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#### Viewing cable 07DIL101, AUSSIES BRIEF ON REINADO OPERATION

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07DILI101	2007-03-12 08:57	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Dili

VZCZCXRO2275  
PP RUEHPB  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DILI 000101

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DEPT FOR EAP/MTS,IO  
PACOM FOR JOC AND POLAD  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/12/2017  
TAGS: KFKO MOPS PGOV PREL TT AU NZ  
SUBJECT: AUSSIES BRIEF ON REINADO OPERATION

REF: A) DILI 94, B) DILI 96, C) DILI 95

DILI 00000101 001.2 OF 003

CLASSIFIED BY: Seiji T. Shiratori, DCM, EXEC, State.  
REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: International Stabilization Forces (ISF) commander Brigadier Malcolm Rerden and Australian Ambassador to East Timor Margaret Twomey briefed Emboffs March 9, reviewing the current status of ISF operations to apprehend Major Alfredo Reinado and summarizing a meeting Rerden has just attended with top GOET and UN officials to discuss strategy to resolve the crisis. Rerden told us that the ISF mission remains committed to apprehend dissident military officer Major Alfredo Reinado and his band alive. Rerden said the operation to date has been a success in that it has met the prerequisite of no civilian casualties, and Reinado was able to slip away from the holdout in Same on March 4 in large part because ISF had given him every opportunity to surrender before launching an assault. Summarizing his just-concluded meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), the President, Prime Minister, Prosecutor General, the military commander, Speaker of Parliament and other officials, Rerden described how neither UN nor GOET officials could find a face-saving way of communicating with Reinado in order to convince the rogue soldier to turn himself in. Rerden confirmed that ISF does not know where Reinado is hiding, that they are trying to cut off attempts to escape by boat, and that the President had stated the Government's determination to let the operation drag on for weeks if necessary. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Australian Ambassador Margaret Twomey at our request arranged for Charge d'Affaires (CDA), Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) and U.S. Defense Representative (USDR) to meet with ISF commander Brigadier Malcolm Rerden the evening of March 9, to be briefed on the current state of the operation to bring in rebel military officer Major Alfredo Reinado. Rerden came to our meeting directly from Tripartite consultations among GOET leaders, UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) leaders, and Rerden. Rerden briefed us extensively verbatim from his written notes of the meeting. The primary purpose of the meeting apparently was to discuss a March 4 revised petition on terms of surrender from Reinado sent to GOET and UNMIT leaders by Reinado's attorney Benevides Correia. (Note: See Ref A. CDA received same document two days ago and passed this to Twomey. We sent scanned version to EAP). Besides Rerden, attendees at the meeting included: President Xanana Gusmao, Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta, Vice Prime Minister (VPM) Estanislau da Silva, Prosecutor General Longuinhos Monteiro,

SRSR Atul Khare (SRSR), Deputy (security) SRSR Eric Tan, Timor armed forces (F-FDTL) Commander Taur Matan Ruak, and Speaker of Parliament Francisco Lu-Olo Guterres, among others.

#### Rerden Recounts Political Discussion of Reinado Predicament

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¶3. (C) Rerden recounted the following discussion with GOET and UNMIT officials: Monteiro spoke first stating that he would no longer be in contact with Reinado, in order to avoid conflict of interest. SRSR Khare, listed along with Dili Bishop Dom Alberto Ricardo da Silva as a witness on the Reinado petition, said UNMIT could not be a witness because of troubling points in the petition. Khare noted that all weapons must be secured before the UN can be involved, and that the SRSR cannot be a witness to a document between the government and someone facing criminal charges. VPM da Silva then said Reinado must be treated as a deserter.

#### Ramos-Horta Vacillates

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¶4. (C) An uncertain Ramos-Horta then replied that there are both political and social issues at play, that they should not rule out the option of some sort of surrender, and that GOET should not be publicly seen as ruling out the surrender option. He added, however, that surrender is the first goal, asking if perhaps Dili Bishop Ricardo could help open direct doors of communications with Reinado. (See Ref B for account of the Bishop saying he does not want to play that role). Ramos-Horta closed by vacillating back to the view that Reinado must surrender himself and his weapons.

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¶5. (C) President Gusmao replied that the Reinado petition has no status and that the state would not respond to the document directly. (Note: See Ref C, Gusmao Expounds on Reinado, Elections.) He asked if perhaps Reinado would talk to the Bishop. Gusmao told the Prosecutor General that he could talk to lawyer Correia only about item 6: "That all charges be dropped against me." Also, all weapons would need to be turned in before any discussions could begin.

¶6. (C) Matan Ruak then also chimed in that perhaps the Church could help, or maybe they should appeal to Reinado through the media, but that there should be no direct negotiations. Lu-Olo took a hard-line stance of no state negotiations: surrender or arrest. If the Church is used, the word will leak out and the state will be damaged. Gusmao said the GOET should not contact the Church, and that only Correia should. Lu-Olo rejected talking to the media and all dialogue, but did suggest that perhaps Father Domingos Maubere might talk to Reinado. (Note: Father Maubere is known as pro-Alfredo Reinado and is often opposed to the ruling Fretilin party. Observers suggest, however, that his close occupation-era ties to independence movement leaders continue to afford him respect and trust among current GOET leaders.) Ramos-Horta wanted someone to take the GOET message directly to the media but in the end no one in the room was willing to do so, Rerden recounted. (Note: Ramos-Horta had already addressed the nation on local television --- TVTTL --- the night of March 8, telling Reinado that if he wants UN Police and ISF to withdraw, he must surrender all weapons. The speech resulted in rumors that same night that the PM had announced Reinado's surrender and the withdrawal of ISF troops, a false interpretation of a confusing speech that Rerden said reached all the way to Canberra).

