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President Bush Meets with President Yudhoyono of Indonesia

Bogor Palace
Bogor, Indonesia

[Joint Statement Between the United States and the Republic of Indonesia](#)

[President's Trip to Southeast Asia](#)

6:45 P.M. (Local)



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President's Remarks

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PRESIDENT YUDHOYONO: Your Excellency, President Bush, members of the press, let me speak in Bahasa Indonesia.

(As translated.) Ladies and gentlemen, today we have received a visit of President Bush, who has come here to increase our cooperation and friendship between Indonesia and the United States. And we just discussed a number of agenda in order to increase our relations.

In the bilateral meeting I expressed my thanks for the cooperation and assistance given by the United States to Indonesia in the field of economics, investment, trade, education, health, technology, military, and so on. I also expressed thanks for the U.S. assistance and also other countries during the Aceh tsunami and also, more recently, during the earthquake in Yogyakarta and central Java, which shows solidarity and cooperation between the two countries.

After that, we discussed in detail a number of cooperation in our agenda. We discussed health cooperation, especially on how to fight avian flu and other infectious diseases, which are found in the tropical areas, especially in Indonesia.

On education, we already have good cooperation and we will continue this cooperation and hope this cooperation will continue between Indonesia and the U.S. as part of our education agenda.

We also discussed energy and we spent time discussing bio-energy fuels. And I'm glad that President Bush has said that he would share technology in other matters relating to development of alternative energy.



Lastly, we discussed how to deal with natural disasters, especially on how to build an early warning system in Indonesia. I expressed my appreciation to the assistance given by the United States government and we also cooperate also with other countries on building this early warning system.

We also discussed a number of international issues, global issues, such as the situation in the Middle East, the situation in North Korea, Iraq, and also Palestine, and of course, we agree on the need to find a solution to these issues.

After the discussions we had a meeting with civic leaders and we discussed all the things that we discussed earlier in the bilateral meeting, especially on how to improve the quality of life and how to make Indonesia-U.S.

partnership -- contribute to improving this quality of life.

The discussions were open, frank, constructive, sometimes critical, and what is important is that we tried to discuss cooperation on how to make Indonesia-U.S. relations touch on the lives of our people.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. President, thank you very much. Thanks for the invitation to come back to your beautiful country. Laura and I are thrilled to be here and we're looking forward to our dinner tonight with you and your wife and your delegation. You lead a large and diverse nation with a very bright future.

During my visit here, we're going to continue to work to build a relationship between our two nations that will last beyond the immediate. It's a relationship that should last for decades to come. It's important to our nation that we have good, strong relations with Indonesia.

We've just come from the APEC summit in Vietnam, and the people of Indonesia should know that when their elected leader speaks, other leaders listen, as do I. Mr. President, you're well-respected in the international community, and I appreciate your perspective on global and international issues, and thank you for sharing them with me again today.

This afternoon we also discussed bilateral initiatives that will expand opportunity for the people of Indonesia, and at the same time, deepen our partnership. We support your country's reform efforts, Mr. President. I thank you for your leadership on that important issue. The Indonesian President understands that economic reform and fighting corruption and investing in people will help this important nation succeed.

We are committed to helping you on all these initiatives. Last week we signed a \$55 million Millennium Challenge Account threshold agreement. This agreement means that the American people will support Indonesia's efforts to reform its democratic institutions and strengthen governance. We would not have made this commitment, Mr. President, if you were, yourself, not committed to reform.

The agreement is going to help fund your strategy to immunize your children against deadly diseases. We support your attempts to modernize your education system. We have pledged and provided over \$150 million to the Indonesian government to help provide the tools that will give the next generations of Indonesians the chance to realize their enormous potential. One thousand schools spread across eight provinces in Indonesia are now benefitting from our education partnership. As I told you in our meeting, we will continue to help.

Our two nations continue to build strong trade and investment relationships. We're determined to grow our economies in a way that are sustainable. Last week, we signed an agreement to help Indonesia conserve its forests. Together, our nations will fight illegal logging while promoting trade in forest products that does not threaten the region's environmental quality.

Our two nations recognize we must explore alternatives to fossil fuels. The President and I have spent quite a bit of time talking about this important issue. The people of Indonesia have got to know that, for national security purposes and for economic security purposes, America must spend research money to enable us to have alternative sources of energy from oil.

I told the President that I am committed to sharing technologies as they become developed to help us all become less dependent on oil, and I appreciate your commitment, sir, to biofuels as an alternative source of energy.

