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**OPENING SPEECH OF THE ACADEMIC WEEK
OF THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (IDN)**

March 4, 2019

MINISTER OF STATE AND PCM,

AGIO PEREIRA

**"Strategy Day - Political Instability and Strategic Surprise
and Homage to National Resistance**

Leader Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

on the occasion of Veterans Day Commemoration"



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Avenida Presidente Nicolau Lobato,
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Your Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen

Dear students,

First of all, and on behalf of His Excellency the Prime Minister, I would like to thank you for your invitation to attend this conference. The Prime Minister, being unable to attend, asked me to represent him, expressing the votes of success for the celebrations of the academic week of the Institute of National Defense.

So, I begin by congratulating all students of the National Defense Institute, both those who begin the 2019/2020 school year and those who have finished their courses in the 2018/2019 school year. Timor-Leste is a new country that undoubtedly needs the participation of young and qualified personnel in the process of building and consolidating the nation.

IDN, by contributing to the valorization and training of the Armed Forces and Security Services, as well as of their senior staff and civil servants, government agencies and others in civil society, is undoubtedly contributing to this goal.

I would also like to emphasize the development, that has occurred in only a few years, of the excellence of this institute which, in addition to providing teaching and research opportunities, has increasingly established bridges and strategic partnerships with other foreign organizations and universities, placing Timor-Leste closer to different centers of knowledge and fostering a culture of academic cooperation, essential to national development.

IDN has effectively been able to adapt to the project we want for our country and to go further with innovation, professionalism and quality, thus forming true "agents of change" for our nation.

An example of this is the initiative that today brings us together, the "Strategy Day", with sessions that allow us to debate the past and the present, which are necessary threads for the strategic construction of a stable, developed and sustainable future.



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As such I am pleased for the presence of such distinguished national and international speakers at these sessions and, especially for those who came from afar, I wish, on behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, to thank you for your presence and willingness to continue to maintain alive the flame of the subject that is Timor!

I think it is consensual to say that Timor-Leste continues to create many opportunities and, of course, challenges. Opportunities which include knowing how to capitalize on the experience and capital of the region, as we are geographically inserted in Southeast Asia - a vibrant region in innovation and commerce that is instrumental to regional security. And equally challenges, as we must invest seriously in our human resources and in the development of infrastructures so that we can compete with the neighbors of the region, creating market segments that can capture investment and business, essential to our economic diversification.

Other challenges and opportunities still apply to our young country, the youngest, but also considered the most democratic in the region. Despite a past of cyclical conflicts, Timor-Leste has avenged itself as a peaceful country with potential for further development. Our complex political process, drawn from experiences that go back to a 24-year struggle for national liberation, did not prevent the implementation of a democratic system that has been on a safe and consolidating path.

Thus, in spite of recent political circumstances and a certain polarization of healthy political parties in democratic contexts, there is, in what is essential, a collective vision for the inclusive development of the Timorese and a constructive relationship between the principal bodies of sovereignty. These conditions are primordial to ensure the strengthening of state institutions and economic development, without which we will not progress as a nation. Particularly because democracy and poverty are, or should be, incompatible!

On the other hand, new opportunities arise for the country with the signing, one year ago, of the historic Treaty between Timor-Leste and Australia on their respective permanent maritime borders in the Timor Sea.

Until the signing of this Treaty, it had only been possible to conclude interim arrangements for the sharing of resources, to unblock access to the valuable resources in the Timor Sea and, consequently, to bring significant revenues for the reconstruction of the country. The rights and responsibilities of



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Timor-Leste and Australia with respect to resources and activities in our respective sovereign territories are now set, thus paving the way for new investment and development opportunities for the country.

Much of this recent victory is owed to the Head of the Timor-Leste Negotiating Team, His Excellency. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, who in the past, has never failed to believe in the ability and perseverance of the Timorese people to fight for their rights and never gave up the ideal of full sovereignty and freedom, leading the nation to success.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen,

Yesterday we marked National Veterans Day, a day with a strong symbology for the nation, where we honor our national heroes. This year, in August, we will celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Popular Consultation that led to national independence, through the overwhelming vote of the population in favor of self-determination.

In this context, it is timely to pay a just homage to the Leader of the National Resistance, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, a great man of our history!

Although other historical leaders were also instrumental in the process that led to the victory of the Timorese people, some of them present here today, were it not for the national strategy change that the Father of the Nation gave to the Resistance, perhaps our destiny had been another, with even greater losses.

As you know, Xanana Gusmão was chosen as the maximum leader of our "Struggle" at the Conference held between March 1-8, 1981 in Aitana. From then on, the convergence of ideas, priorities, sense of mission and, above all, concerted and strategic actions, embodied in the concept of National Unity, led to our freedom, the freedom of the Timorese People.

Xanana Gusmão analyzed the national, regional and global context. He studied other experiments and guerrilla techniques, reflected on the objectives of the resistance struggle, the conditions - human, material and military - and reorganized the resistance, uniting the people around the collective dream of independence. With consistency and courage, he managed to inspire a suffering and discouraged



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people and obtained the respect of the guerrillas, devastated by years of suffering, sometimes with hard but necessary measures, so as not to let the momentum of the "Struggle" dwindle.

The decision to make FALINTIL apolitical, the national reconciliation around a common enemy, the dynamization of youth, among other decisions of our national leader, including his own capture, and later the critical cantonment of our guerrillas in the preparation of the vote popular, were decisive conditions that led to the realization of the popular consultation, under the bastion of international law.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Xanana Gusmão is undoubtedly an extraordinary and charismatic man who personifies the spirit and the capacity for sacrifice, discipline, work and leadership, characteristic of those who are capable of transforming the world.

Xanana Gusmão is a strategist and is, above all, a dreamer. And the dream commands life!

Thank you very much.



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