



**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE**

**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

**SPEECH**

**BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER**

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**ON THE OCCASION OF HIS VISIT TO JAKARTA**

**“REDEFINING FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN**

**INDONESIA AND TIMOR-LESTE”**

1 May 2008

Indonesian Council on World Affairs

Excellences

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is always an honour to address you all, particularly in this Council that gathers members from the most varied sectors of Indonesian society, and which has already received illustrious international figures for debates on issues with global importance, within a truly democratic and universal context. I therefore salute the members and patrons of the Indonesian Council on World Affairs for the excellent work they have been doing.

The subject “Redefining Future Relations between Indonesia and Timor-Leste” holds an exceptional emotion for me. The mutual sympathy and friendship that unites both our countries did not begin yesterday, and I believe they will not fade in the future, since they are part of the history of our two Republics.

Thus I will speak to you with an open heart, as one does among old friends. The common origins and the way in which the more painful memories of our past have been overcome – through a process of mutual reconciliation – allows us to foresee that our relations, by being strengthened, can contribute in the future for the consolidation of our two young democracies.

In 1999, the people of Indonesia and the people of Timor-Leste added a new chapter to the history of democracy in Southeast Asia. Against all scepticisms, our peoples voted for democracy and the principles of a State under the Democratic Rule of Law, with Indonesia abandoning irreversibly its legacy of autocratic governance and with Timor-Leste starting the path towards national sovereignty and independence.

Here I must congratulate His Excellency the President of the Republic Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono for his democratic vision for the Indonesia Nation. Under his leadership the Indonesian people have known the opportunities provided by a climate of peace and stability, and they have enjoyed the ideal of freedom.

Timor-Leste, as a young democracy, also aspires to be distinguished by a culture of tolerance and, like its neighbour, to promote “unity in diversity”, nurturing a true democratic culture.

As founding member of ASEAN and as an emergent democracy, Indonesia has been playing a leading role in terms of change and leadership, which are vital for the region of Southeast Asia where Timor-Leste is also inserted. Your country, within a very specific context of respect for customs and traditions, has been distinguishing itself by way of significant changes that enabled the development of the economy and the promotion of peace and national stability.

These progresses, accompanied by Timor-Leste with great enthusiasm, become even more remarkable since we are talking about a country with an ethnical, historical, cultural and language diversity that cannot be neglected, thereby proving that diversity can indeed be a factor of development and union.

Timor-Leste has been extending and consolidating cooperation relations with several countries in the world, with special attention to the regional context. The membership in ASEAN is a priority for the Timorese State, since we consider that it is extremely important to belong to this “family” and to extract the implicit advantages that derive from here: security, stability, economic development and regional cooperation.

What is more, the fact that we will be full members of ASEAN is also a way for us to have a more active participation in the collective regional development effort.

I cannot miss this opportunity to salute the Indonesia Government for the creative and responsible way in which it has conducted the Aceh stabilization process – I consider it to be a triumph of Peace – a fruit of the commitment by the Indonesian leaders and civil society, in nurturing reconciliation and democracy in the Country.

This victory would not have been possible without the participation of all Indonesian people, which keeps on surprising us with demonstrations of courage and compassion, as well as with the way in which they have overcome the natural disasters that have hit them.

I would also like to say a few words condemning vehemently the terrorist attacks that have killed hundreds of Indonesian citizens, mostly Muslims. These attacks represent an attempt to destroy the traditions of cultural tolerance and freedom, and the damaging connotation that is often made between Islam and terrorism must also be fought against effectively.

Indeed, we can see in the entire world the fundamental contribution that the Muslim community has made to the development of humankind itself, co-existing healthily with other religions and sharing its knowledge and wisdom in an open and constructive manner. Indonesia, the Country with the largest Muslim community in the world, has been a singular example of this reality.

Timor-Leste has a small but dynamic Muslim community, the rights of which are acknowledged in our Constitution. Our Government has been giving all

necessary support for this community to develop itself and to have an active participation in the development of the Country.

