Fax to Canberra Times 280 2282

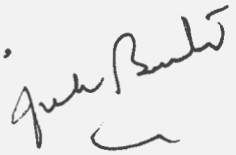
The Editor
Canberra Times

Dear Sir,

The Indonesian Treaty

The Simmington article in your January 15 issue missed the main point in criticism of the Treaty. "The realpolitik need for a security relationship with Indonesia must override other bilateral problems". The author, like the Prime Minister, is thirty years out of date. Political "realists" are no more realists than economic rationalists are rational. The founding theorist, Hans Morgenthau, nearly thirty years ago, after a great power was defeated by a small emerging nation, recognized that deterrence does not deter. The underlying assumption of power politics was false. There can be bargaining and deterrence in cases of "disputes" over negotiable issues such as resources distribution and other material competitions, but there cannot be deterrence in the case of "conflicts" over issues involving human needs of identity and recognition, such as independence and ethnicity. Morgenthau's disciples and the remaining universities that maintain strategic studies have yet to catch up with thinking. The Prime Minister took this inititative without adequate advice, just as he has pursued economic rationalist policies not knowing of important paradigm shifts in thinking which have taken place in the last few decades. Supporting a military government which seeks to deny by coercion some degree of autonomy to the other former Dutch colonies is asking for security trouble for Australia. Some vague commitment to render assistance in three more Vietnams to our North is an absurdity. Far better to have kept to quiet diplomacy and to have drawn the attention of the Indonesian military government to universal trends which no power can prevent, and to have faciliated some discussions between the parties concerned. To confront in this way the future great power of the region, China, is also a self-defeating stratey. There are more contructive approaches to the problem.

Yours faithfully,



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