

# Whitlam slips into Timor

HERALD (NEWS) 3/3/82

From BILL GRAY

**SINGAPORE, Tues. — The former Australian Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, has gone to strife-torn East Timor on an unannounced visit.**

Indonesian officials agreed to the trip so that Mr Whitlam could make an "independent assessment" of how the former Portuguese colony is being governed.

Indonesian troops, who invaded East Timor in 1976, are battling nationalist Fredelin guerrillas.

Mr Whitlam has made comments supporting international recognition for Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor as a province.

The United Nations does not recognise the takeover.

Mr Whitlam arrived in Dili on Sunday and is due back in Jakarta on Thursday night.

He is travelling with Indonesian officials and Sydney Morning Herald journalist, Mr Peter Hastings.

Western diplomats in Jakarta said tonight the trip was arranged by Mr Hastings to provide an independent answer to allegations that Indonesian administrators are using famine and murder to reduce East Timor's population to a manageable level.

Mr Hastings, who has visited Jakarta three times in the past 18 months, is the first person to escape a 12-month blackban on Australian journalists working for Australian companies.

He also is the first foreign journalist allowed



**Gough Whitlam**

into East Timor since February 1980, when the Sydney Morning Herald's Mr Peter Rodgers brought out stories and photographs of a famine on the island.

The diplomats said Mr Hastings had well-placed connections in the Indonesian hierarchy and was highly regarded by President Soeharto, although many of his articles on East Timor have been critical of Indonesia.

Mr Whitlam also is highly regarded by the Soeharto Government.

He has encouraged Australian MPs and businessmen to forge closer links with Indonesia.

Roman Catholic organisations recently have accused Indonesian troops on East Timor of forcing civilians to take part in anti-guerrilla sweeps.

Catholic relief agencies and the human rights organisation, Amnesty International, also have reported executions and disappearances among the civilian population.