The dialogue between cultures and civilizations requires strong and demanding internal agendas, in what regards the respect for difference and the inclusion of everyone in society, regardless of beliefs, religions and cultures, especially today when we must carry on opening paths towards dialogue and hope, through all the existing tensions.

This dialogue must take place within a framework of universal values and principles, respecting the individual assurances and liberties. Thus I must highlight the efforts made by the Indonesian Government and by His Excellency the President of the Republic Yudhoyono, which within the scope of ASEAN have been defending the fundamental rights of the people of Burma.

The dramatic situation lived in Burma is being accompanied by us with great concern and disappointment. These people have been the victims of policies that have laid waste to their democratic aspirations and that have deteriorated the economic, social and humanitarian situations in a country too close to us. It is impossible for us to contain our indignation.

We truly hope that a solution can be found urgently for Burma – a solution that includes the leader of the opposition and the Nobel Peace Prize winner Ms Aung Suu Kyi – returning freedom and the full use of democracy to their people.

Excellences

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The common features that united Timor-Leste and Indonesia are too many for us to think of a future that does not involve the strengthening of our ties: we have a common historic past; we have common borders; we have Timorese citizens living in Indonesia and Indonesian citizens living in Timor-Leste, completely integrated. The Indonesian language has been declared a working language by our Constitution, and we also have determinant cultural features that make us feel closer to each other.

In addition to this, we face similar challenges: to build a sound democracy; to consolidate transparent and accountable institutions; to enhance the rule of law; to strengthen the judicial system and to enable a free and independent media contributing to the accountability of the leaders towards their people.

In view of all this, our future relations must be built around a strong partnership that promotes peace and security, as well as new opportunities of prosperity, freedom, justice, tolerance and democracy for our neighbouring and friendly countries.

The development of the creation of the Truth and Friendship Commission, which represented a unique reconciliation model, is evidence of how this is possible.

We were pushed forward by the strong will to move on and by the determination to turn the pages of the past, through joint efforts, as the solution of old problems will contribute to promote our bilateral relations. This innovating way to bring our two peoples together in an uncommon approach

in the search for truth and in the promotion of friendship – instead of starting legal cases – contributes for them to be even more united, within the conviction that we all suffered because of a regime.

The final report of the TFC will be ready within the present year – as a result of the acknowledged commitment by the commissioners from both countries – and its recommendations will be implemented as much as possible.

Let our recent history state that, despite the concerns underlying the creation of this Commission, the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of Timor-Leste spared no effort to develop relations of stability, friendship and mutual advantages between the two countries and peoples, making reconciliation indeed a reality.

Excellences

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The IV Constitutional Government of Timor-Leste entered office about 8 months ago and assumed the responsibility for the definition and implementation of reforming policies in a country that, in addition to being democratically young, was also in a particularly weakened condition, as a result of the 2006 crisis.

The 2006 political crisis, which shook the foundations of our State and submitted our People to unforeseeable suffering and anguish, left behind a heavy legacy with painful consequences, of which the assassination attempts of February 11 is a dramatic example.

However, those who tried to attack the sovereignty of the State could not achieve their goals, as once again the institutions of our Country, despite their little temporal experience, were able to face this new trial with firmness and determination.

The State of Timor-Leste chose to declare martial law in order to prevent greater public disturbances, as well as to undertake the necessary investigation and operational diligences to capture the suspects of the crimes, while at the same time ensuring the population a social climate of public normality and tranquillity.

These measures allowed a significant evolution in the internal security situation of the Country, with most of those involved in the attacks having already surrendered themselves to justice. Only a small group remains to be captured, a group that is already restricted to an area of the Country.

This evolution results in part from the creation of a Joint Command between the Armed Forces and the National Police, which have demonstrated that they are able to operate in a coordinated, efficient and effective manner. If we can take positive aspects from difficult periods, we should highlight the reapproximation of these two institutions, proving that when confronted with common objectives they can work well and in a duly articulated manner, thereby disrupting the doubts cast in 2006 saying that these forces would never see eye to eye in the pursue of the consolidation objectives of a State under the Democratic Rule of Law.

