R 120643Z SEP 90
FM AMCONSUL MEDAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4405
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL SURABAYA
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI 0048

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 04 MEDAN 00406

CINCPAC FOR FPA

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PGOV, PINSS, ID
SUBJECT: ACEH: IN FOR THE LONG HAUL.

REFS: MEDAN 00341 AND PREVIOUS

1. (C) SUMMARY: INDONESIA'S NATIONAL DAY, AUGUST 17, CAME AND WENT WITHOUT A WIDELY ANTICIPATED SURGE OF ACEH MERDEKA TERRORISM. NONETHELESS, OUR INTERLOCUTORS AGREE THAT THE CONFLICT WITH INDONESIA'S JAVANESE DOMINATED ARMY IS LIKELY TO BE LONG AND BRUTAL. THE ARMY RECENTLY ATTEMPTED A COORDINATED SWEEP, WITH THREE THOUSAND-PLUS TROOPS, MOVING SOUTH FROM ACEH BESAR AND NORTH FROM LANGSA. ACEH MERDEKA INFLUENCED TERRITORY REPORTEDLY CONTINUES TO RUN 300 KILOMETERS ALONG THE EAST COAST.

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3. (C) The threat to foreigners does not appear to have markedly increased, though Acehnese Islamic radicalism may be sensitive to developments in the Middle East. End summary.

IN THE MEDIA

4. (U) Local press coverage of the conflict in Aceh attempted to hype government success on the eve of national day ceremonies. On August 6, a campaign to publicize alleged support for the government was launched when hundreds of residents of villages in the subdistrict of Sunuddon, North Aceh, were gathered together to read a loyalty statement to the goi. On the 7th, a statement condemning the GPK (Security disturbance movement), signed by local notables, was read out before minister of cooperatives Bustanil Arifin in East Aceh. Next day, the same procedure was repeated in Pidie. Also on the 8th, Kodam I (Northern Sumatra military command) alleged that those in the GPK responsible for a series of robberies had been arrested. Governor Ibrahim Hasan, responding to "threats" to Acehnese who would attend Indonesian national day ceremonies, instructed all residents of Aceh to display the Indonesian flag at their homes and offices through August 17. On August 9, according to the kodam, a GPK commander for Kuta Sentang Pase allegedly surrendered to the military. On the 12th the army presented a "show of skill" confidential.

In the kabupatens of Pidie, North Aceh, and East Aceh involving air force F-55 based in Medan, assaults from landing ships, and parachute drops by "airborne command" forces. On the same day, a crowd was gathered together to hear protestation of loyalty in Langsa, East Aceh and the government announced that seven more GPK "followers" had turned themselves in.

5. (U) Then all was quiet in the press until August 20, when it was announced that a theatre in Bireun, North Aceh, showing a Chinese film, had been destroyed by fire the previous evening. On the 21st, Colonel Muhammad Chan, commander of the Banda Aceh Korem, told reporters that Acehnese informers need not worry about GPK retaliation since the army would assure their protection. The next day the press carried a report that 35,000 people had been gathered together on the 20th in Lhokseumawe to hear Ulama lecture on Islamic unity and the local Korem commander, Col. Suffian, call for the "people's participation" in improving security in the province. Meanwhile, a fire destroyed the largest timber processing plant.

FOREIGN PRESS
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6. (LOU) THE FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW (AUGUST 2 EDITION) REPORTED THAT A GROUP CALLING ITSELF "THE NATIONAL LIBERATION

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   H-01 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 HA-09 L-03 TRSE-00 PM-01
   PA-01 SJK-01 OMB-01 INRE-00 OCS-06 CA-02 USIB-00
   SP-01 SNP-01 PRS-01 DS-01 SCT-03 P-02 T-01
       /044 W

R 120643Z SEP 90
FM AMCONSUL MEDAN
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INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL SURABAYA
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI 0049

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CINCPAC FOR FPA

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FRONT ACEH SUMATRA" HAD SENT A LETTER TO THE INDONESIAN PRESS STATING "WE WANT TO FREE THE ISLAMIC STATE OF ACEH SUMATRA AND SEPARATE IT FROM THE TOY OF JAVANESE INDONESIA WHICH CONTINUALLY VIOLATES THE RIGHTS OF ACEHNESSE PEOPLE". ON AUGUST 14, USINFO TRANSMITTED TWO CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR ARTICLES, WHICH REPORTED THAT A "SHADOWY REBELLION IS GRIPPING ACEH. IN RECENT MONTHS, ABOUT 80 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED, MOST OF THEM JAVANESE SOLDIERS AND SETTLERS...MOTIVES FOR THE UPRISING ARE MURKY." A WESTERN DIPLOMAT, ALLEGED TO SEE THE VIOLENCE AS A "CYCLICAL OUTBREAK RATHER THAN A SERIOUS CONFIDENTIAL

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THREAT," IS QUOTED AS STATING THAT "IT'S NOT ALL INDEPENDENCE. IT'S ALSO RELIGION AND ECONOMICS." IN ADDITION, WE UNDERSTAND THAT AFP FILED AN AUGUST 15 REPORT STATING THAT ACEH MERDEKA MILITANTS HAVE NOW ALSO THREATENED FOREIGNERS (COMMENT: WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE TEXT OF THIS REPORT AND OF ANY OTHER REPORTS IN ADDRESSEES' LOCAL MEDIA. IN THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, AFP HAS FILED SEVERAL CONTROVERSIAL REPORTS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN ACEH).

