The Honorable Dr. Condoleezza Rice  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madame Secretary:

As you know, the United Nations recently expanded its mission in Timor-Leste substantially. As longtime supporters of the new nation, we hope that the new United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) will be as effective as possible in helping Timor-Leste restore security and continue on the path toward peaceful democracy which has been interrupted by recent violence.

In August, disagreements within the U.N. Security Council caused it to defer a decision on whether the international military component, now led by Australia, should be fully integrated into the UN mission or remain under separate command. A final decision on the military command structure will be made after the Secretary-General reports on the issue by October 27.

We commend the Australian government for the speed in which they responded to Timor-Leste’s request for help in May 2006. However, we have concerns that a force under separate command will not only make coordination difficult, but that it will reduce the confidence and security that the people of Timor-Leste need from UNMIT at this difficult time. The U.N. Secretary-General has expressed support for a fully-integrated mission as well. Including all military components within UNMIT would also be consistent with previous UN missions in Timor-Leste. In 1999, when the Australian-led InterFET deployment helped to end post-referendum violence, it was integrated into the UNTAET peacekeeping force within a few months.

When the Security Council considers the issue again, we respectfully urge that the United States support a well-integrated and effective U.N. mission in Timor-Leste, with all international soldiers under U.N. command. We thank you for your consideration of this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Nita M. Lowey  
Member of Congress

Patrick J. Kennedy  
Member of Congress

George Miller  
Member of Congress

James P. Moran  
Member of Congress
Sam Farr  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Steven A. Rothman  
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne  
Member of Congress

Robert Wexler  
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress

Tammy Baldwin  
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress

James L. Oberstar  
Member of Congress

Ellen O. Tauscher  
Member of Congress

Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress

Lane Evans  
Member of Congress

Allison F. Schwartz  
Member of Congress

Raul M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress
Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress