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## Terror in Indonesia

INDONESIAN POLICE officials disclosed yesterday that they had unearthed documents a month ago warning of a terrorist attack in the Jakarta neighborhood where a truck bomb was detonated Tuesday. Officials at the U.S. Embassy and at the JW Marriott Hotel, where at least 10 people were killed when the bomb went off, said they hadn't been told anything about such documents, The Post's Ellen Nakashima reported. The revelation will focus more attention on the question of whether the Indonesian government is doing enough to combat the threat from radical Islamic terrorist organizations, notably the al Qaeda-affiliated Jemaah Islamiah. There's no question that Indonesia was slow to acknowledge the threat, that the government has been moving more aggressively in recent months and particularly since a deadly bombing in Bali last fall and that a lot more needs to be done. How much more may emerge as the investigation into this latest bombing unfolds.

Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous nation, and the most populous with a Muslim majority. Its significance in the global fight against Islamic terrorism can hardly be overstated. Traditionally Indonesian Muslims have shared their Asian archipelago nation with Christians, Hindus and others; Islamic rule has never been imposed. Lately, though, a more doctrinaire form of Islam has been gaining ground among a growing minority of Indonesians.

The response has to be both tactical and strategic. As the International Crisis Group has reported, many of the leaders of the terrorist organizations have been trained in Afghanistan, either during the anti-Soviet war or since; it will take intelligence and police work to track them down. Many of the foot soldiers are young students of Islamic schools that preach intolerance, often with Saudi financing. While the focus of such groups used to be internal -- resentment of communal violence against Muslims within Indonesia -- now they are looking outward and particularly seeing the United States as a target. The larger picture is of a nation in difficult transition from dictatorship; since the 32-year reign of autocratic President Suharto ended in 1998, the nation has had three leaders. Its challenges include deep-seated economic troubles, ethnic divisions, corruption, tensions over the place of the powerful military in society and human rights abuses by some parts of those armed forces. It's in the West's interest to help the transition in any way possible -- to help a Muslim-majority country succeed as a tolerant democracy.

The terrorists who attacked the Marriott Tuesday showed themselves, as have the perpetrators of past attacks in other continents, to care as little for Muslim life as for anyone else. Most of the dead and injured are Indonesians, many of them poor workers. The larger effect will also be primarily to hurt Indonesia, by discouraging tourists and investors. But harm to Indonesia reverberates painfully around the globe.