It is with satisfaction that I announce that at this time the exceptional measures suspending the rights and assurances of the citizens have been lifted, and that



the country has returned to normal, with the exception of the region of Ermera, where the rebel group yet to surrender to justice is located.

Our Government is also committed to the urgent resolution of the problems that condition economic growth in our country, such as the problem of the thousands of internally displaced persons. We are aware that peace and stability cannot be achieved without returning dignity and justice to these sectors of the population, who deserve the protection of the State and the material and spiritual wellbeing to make use of the freedom earned with so great a sacrifice.

Efficient governance is essential to strengthen the confidence of the People in the Government. The protection of Human Rights, Justice and the Rule of Law, together with the assurance of security and stability to the people, are the main obligations of the State. In this sense we are faced with huge challenges, which need to be overcome urgently.

We have been accompanying the Public Sector Reform in Indonesia, and my Government as well has chosen 2008 as the year for Administrative Reform. The Government is committed to create an efficient, independent and free from corruption civil service, relying on the collaboration from other Sovereignty Bodies – so that the transformation in the public sector may lead to a governance of transparency, accountability and efficiency in the management of public finance.

For the immediate fight against poverty we are implementing a proactive economic policy for mobilizing foreign investment and attracting investors. We believe this is the more immediate way to create employment, at the same time as we transform the national business climate, namely in what concerns the inherent administrative procedures.

In addition to this, we are reviewing the investment laws and other essential laws (such as the one on law property) and captivating foreign investment, while undertaking tax reform and reducing taxes in the non-oil sector, in order to increase private investment.

It is here that I would like to see an increase in the investment and economic cooperation between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. We want more Indonesian companies to invest in Timor-Leste, and we want Timorese and Indonesian businesspersons to have a closer relationship.

The truth is that around 70% to 80% of our external trade is with Indonesia, and therefore we have to develop mechanisms making these commercial relations easier and appealing to the Indonesian private sector.

The strengthening of the economic and commercial ties between our two countries is also an investment in our very security. Together with the establishment of new dynamics of cooperation in the area of defence, mostly in the border areas, this will be fundamental for the future dialogue between our Nations.

I must also thank Indonesia for closing the land border posts so as to prevent our bilateral relations from being affected, during the most critical periods we have experienced in the recent past.

The threats to internal stability within the global world of today are shared with concern by us all. The subversive actions against national identity and cohesion, the acts of terrorism, guerrilla war and force by movements with political goals contrary to the constitutional order (as we have witness with the attacks of

February 11), and of course organized crime such as drug trafficking and others, are threats that we must fight together, as neighbouring countries.

The strengthening of our diplomatic relations makes the entire country benefit from stability, rather than just the border area, thus promoting development and fighting the threats that have an increasingly more global nature.

I would like to conclude by saying that the bilateral meetings we have had have been rather productive. I can highlight the signing of various agreements in fundamental areas for the development of Timor-Leste.

In addition to these bilateral and also trilateral agreements – including Australia, the United States, Brazil and Germany – I must also state my appreciation for the contribution that Indonesia has made towards the development of the institutional capacity of my country, providing technical cooperation and assistance in areas so diverse as health, forestry, transports, telecommunications, power and diplomacy, among others.

With Timor-Leste being a country that consists mostly of young people faced with the drama of unemployment and social integration, the scholarships and facilities attributed to our university students are very much appreciated by us.

Lastly, it is with great satisfaction that we receive the creation of an Indonesian Cultural Centre in Dili, in response to the request by His Excellency the President of the Republic Dr Ramos-Horta, as a way to promote an even closer cultural cooperation between Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

Despite the setbacks that have conditioned the sustainable development of our country, I consider that Timor-Leste has great potential to succeed and to be a reason of pride for all those who have supported us and believed in us.

The common agenda of added cooperation defining the relations between Indonesia and Timor-Leste is promising! For the future I propose that we explore even further that which brings us close.

Let us reinvent new partnerships, formulating serious cooperation proposals, as a way to defend the freedom of our brother countries.

Our common history is made by our two peoples. Let us create the conditions for the friendship and solidarity among them to grow stronger and stronger!

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

1 May 2008