

## **“Indonesian Foreign Minister Wirajuda on the U.S.- Indonesian Comprehensive Partnership”**

**H.E. Hassan Wirajuda**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia**

*In cooperation with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

As part of his visit to the United States, Dr. Hassan Wirajuda spoke at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on the comprehensive partnership between the United States and Indonesia.

Dr. Wirajuda opened his remarks with a reference to President Obama’s recent speech at Cairo University in which he invited the Muslim world into a partnership with the United States, noting that Indonesia has long prepared itself to enter into such a partnership.

Dr. Wirajuda discussed Indonesia’s transition to democracy, noting that the country is the world’s third largest democracy and will hold its second presidential election in July of this year.

Ten years ago, Indonesia had a negative economic growth rate with widespread political and social turmoil. The country realized that the only way to address these issues was to make the transformation to democracy. In a relatively short timeframe, the country was able to get the military out of politics, fight corruption, and give local governments more control over funding. Last year, the GDP grew 4.5%, one of

the few countries in ASEAN with a positive growth rate. The economy is driven by robust exports, foreign direct investment, and strong domestic consumption, and characterized by high consumer confidence. These achievements are directly related to Indonesia’s reforms and its transformation to democracy.

Dr. Wirajuda also discussed how Indonesia’s internal reforms have allowed the country to better promote regional growth and development. Indonesia has taken the lead in helping to make positive changes in ASEAN. By 2015 there will be free flow of goods, labor and capital throughout member countries, and Indonesia is also working to ensure that the new ASEAN charter focuses on human rights and democracy. Indonesia is also looking beyond ASEAN, to the ASEAN + 3, which includes China, Japan and South Korea, and to the East Asian Summit, which also includes Australia, New Zealand and India. A Free Trade Area of East Asia, currently promoted by ASEAN, would include 3.5 billion people.

Indonesia is also involved in bridge-building throughout the world, working on promoting partnerships between Asia and Africa, a Southwest Pacific Dialogue, and an Asia/European partnership. The United States is looking to develop a partnership with the Muslim world; as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia can lead the way in developing such a partnership. Indonesia also wants to promote democracy in the larger Asia region. The Bali Democracy Forum was designed to be a high-level forum for exchange of experiences and best practices. Additionally, since 2003 Indonesia has pushed for greater political development in ASEAN to include a focus on democracy, human rights and good governance.

Dr. Wirajuda also discussed security issues in the country. He noted that the perpetrators of the Bali bombings were brought to justice without human rights violations, and that the country is tackling terrorism by empowering moderate voices and promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogues. Engagement and dialogue made possible by democratic governance lead to the resolution of several conflicts and issues in Indonesia. Peace in Aceh enabled Indonesia to rebuild and reconstruct the region following the tsunami in 2005, and the Aceh Office of Reconstruction closed last year.

Indonesia is also supportive of President Obama's work to re-start the peace process in the Middle East, and is a staunch supporter of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and has called for the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Dr. Wirajuda also discussed how Indonesia can work on a bilateral basis to address the food and energy crises,

advance the Bali Roadmap, and use its leadership at the World Oceans Conference to bring participants into the dialogue on climate change.

## QUESTIONS

**Q: What is Indonesia doing about the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma? Also, what are Dr. Wirajuda's thoughts on an upcoming U.S. Foreign Policy Review?**

**A:** Indonesia, frustrated by the lack of democracy and human rights in Myanmar, has discussed this within ASEAN in an open and frank manner, and has issued statements calling for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi as soon as possible. The government is also working to alleviate the poverty and suffering of the people of Myanmar, which would encourage the government to be more open. Dr. Wirajuda noted that one way to deal with the lack of democracy in Myanmar is to encourage ASEAN to promote a political agenda. Neighboring countries should also engage Myanmar closely to better ensure the credibility of the election process.

On the foreign policy review, Dr. Wirajuda said that he appreciated the commitment of the United States to dialogue and engagement, especially to those nations with differing positions, and also appreciated the increased engagement with Asia.

**Q: How is Indonesia providing leadership within the ASEAN charter? Also, given the complex relationship between Vietnam and Indonesia, how is Indonesia addressing calls for political and economic reform in Vietnam?**

Dr. Wirajuda said he was encouraged by the rapid economic development of Vietnam. Also, since Indonesia and Vietnam are two independent-minded countries in the region, they can work together to promote the wider East Asian summit, beyond the ASEAN+3.

**Q: While the military is no longer in power, military reform has been slow in comparison to other reforms. What does the Minister propose to do regarding the Papua issue?**

Until recently, the military was the most powerful group in Indonesia, and it will take time to reform it. However, the military was scheduled to remain in the parliament until 2009, but withdrew voluntarily in 2004. Moreover, the peace talks in Aceh were possible because the professionalism of the military. Additionally, while the government has asked the military to cease its social and political roles and business activities, the state does not have the funds to compensate them for this lost revenue.

On Papua, Dr. Wirajuda stated that the problem is local authorities have power and a great deal of revenue from natural resources, but they have limited capacity to use those resources well. More attention should be paid to education and capacity building.