#### Military Operation Described

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¶7. (C) Rerden also briefed us on the military operation. He said the overall mission remained one of "apprehending Reinado and his men," without casualties if at all possible, with surrender being the primary emphasis of the operation. He said the March 4 operation "was a success" because it met the prerequisite of no civilian casualties. Reinado's side had five killed in the course of two significant engagements initiated by Reinado's side, Rerden confirmed. Rerden described how ISF called out for Reinado to surrender one last time in the early hours of Sunday morning when ISF was staged for an assault, and then initiated the attack with teargas. ISF's Australian and New Zealand forces continued to call out to Reinado's group to surrender during the beginning of the assault even though they were being fired upon, and did not fire back until it became clear that Reinado's men were not going to cease fire, and because they were in imminent danger, Rerden said. ISF assumed great risk in operating in this manner but minimization of civilian casualties was preeminent, Rerden told us. There would have been many more than five casualties had they acted more aggressively, he said. There were no Australian casualties, he confirmed.

¶8. (C) One of Reinado's key lieutenants - "Nixon" - was found in the company of nuns who were nursing his injuries; they subsequently turned him in to ISF after prolonged negotiations. There were four killed in initial reports, but ISF later found a

fifth casualty who had fallen off a steep embankment after being shot.

¶9. (C) ISF conventional forces were pulling out of Same and operating at a lower operational profile because larger forces were actually spooking Reinado's men to stay under cover, Rerden said. They are now operating in a smaller, covert manner in the hope that the fugitives can be lured into the open. ISF is no longer conducting vehicle checkpoints in the Same area. Same is no longer a restricted area and is safe for general passage. (Note: Rerden invited Emboffs to visit Same and following a check by RSO with ISF and other security officers that Same is safe, Emboffs arrived in Same the afternoon of March 12 to talk firsthand with persons on the scene. Emboffs are also talking with sources in other parts the western region to determine the extent of Reinado's support.)

#### Interesting Operational Notes

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¶10. (C) Rerden said the focus of continuing surveillance operations is along the Ainaro - Same - Alas corridor. Reinado's group is greatly dispersed and operating in 2-3 man teams; over 25 escaped from the target area during the ISF assault on March 4, more than likely armed. ISF also is closely watching suspicious maritime activity, largely due to Reinado's penchant for using the sea as a means of facilitating his own operations; the night of March 8 there was a boat operation in Dili which resulted in the boarding of one underway vessel by ISF helicopter commandos; no weapons were found, and boat occupants were released following the search. Rerden said Reinado will hear about this search, and this may dissuade him from conducting boat operations. Contrary to previous reports, no tunnels were found at the Portuguese fort Reinado was encamped at in Same.

Rerden: Reinado Support All Hype

¶11. (C) Rerden said that contrary to their initial analysis that Reinado was moving from town to town building support, they now believe that he kept moving because townspeople "got sick of him." Claims of widespread Reinado support are all media hype, he opined. Rerden cited threats of mass demonstrations that never materialized. There was no big reaction in any western cities nor any sign of discontent. An ISF officer talked with 69 petitioners in Gleno the night before the assault to discuss the operation in a public diplomacy outreach. They all sympathized with Reinado but none said they would join him. "Maybe he was too much of a loose canon," Rerden said.

¶12. (C) Rerden described a call the night before the assault by Prosecutor General Monteiro to Reinado, in which negotiations lasted for a couple of hours, with Ramos-Horta and Rerden listening quietly in on speaker phone. Finally, Ramos-Horta got fed up with the dialogue and gestured to Monteiro to cut off the dialogue. The assault came a few hours later.

U.S. Officials Offer Support, Caution

¶13. (C) CDA reiterated to Rerden and Twomey that the USG fully supports ISF and Australian policy in this operation and that we will work in close cooperation with them. We cited how we have conveyed the importance of Reinado surrendering, and our support for the GOET/ISF operation, in all our meetings. We also conveyed how we are rebuffing overtures to communicate with Reinado and the petitioners (F-FDTL soldiers dismissed last year after they complained of discrimination in the military) in order to not jeopardize the ISF operation, and that we will continue to share information that might be important for that operation. We shared information from our meetings with the President, the Bishop, Benevides and others. We did caution Rerden that his assessment of lack of support for Reinado only took into account the reaction by such groups as the Movement for National Unity and Justice (MUNJ) and the petitioners, and immediate visible public reaction; that Reinado might be seen more as an icon than a hero, and that apprehension or killing of Reinado could cause a groundswell of grassroots reaction triggered by other factors such as disillusionment with the government and poverty, although no one can predict. We said our staff would be traveling to western parts of East Timor over the weekend to take the pulse of the people in order to gauge support for Reinado and his cause.

HARSHA