ACEHNESSE DISCONTENT. HIS HOSTS ARRANGED THE TRIP BY BOAT TO
SABANG; HE NOTIFIED A SIZEABLE CONTINGENT OF ARMED GUARDS
ABOARD, AND HIS COUNTERPARTS TRIED TO DISCOURAGE HIM FROM
MOVING FROM THE LOWER CABIN TO THE DECK - WHICH HE SAID WAS
FULL OF "UNSAYON LOOKING CHARACTERS". THE TRIP TO SIGLI WAS
PRE-EMPTED BY SOME TRIPS, HASTILY - ORGANIZED BY HIS HOSTS,
TO MUSEUMS AND ART SHOPS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEDAN 00267 03 OF 03 081011Z

14. CONFIRMED THE VERSION OF THE MAY 28 ATTACK
ON SOLDIERS AND THEFT OF WEAPONS DESCRIBED IN REF A. HE ALSO
CONFIRMED REPORTS OF TENSION BETWEEN THE PREDOMINANTLY
NON-ACEHNESSE SOLDIERS AND THE SUBSTANTIALLY LOCAL POLICE FORCE
IN ACEH (REF A). HE SAID POLICE WERE FINDING THEMSELVES IN
THE UNENVINABLE POSITION OF BEING SUSPECTED BY THE MILITARY OF
HAVING TIES TO ANTI-GOVERNMENT ELEMENTS (GBK), AND BEING BLAMED BY LOCALS FOR REPRISALS BY THE MILITARY. HE HAD HEARD REPORTS OF ARMED ATTACKS BY MILITARY AGAINST POLICE AND VICE VERSA. HE KNEW OF TWO TO THREE BATTALIONS OF TROOPS THAT HAD BEEN SENT TO ACEH RECENTLY.

15. MILITARY OFFICERS SHOWED REAL HATRED TOWARD ACEHNESSE, AND ACEHNESSE EXPRESSED HISTORICAL BITTERNESS AGAINST JAVA NESH (ONE ACEHNESSE SAID, "JAVA NESHES CAME TO SUBJUGATE US FIRST UNDER THE DUTCH, AND NOW THEY ARE COMING AGAIN."). HE DESCRIBED THE VIOLENCE AS A "VENDETTA WAR," IN WHICH EACH SIDE RESPONDS TO ATTACKS ON ITS OWN MEMBERS WITH INDISCRIMINATE REVENGE ATTACKS ON MEMBERS OF THE SIDE IT BLAMES. BYSTANDERS AND POSSIBLY PARTICIPANTS IN THE GAME ARE CONFUSED BY THE USE OF FORCE BY ARMED BANDS, BOTH IN AND OUT OF UNIFORM, WHOSE IDENTITIES ARE IN DOUBT. SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT NEW DEVELOPMENTS ARE: THE EMERGENCE OF DAYLIGHT ATTACKS AGAINST GOVERNMENT FORCES; INCREASED EVIDENCE OF LOCAL INHABITANTS PARTICIPATING IN THESE ATTACKS; THE FACT THAT MANY ARE ATTEMPTS TO STEAL WEAPONS FOR FURTHER USE; AND THE WIDE GEOGRAPHIC DISPERSION OF THE ATTACKS. ALSO SIGNIFICANT, HE SAID, IS THE DISCOVERY OF GRENADES IN ANTI-GOVERNMENT HANDS.

16. [ ] MADE AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO REPORTED OUTSIDE SUPPORT FOR THE GBK BY "THIRD COUNTRY" NATIONALS. HE RELATED AN ACCOUNT HE HAD HEARD OF A "WELL-KNOWN THIRD COUNTRY JOURNALIST" COMING TO INDONESIA SEEKING THE WHEREABOUTS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03  MEDAN 00267 03 OF 03 081011Z

OF SOMEONE IDENTIFIED AS A STUDENT, TO WHOM HE WISHED TO GIVE A "DONATION". REGARDING THE REPORTED CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CURRENT VIOLENCE AND THE GOVERNMENT'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST ACEHNESH GANJA TRADE, HE RECALLED HEARING FROM AN ACEHNESH, "AS LONG AS GANJA CAN BE HARVESTED, WE DON'T NEED OUTSIDE FINANCING."

17. BANDA ACEH OFFICIALS MADE UNSUBTLE ATTEMPTS LAST MONTH TO ASSURE [ ] THAT THE SITUATION WAS COMPLETELY SAFE. IN MORE RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH MILITARY OFFICERS, THE MOOD HAS BEEN MORE RESIGNED. ONE OFFICER WARNED AGAINST TRAVELING IN ACEH BY CAR, SAYING THAT HE COULD NOT ASSURE THE SAFETY OF ANY ROAD IN THE PROVINCE. CHINESE BUSINESSMEN IN ACEH SEEM PARTICULARLY FEARFUL OF DEVELOPMENTS THERE OBSERVED.

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