PRIVATE PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONFLICT

7. (C) ACEH MERDEKA IS ACTIVE IN A THREE HUNDRED KILOMETER BAND OF DENSELY POPULATED TERRITORY ALONG THE EAST COAST, FROM THE TOWN OF PIDIE TO JUST SOUTH OF THE PEREULAK RIVER. IT ALSO CARRIES OUT OPERATIONS IN BANDA ACEH AND LANGSA. BREAKS IN THE ACEH MERDEKA INFLUENCED TERRITORY INCLUDE SEUNEDEON, MANE, SAMALANGA, AND SIGILI TOWN. HE CHARACTERIZED WHAT WAS A "SKIN DISEASE" SEVERAL MONTHS AGO AS HAVING BECOME A "CANCER. THE

8. (C) WIDELY DISTRIBUTED ACEH MERDEKA LEAFLETS WARNING ACEHNESSE TO AVOID PUBLIC CEREMONIES PLANNED IN CONJUNCTION CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED
WITH INDONESIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY, COMBINED WITH A WIDESPREAD ASSUMPTION THAT ACEH MERDEKA, QUIET FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, WOULD LAUNCH A SERIES OF ATTACKS ON AUGUST 17,
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CINCPAC FOR FPA

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
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REFS: MEDAN 00341 AND PREVIOUS
12. (C) ANOTHER INTERLOCUTOR, WHO BELIEVES THAT ACEH MERDEKA HAS BEEN PURPOSELY "LYING QUIET FOR YEARS", EMPHASIZES THE NEED TO ACCOMODATE ACEH'S DISTINCT CULTURE AND VALUES. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE, AS DO SO MANY WHO POINT TO SOCIAL ECONOMIC TENSIONS, THAT A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN FUNDS FROM JAKARTA TWO YEARS AGO WOULD HAVE HEADED OFF THE CURRENT UNREST. INSTEAD, HE ARGUES THAT THIS CONFLICT IS, IN ESSENCE, A COLLECTION OF LOCAL EVENTS. A MILITARY RESPONSE JUST INFLAMES THE SITUATION.
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LONG TERM SETBACK TO ACEH'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, BUT PAINTED THE CONFLICT AS A RENEWAL OF THE MORE THEN A CENTURY OLD ACEHNSE SEARCH FOR INDEPENDENCE. IT IS NOT, IN HIS VIEW, "THE TIME TO SHED ACEHNSE BLOOD, BUT NO ACEHNSE CAN SAY NO WHEN HE IS ASKED TO FIGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE'S FREEDOM." HE KNOWS THAT ACEH "CAN'T WIN", BUT MOST ACEHNSE, EVEN THE LEADERS WHO HAVE GRADUATED FROM THE IAIN AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING, BELIEVE THEY CAN AND, IF THEY CAN'T, "THEY BELIEVE IN A MARTYR'S DEATH (MATI SHYAHID)". THE REVOLT,

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ACTION EAP-01

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-05 SS-01 CIAE-00 EB-01 DODE-00
H-01 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 HA-09 L-03 TRSE-00 PM-01
PA-01 SJK-01 OMB-01 INRE-00 OCS-06 COR-01 CA-02
USIE-00 SP-01 TFCE-00 SNP-01 PRS-01 DS-01 SCT-03
P-02 T-01 DPR-01
(ADS ) W

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R 120643Z SEP 90
FM AMCONSUL MEDAN
TO SECSTATE WASHD C 4408
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL SURABAYA
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI 0051

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CORRECTED COPY (CAPTIONS THRU REF LINES)

CINCPAC FOR FPA

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
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PARTICULARLY IN THE KABUPATEN OF NORTH ACEH, IS LED BY ACEHNSE WHO HAVE RETURNED FROM ABROAD.
15. (C) MOST OF OUR INTERLOCUTORS, DESPITE THE AFP ARTICLE ALLEGING A THREAT TO FOREIGNERS (SEE PARA 5), DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ACEH MERDEKA HAS TARGETED FOREIGNERS. A FEW HAVE EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN THAT FEELINGS OF ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY COULD TAKE ON A STRONG ANTI-CHRISTIAN, ANTI-FOREIGN TONE.
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