We talked about avian influenza. In this world of ours today, if there's an influenza outbreak in Vietnam, it could affect Indonesia or the people of America. And therefore, we need to work in a collaborative way to deal with this grave threat. We'll continue to fund our partnership on this issue, Mr. President, as well as our partnership to protect public health in Indonesia.

We support Indonesia's growing global role. Indonesia will soon take a seat on the United Nations Security Council. We discussed threats to global security and how, together, our two nations can help provide a peaceful way forward.

We discussed North Korea, and we discussed Iran. Both regimes have nuclear ambitions. Nuclear weapons in

the hands of these regimes would make the people of the Middle East and Northeast Asia less secure. The President and I discussed how the International Atomic Energy Agency and the six-party talks provide the best opportunity to seek peaceful, diplomatic solutions to our concerns about these weapons programs.

The United Nations requires reform to become a more effective institution, and I know that Indonesia will be a strong voice for positive change in the United Nations. And we look forward to having you on the Security Council.

The American people and the Indonesian people have both suffered from the acts of violent extremists. Our nations are determined to take effective action against terror networks that plot new attacks against innocent people. Indonesia is an example of how democracy and modernization can provide an alternative to extremism. And we appreciate your leadership, Mr. President. Your democracy is making Indonesia strong and better able to play a positive role in Southeast Asia and the world. Our talks today have been very constructive. I appreciate your hospitality. And I presume we'll take some questions.

PRESIDENT YUDHOYONO: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Q I would like to ask you -- as you mentioned before, Indonesia now is growing toward democratization, and how do you think the process of democratization in Indonesia -- the progress of democratization is going? And I have a second question.

PRESIDENT BUSH: How many do you get to ask here in Indonesia?

Q Excuse me?

PRESIDENT BUSH: How many questions do you get to ask? (Laughter.) Keep firing away. You're just setting a bad example for the American press corps. (Laughter.)

Q Well, lots of Indonesians think that you have a hidden agenda going here --

PRESIDENT BUSH: Oh, yes?

Q -- such as securing your Exxon deal in Natuna. And what is your comment on that?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, we didn't discuss it. No, we did not discuss it. You asked about Indonesian democracy -- here's living proof, right here. He ran a campaign; he said, vote for me, I will do the following things; he's following through on his promises. The elections were open, the elections were clean, the elections were fair. And you elected a good President, who is working hard to -- in a tough job. I don't think the American people understand how big Indonesia is -- 17,000 islands, 6,000 of them inhabited, with a variety of demographics. The President kindly hosted a meeting today with civil society leaders, which points up to the diversity of this great nation -- different religions, different backgrounds, different people, all united under a democratic -- under a democracy.

And so I would say your progress is very good. But we all have work to do in our respective democracies. Our transition to democracy wasn't all that smooth in America. If you study American history, we had some rough go for a while. And it's hard work to make sure the institutions are sound so that people can live in a free society that's based upon the rule of law. But the President is committed to it, and he's working hard to it, and I would say you're making good progress.

Terry Hunt -- go ahead and yell it.

Q Mr. President --

PRESIDENT BUSH: Oops, don't yell it. (Laughter.)

Q Mr. President, you've talked about the dangers of leaving Iraq too soon, but you haven't talked about what risks might be involved in adding tens of thousands of troops to secure Baghdad, as Senator McCain has suggested.

What are the downsides, if any, for that approach?

And I'd like to ask the President of Indonesia, what suggestions did you make to President Bush about his Iraq policy?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Terry, we haven't made up -- I haven't made any decisions about troop increases or troop decreases, and won't until I hear from a variety of sources, including our own United States military. As you know, General Pace, who is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is in the process of evaluating a lot of suggestions from the field and from people involved with the Central Command, as well as at the Pentagon. And they will be bringing forth the suggestions and recommendations to me here as quickly as possible.

But, so I haven't -- there's no need to comment on something that may not happen. But if it were to happen, I will tell you the upsides and downside.

PRESIDENT YUDHOYONO: My view on how could we work together at ending conflict in Iraq, in finding a proper and realistic solution for Iraq is that global community must be also responsible in solving the problems in Iraq. Talking about long-term state building, nation building in Iraq, I think it's not only the responsibility of the missions of the United States and other countries who are now involved in Iraq, but of course, is the roles and responsibility of other missions, as well -- other communities, as well.

