



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

ADDRESS BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER AND
MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY,**

KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO,

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE SECOND JAKARTA
INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE DIALOGUE (JIDD)**

**“Military Operations Other Than War: Regional and National
Perspectives”**

21 March 2012

Jakarta

Your Excellency the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia,
Dr Purnomo Yusgiantoro

My dear friend President Fidel Ramos

Your Excellencies

The Ministers of Defence of the various countries in attendance
Illustrious Participants and Heads of Delegations

Dear panel colleagues:

Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister of Defence of Singapore

Mr Dato Paduka Haji Mustappa Bin Haji Sirat, Deputy Minister of Defence of
Brunei Darussalam

Mr Lee Young Geol, Vice Minister of Defence of the Republic of Korea

Professor Dewi Fortuna Anwar, moderator

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to take part in this Second Jakarta International Defence Dialogue and I trust that it will be as successful as the first one held last year.

Once again, this event, organised by our neighbour Indonesia, was of such significance that it was important that Timor-Leste attended. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Government and People of Indonesia whose efforts enhance the friendly environment between our two countries. Indonesia is at the forefront of encouraging global dialogue on current and pressing topics within the regional and international context, particularly in the areas of defence, security and democracy.

This dialogue and exchange of honest and constructive opinions, within a true spirit of intergovernmental cooperation, could not be held in a more fitting country. In addition to being a gracious host, Indonesia is a stable and successful democracy in our region and provides, as we all know, a leading example of intercultural and religious tolerance.

The issue of tolerance is an excellent starting point for the dialogue on “Military Operations Other Than War”. We live in times of underlying uncertainty and anxiety, caused by irresponsible acts and feelings of intolerance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The First Jakarta International Defence Dialogue strengthened the consensus in relation to the need to build mutual trust and cooperation between countries in order to solve, by ways other than conflict, the differences that may exist in bilateral and multilateral relations.

We have often mentioned the need to strengthen dialogue and develop coordination mechanisms able to ensure peace and harmony in the region and ultimately in the world. An example is R2P, the Responsibility to Protect mentioned earlier by the Secretary General.

This challenge can only be overcome when the policies of “responsibility for protecting the human rights of the international community” are truly separated from

economic interests. The atmosphere of distrust will remain between States while it is the markets – and not the values of the Nations themselves – that dictate if there will be war or peace and that determine the eventual intervention of Peacekeeping Missions, as in the case of Cote d'Ivoire.

Upon reflection I raise a question that for me is essential. It is this:

Since the first JIDD in March last year what have we witnessed taking place in the world?

You may not agree with me but what I see is:

- an Egypt that is socially divided
- a Libya bloodied
- a Yemen experiencing the anxiety of change, a change that we all wish to be peaceful
- and a Syria unable to stop its path to self destruction.

In the Middle East, we have Israel and Palestine who cannot escape their fatal destiny as though condemned by a need to guarantee the integrity of principles and the grandeur of values held in high spheres of decision. We see Iraq destroyed in its entirety as a country, Afghanistan shaken to the core by their differences and disunity and a Pakistan that cannot avoid disconnecting itself from the problem of its neighbours.

And if all this was not enough, we have Iran maintaining a rigid stance whilst an oil embargo that has been imposed, in addition to not resolving the problem, will make the global economic recovery more difficult. By chance there are indications that Saudi Arabia is attempting to reduce the risks of an enormous collapse that would create instability across the globe.

Meanwhile in the African continent the process in Tunisia seems to have developed with maturity, but there are many countries, including some with Peace Keeping Forces deployed, where a solution to conflict and violence in the medium term is not easy.

The economic growth of ASEAN itself, alongside the growth of China and India, and the enduring strengths of Japan and the Republic of Korea, make this, the century of Asia.

Meanwhile, this great region of Asia-Pacific is not immune to the latent and real threats of today's world.

Nowadays interdependence is critical. We are here with the assumption that the States should work together to protect the interests, both national and global.

Could there perhaps also be another venue for us to raise the true causes of other problems that are not merely derived from economic interests?

Asia has become a major buyer of weapons – in an era where multilateralism should guide the acts of States, it seems that we are preparing for an unprecedented war.

The United Nations should offer debates to reorient the policies on intervention in the world. I am glad to hear the UN Secretary General raising this issue earlier. The sending of the highly respected Kofi Annan to Syria was so late that it demonstrates that the community of nations still prefers armed interventions to interventions of a political nature.

The people that are victims of persecution and victims of their own poverty and often unaware of the thin line separating the morality of the international community and the morality of “national economic security” of the major powers, these people will in the meantime increase the rate of inter-territorial crime and also increase the threat to internal security and the economic and social stability of the community of nations.

I say this because it is said that “power and influence” follow “economic trends”.

Within this negative scenario, we must commend the positive developments taking place in Myanmar, both with the political participation of Aung San Suu Kyi and the end of the armed conflict, and we hope these developments will continue on the path to consolidating democracy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In terms of security and defence, Timor-Leste, which is located both in Southeast Asia and in the greater Pacific region, is not immune to regional strategic manoeuvrings.

Timor-Leste is part of an archipelago, which is in itself a situation of fragility. We have land borders and sea borders that make us vulnerable to the threats of the modern world: piracy, terrorism, organised crime such as the trafficking of drugs, people, weapons and contraband, as well as illegal immigration.

