



Remarks at the U.S.-Indonesia Society Luncheon

John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State

Remarks in Honor of Indonesia President Yudhoyono
Washington, DC
November 14, 2008

Thank you, David, for that kind introduction, and thank you to the United States-Indonesia Society for hosting this event. I also want to recognize the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council, American-Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, and U.S. Chamber of Commerce for their support today.

I'm delighted to have this opportunity to welcome President Yudhoyono and to express the United States' commitment to the close partnership between our countries. As two of the world's largest democracies, and as two nations that recognize that tolerance, pluralism, and religious freedom enrich our societies and promote our success, the United States and Indonesia are natural friends, and our partnership promotes the many values and interests we share.

This afternoon, it is our common interest in a prosperous, stable world that brings us together on the eve of the G20 Summit. Indonesia's leadership in Southeast Asia makes it an important voice in the discussion of how to solve the severe economic and financial challenges we all face.

Indeed, on a wide range of issues, Indonesia's success is critical to the stability, security, and prosperity of Southeast Asia. Our countries work closely to advance regional security, environmental protection, food and energy security, and trade and investment. A cornerstone of our partnership is the foreign assistance we provide to support Indonesia's efforts to strengthen its civic, educational, and governance institutions. Indonesia is working hard to alleviate poverty, improve access to health and social services, and rebuild infrastructure, and this assistance is a symbol of our shared investment in the future of our relationship.

It's not hard to find further evidence of the depth and breadth of our partnership. Since restoring military ties in 2005, we have increased our cooperation and exchanges on disaster relief, peacekeeping, and regional and maritime security. And on environmental issues—an area where your leadership, Mr. President, has been especially significant—we are cooperating to promote sustainable fisheries, sustainable livelihoods, and adaptation to climate change through the Coral Triangle Initiative.

I want to note that the growth of our relationship has occurred against the backdrop of a remarkable transformation in Indonesia. Over the past decade, Indonesia has nurtured a flourishing democracy; restored solid economic growth, and achieved impressive progress against terrorism. Indonesia has made peace at home, in Aceh Province, and has assumed a larger role on the international stage, as a leader in ASEAN, a member of the UN Security Council, and a contributor to peacekeeping missions in Lebanon and Sudan. Your hard work, Mr. President, has contributed greatly to this transformation.

One of Indonesia's many milestones during the past decade occurred with your 2004 election, Mr. President, when Indonesians for the first time directly elected their leader. As Indonesians took great interest in our own recent elections, when we elected a President who'd spent four years of his boyhood in Jakarta, we look forward to joining Indonesians in celebrating your democracy when you hold elections next year.

Indonesia's growth as a democracy, an economic power, and a regional leader makes me confident that the close friendship between our countries will grow still closer in the coming years. So it is my great honor to introduce His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

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