

Status-quo on incorporation to stay Hayden sidesteps ALP Timor policy

From GAY DAVIDSON, in Jakarta

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Hayden, left Jakarta yesterday with firmer assurances on several matters already agreed to or under discussion between Australia and Indonesia, and promising no change in existing bilateral programs pending a review by the new Labor Government.

But his pushing the Labor Party resolution on East Timor aside until closer to the United Nations vote in October has merely delayed Indonesia's and Australia's grappling with a new or modified Australian foreign policy.

Asked if continuation of the dialogue with Indonesia was now up to Mr Hawke on his visit in June, Mr Hayden pointed out that he had taken a lot of the strain over the past two days in Jakarta and had paved the way for Mr Hawke.

He anticipated that, in June, Mr Hawke would still be saying that the decision on Australia's vote at the UN was a matter for closer to the time.

Between now and whenever Caucus considers the Government's policy toward Indonesia and East Timor, Mr Hayden can expect to employ at least as much skill among his colleagues as he has in his talks with the Indonesians.

He has already begun preparing for that in his presentation of the results of his talks in Jakarta, and in raising in conversation the irreversible nature of Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor, the effect of retaliatory measures Indonesia could take if Australia was regarded as a betrayer, and the loss of face for Australia internationally if the Government was thought to have made a mess of the issue.

As well, information likely to assist the Government's cause has come to light, including a report that representatives from the Australian Embassy who visited East Timor a few months ago returned saying there appeared to be 300 to 400 Fretilin with about 100 arms.

And in recent months there had been reports that a significant proportion of these Fretilin, with arms, had entered into negotiations with the Indonesian authorities about surrender. It was suggested that the negotiations were currently active.

When this was referred to Mr Hayden, he said he was aware of it but a senior Indonesian official who agreed on the figures was more sceptical of the negotiations. He said the Fretilin were dispersed, there was no indication of communications between them, and they had no leaders to undertake negotiations.

At his press conference after talks finished yesterday, Mr Hayden said he had not come to Indonesia believing all matters of difference could be cleared up in two days.

Mr Hayden said he had noted on behalf of the Australian Government that Indonesia had incorporated East Timor. "But I also expressed our deep concern that an internationally supervised act of self-determination had not taken place in East Timor, and the matter stands there," he said.

What Australia would do at the UN when the issue came up in October was a matter the Government would attend to later, closer to the date of its consideration. "In the meantime existing programs, projects and exchanges in Indonesia will be maintained as we

mutually explore our bi-lateral relations with the purpose of putting them on a firm, more constructive and creative footing and seek to reduce causes for differences and misunderstandings," Mr Hayden said.

"In respect of East Timor, our primary concern is to ensure that we do all we properly and reasonably can to help the East Timorese."

"But what I have established is that we have embarked on a process of dialogue and in that dialogue we sought to explore differences and seek room for adjustment and accommodation," he said.

The "notable advances" included the family-reunion program for the East Timorese. They were moving but they hadn't reached conclusions, and the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr Mochtar, had given an assurance "from the highest possible level here" that the program would proceed at the rate of 20 or 30 a month.

A Parliamentary delegation had been incited to visit, and Mr Hayden expected that would go ahead during the winter recess in July. Dr Mochtar had undertaken to examine the claims of Australian property interests in East Timor.

Mr Hayden had also raised the matter of the five journalists who died at Balibo in 1975 "And the foreign minister assured me that no new information had come to light since the earlier investigation". The Indonesians denied responsibility and it was difficult to see what more could be done unless more information was given to the Government.

AAP journalists in Jakarta a 'break-through'. — Page 8