



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH

BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER

KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAYING OF THE
FOUNDATION STONE FOR THE BUILDING OF THE
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND F-FDTL HEADQUARTERS**

24 August 2010

Fatuhada, Dili

Your Excellency the Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Júlio Tomás Pinto,

Your Excellency the Chief of the Defence Force, Major-General Taur Matan Ruak,

Your Excellency the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Mr Fu Yuancong,

Illustrious guests,

It is a great pleasure for me to be present at this ceremony, which could not have come any sooner. We cannot demand State institutions to meet their obligations with commitment and professionalism without first providing them with dignified and proper working conditions.

The Ministry of Defence and the F-FDTL Headquarters have from the start been occupying temporary facilities that are not adequate to the demanding tasks given to them.

Armed Forces are the last stalwart for ensuring national sovereignty, and as such the State must invest its resources in their modernization, providing them with infrastructures that make proud all those who have chosen to dedicate their lives to serving in their ranks.

Also, we cannot forget that it is because of FALINTIL, which were the embryo for F-FDTL, that we now live in freedom and are the masters of our fate.

By laying the foundation stone for the building that will house the Ministry of Defence and the F-FDTL Headquarters, the Government is not making a favour to the Military, but merely doing its duty.

When this work is completed, I am sure that the Armed Forces will be better prepared for carrying out the tasks that are inherent to their mission, with soldiers and officers having a more honourable and motivating working environment.

Furthermore, enabling the Minister of Defence and the senior officers of the Armed Forces to share the same physical space will allow for greater articulation between the political power and the Military, with the resulting natural advantages.

Your Excellency the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China,

Words cannot express how thankful we are for this work that your Country gave us, in addition to all the others. After the Palace of the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Military Residential Quarters in Metinaro, we are now privileged to be about to receive, in the name of the fraternal brotherhood that links our two Peoples, the building that will house the Ministry of Defence and the F-FD'TL Headquarters.

I also ask you to convey to your Government not only my personal thanks but also the appreciation of all the Timorese, who never forget who they true friends are.

It was also in the name of this friendship that the People's Republic of China has recently enabled the training of the crews of the Jaco patrol boats, which are now part of the Naval Component of our Armed Forces, in addition to having facilitated the purchase of these vessels.

We are firmly committed to incrementing bilateral cooperation in the military area with friendly countries that provide us with uninterested support. Our Chinese brothers and sisters are clearly part of this group.

We are aware that an eventual assistance in order to enrich the technical know-how of our military, to be generously provided by the People's Republic of China, will not result in heavy burdens to the Timorese State. Consequently, there is nothing that would prevent us from requesting and accepting it, nor would it be legitimate for anyone to seek to constraint our options.

We will have the opportunity, Mr Ambassador, to discuss the subjects and the terms under which bilateral cooperation between our countries is to be carried out.

I urge all you civilian and military staff that will soon be enjoying these facilities to dedicate yourselves heart and soul to your work. I look forward to seeing this building completed as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

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