Located between two major regional powers, Indonesia and Australia, indeed two good friends, we are not immune to the consequences of acts of terrorism carried out in our region. Further, Australia is, of course, also not immune to these threats, as a result of the complex network of international relations.

We were recently presented with the issue of asylum seekers, which ultimately affects Australia but which must be approached within a regional, if not international context. This is yet another example of how we cannot solve conflicts and promote peace in the region, supporting those who flee from domestic crises, without targeting directly the root causes of the problems.

Timor-Leste is a small and young nation and remains vulnerable to frictions affecting our region.

Perhaps because of the recent tensions in the South China Seas, we are witnessing the preparation of defence mechanisms of another major power next to our borders.

Today we understand that the protection of the borders of a country and its maritime territories are not exclusively confined to a country’s defence force and is thereby applying a broader concept of defence which obviously has implications for smaller countries like Timor-Leste.

Within the context of regional defence, Timor-Leste, alongside Australia and Indonesia, must not stop searching for a better understanding on maritime security under a trilateral arrangement.

We do not want to risk being considered unfriendly by this country or the other. On the contrary, we want and we seek to have partnerships with everyone, particularly our closest neighbours, so that we can develop our country.

The concept of national security is still a concept in development for our country – as indeed is everything else. We have just begun a profound reflection on the best way to effectively protect our population and our assets, as well as on the best way to ensure territorial integrity and national sovereignty through our security and defence forces and services.

Lately we have been the victim of illegal fishing and destruction of our maritime fauna. We understood that Timorese waters were easy prey to illegal exploitation, in view of our difficulties with patrolling our coastal areas. As you know, we have great wealth in our waters, which is essential for the economic and social development of our people.

On the other hand, we are also vulnerable to natural disasters and calamities that are frequent in our region. The occurrences that took place in different parts of the world made us even more alert to the need to be prepared for these types of adversities.

As such we decided that our Military should be prepared not only to defend our sovereignty, but especially to guarantee the safety of our population and our assets. It was in this sense that we developed our Naval Component, with a view to our maritime security.

Timor-Leste requires naval capability to respond to the improper use of its national waters for illicit activities. Timor-Leste must be able to carry out monitoring, surveillance, policing and rescue activities in maritime areas under national jurisdiction. These responsibilities will also enable our neighbours to have confidence in our State, which is important in terms of regional stability and to prove that we are serious in our commitment towards collective global security.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are seeking ways to be more active in our region and in the world. After overcoming the conflicts in which we lived for over a quarter of a century, including our own internal quarrels, we now want to share our reconciliation experience and to focus our efforts on a more humanist ideal of political and social tolerance to bring dignity and development to everyone.

Since the beginning of this year, a small engineering team from our defence force has been deployed as part of the Portuguese contingent in Lebanon under the UN Mission.

Our participation in international missions will help us to create strong and positive bonds of cooperation with other countries, as well as to put our own experience and our determination for peace at the service of other countries. Our firm willingness to become fully fledged members of ASEAN is also substantiated in this desire to take an active role in

the development of peace in the region and to bring our national defence forces more in line with the models held by other countries.

We are aware that many countries cannot or are unable to act as effectively as they would wish in the management of crises and situations of humanitarian emergency. In these times of serious difficulty, combined forces acting under effective international coordination have much better chances of being successful.

Our own experiences teach us that the only way for international peacekeeping operations to be successful is for them to be designed and implemented in an intrinsically transparent manner, without losing sight of the perspectives of the country that receives the assistance.

We know this because we have been living in a long period of peace and stability, supported by the United Nations and the International Stabilisation Forces provided by Australia and New Zealand. During this time we have been adjusting and re-adjusting internal priorities and needs, without allowing interferences and without disrespecting our own timings and processes.

In conclusion, we can say that we have reasons to be confident. Along with the growth in the Asia-Pacific region, Timor-Leste has also been recording high economic growth rates.

As you have all been following, on the 17th of March we held the Presidential elections and the results indicate that we will go to a second round. The elections ran peacefully and I am confident that the legislative elections in June will be held in a similar manner so as to allow the planned withdrawal of the UN mission and ISF.

And if there is one thing we can say on “Military Operations Other Than War” is that the security challenges posed to nations leaving behind post-conflict situations are certainly easier to overcome if there is a strong will by the international community to contribute to develop those nations.

I can add that, without first ensuring peace and stability in those fragile States, it will be impossible to enable economic development and to remove the people from misery – which is the worst threat against humanity.

As such, these operations should seek only to promote peace and stability as ends unto themselves. The rest, namely economic and social development and the very consolidation of democracy will follow through naturally from within those societies!

It is not by imposing policies befitting developed countries or by defending economic interests in strategic parts of the world that we can resolve the misery under which the people live. On the contrary, misery that has been ignored by the entire world inevitably turns into tragedy in some part of the globe, to the amazement – if not to the surprise – of all.

Peace or hope for peace, in my view, can only begin where and when there is an end to intolerance.

Promoting peace and reducing poverty in countries that are poor and affected by conflict is therefore the best way to prevent war and to promote world peace.

In April this year, Timor-Leste together with the International Conference of Asian Political Parties, chaired by former speaker of the Philippines Jose de Venecia Jr, will organize an International Conference on Peace and Reconciliation. This is another form of approach to put an end to feelings of intolerance between groups, societies and nations.

This is the contribution that Timor-Leste wants to give to help to reduce the climate of hatred and hostility amongst people.

Thank you very much.

Jakarta, 21 March 2012

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão
Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Security