

'A.M.', A.B.C. Radio, 11th March, 1983

Q: What's your view of our relations with Indonesia since their takeover of East Timor, and what kind of moves do you see your government taking in that relationship ?

Hawke: Well, the honest statement obviously is that the events of the end of 1975 and into '76 damaged the relations - it would be quite futile to say otherwise and it is also true to say that they have not fully recovered. Having said that, I believe that the correct thing to say, not to say, but what the realities are, is that it would be quite inappropriate for Australia to not have good relations with such a populous, economically and strategically important country such as Indonesia - right on our doorstep. Therefore, my government and Bill Hayden, my Foreign Minister, will be moving to try and reestablish, on the best possible basis, those relations. It must be remembered, and indeed our friends in Indonesia remember, that it was the Australians - and if I may remind you the Australian trade union movement - which played such a significant part in helping the Indonesians achieve their independence. We as a country have foundationally good relations therefore with the government and the people of Indonesia, and personally, I have good relations with much of the leadership, including the President.

Q: What are some first moves that Australia might do there ? Would you yourself go there and see President Suharto ?

Hawke: I think as a first step Bill Hayden, my Foreign Minister, should be going there in the reasonably near future and I will be talking with him about this.