Indonesia believes very strongly if we could work together, if we share and exchange ideas, then there must be a proper and realistic solution in the long-term in finding, again, a proper solution for Iraq that's good for Iraq, good for neighboring countries, good for the U.S., good for Indonesia, and good for all communities in the world.

Q I would like to ask Mr. President Bush -- President Bush -- relations between the United States and Indonesia is strong, and as you said, the United States is a longstanding partner of Indonesia. As you already know, Indonesia is currently developing alternative energy. Are you willing to cooperate in this area? And can the United States share its technology with Indonesia and help us --

PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes, thanks. I'm very supportive of biofuel initiatives, starting in our own country. It's important for us to develop alternative ways to power our vehicles if we want to become less dependent on oil. And so, for example, we're now consuming about 5 billion gallons of ethanol, which is a fuel made, in our case, from corn. The President and I spent a fair amount of time talking about the ability to develop biofuels, particularly, in Indonesia's case, from sugar cane, as well as palm oil. And the technologies are available to convert sugar into ethanol. For example, the country of Brazil powers its automobiles with about 85 percent of all fuels from ethanol from sugar cane.

The other interesting fact for people to understand is that the technology to have a gasoline-driven automobile be powered by ethanol is very simple. It's what's called flex-fuel automobiles. And so there's -- we're on the beginning stages of really a change in how we consume energy. And it's in the world's interest that we promote biofuels.

Where the United States needs to go, though, is that we can't rely upon corn only to develop our ethanol. And so we're spending a lot of money on cellulosic research, and that is the ability to convert wood chips, for example, to ethanol. And as those technologies become feasible and economic, we will share them with other countries. It's in our interests, it's in the U.S. interest that others use biofuel, as well as our own.

And so I'm optimistic about the technologies that are developing. I'm also realistic to understand it's going to take a while to get them -- to bring them to -- to make them economic. But we're spending a lot of money on this type of research. And the President needs to know that as it becomes commercially capable, we'll share it.

Q President Bush, here in the world's most populous Muslim nation, thousands have demonstrated for days, saying that your policy in the Middle East and Iraq and elsewhere is anti-Islamic. How do you fight that impression? Doesn't it require more than just reassertion of your existing foreign policy goals?

And for President Yudhoyono, did you, in your talks with President Bush, urge him to begin a withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq as soon as possible?

PRESIDENT BUSH: I'll be glad to answer it for him -- no, he didn't. But he can answer it for himself. (Laughter.)

Look, I applaud a society where people are free to come and express their opinion. And it's to Indonesia's credit that it's a society where people are able to protest and say what they think. It's not the first time, by the way, where people have showed up and expressed their opinion about my policies. But that's what happens when you make hard decisions.

My answer to people about whether or not -- how do you comfort people of the Muslim faith that our policies are open, is that I believe freedom is universal and democracy is universal. I don't believe it's the sole right of the United States or the sole right of Methodists. I believe in the universality of freedom. And therefore -- and I believe people desire to live in free societies, and I believe the vast majority of people want to live in moderation and not have extremists kill innocent people.

And so, therefore, our policies are to promote that kind of form of government. It's not going to look like America, it's going to be different from America. And I also would tell people that democracies yield peace. Democracies don't fight each other. One of the reasons why I am proud to call this President friend is because he understands the power of democracy, and he understands it's a universal right.

And so therefore, to say spreading democracy is anti-religious -- it's the opposite of that. Democracy means you can worship any way you choose, freely. And so, look, people protest, that's a good sign. It's a sign of a healthy society.

PRESIDENT YUDHOYONO: Well, to elaborate my first view on Iraq, I would like to say that probably we have to think about developing a triple-track solution. One is really important is having national reconciliation in Iraq, together with the empowerment of the existing national government is very important so Iraq can handle her own problem.

Second is, of course, we have to involve other parties. We have to probably deploy -- employ new set up of security forces in parallel with some day, this on a proper timetable, the disengagement of U.S. military forces and other coalition forces from Iraq.

And, of course, the third track is also not to be neglected is how do the international community work together in conducting reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq after the conflict.

So I think we have to combine all those three solutions before actually the United States can determine what the possible policies to be developed in the future related to the withdrawal or disengagement of the U.S. forces from Iraq.

Q -- (inaudible) -- U.S. forces should remain in Iraq?

PRESIDENT YUDHOYONO: I think I have explained my view on those three tracks of solution. And the future disengagement of U.S. forces from Iraq must be connected to the other two that I have mentioned already.

Thank you.

END 7:05 P.M. (Local)

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