



Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific

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Remarks By
H.E. Dr. Marty Natalegawa,
Foreign Minister of the Republic of Indonesia
On the Occasion of the
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Dr. Rizal Sukma, thank you very much for that kind introductory remarks, and of course to Dr. Carolina Hernandez as well thank you for your important contribution. I'd like to begin by expressing my most profound appreciation to CSCAP for the kind invitation to myself to be present this afternoon and indeed to deliver the key remark and share some thoughts with respect to the issues before the conference.

I am certain that the forum will provide a valuable contribution and input not only to academics but also to practitioners of foreign policy. I also share fully the sentiments expressed by Prof. Hernandez earlier that this forum brings together some of the best mind on foreign policy from within our region and beyond.

Just as a footnote, some of you may not be aware, but when I was completing my Ph.D research, Professor Hernandez was actually one of the first persons whom I have interviewed. And this was back in 1990 if I'm not mistaken, and I remember her as being extremely generous with her time and in her assistance and her support. And I'd like to thank you once again Dr. Hernandez.

It's been some 20 days or so since I took up this new post. So I only have experience in my favor as I am only somewhat 20 days into my job. But even during that short period of time I can share with you that there has been some events and occasions that I had to attend and be responsible for. Practically the day after my appointment I had to attend the ASEAN Summit, and the related ASEAN meetings.

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Soon thereafter there was the Indonesia EU troika meeting, which led to the EU-Indonesia cooperative partnership agreement, and then of course we've been attending the APEC leaders meeting. Actually, I have just returned from the airport about 45 minutes ago, so if I'm a bit somewhat incoherent, I hope you would understand why that is the case. We have also just had the ASEAN -US leaders summit, and dozens of other bilateral, both leaders as well as ministerial, meetings.

Ahead of us, we have a full calendar of various diplomatic activities. We have the upcoming Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change in December. We also have the fresh cycle ASEAN related meetings and summits in the New Year. In other words just by being passive and simply responding to the various conferences, meetings, and the like, that would already take up quite a substantial part of one's time and preoccupation. And thus I feel, as I begin this new task, it is very important to be able to reflect where we are, and where we want to go in terms of Indonesia's foreign policy as we begin this new government. And I want to use this opportunity, this forum, if I may, just to compare notes and share some preliminary thoughts on my part and hopefully take this conference as an opportunity to be able to obtain valuable inputs so that I can further refine and sharpen some of those thoughts.

The way I see it, dear colleagues, the world is certainly an extremely complex one. That hardly needs emphasis. We've had over the past year various situations where we had to deal with the financial crisis, the energy crisis, and the climate change challenge, while at the same time having to deal with the perennial traditional challenges that has always been confronting us. In other words, we have not only a proliferation of extremely complex issues, but these are also issues that are very much interrelated to one another, which makes their resolution all the more difficult.

Not least, we have also had a situation where we have a proliferation of stakeholders and actors. In fact, I don't think there ever was a case or a situation where only governments deal with these issues. This is increasingly more pronounced whereby not only do we have proliferation of complex issues that are interrelated, but also at the same time there is a growing number of stakeholders who we need to reach out to and who we need to be building coalitions with, especially when likeminded aspirations and courage.

Not least for us practitioners, where the reality of time within which we can respond to the various crises have become extremely compressed because of the phenomena of the information revolution where we find ourselves almost constantly and instantly be demanded to respond in a very quick way.

In the face of such challenges, I'd like to share some key thoughts relating to Indonesia and its foreign policy as the new government begins its work.

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One tag line, so to speak, or one of key thought, in so far as the present government is concerned and as it relates to foreign policy, is the theme of “change and continuity.” These two elements, this tagline, is one of the points that I’d like to emphasize.

Continuity first. Because we’ve wanted to ensure that there will not be any pressures or inclinations to simply undertake change for its own sake – rather there is a need to identify where things have worked, and those that have worked in our foreign policy, that we wish to reconfirm, and build on and continue to further strengthen. And here of course for Indonesian foreign policy experts, it wouldn’t surprise you all that our continued preoccupation with the constitutionally-provided independent and active foreign policy remains the case.

That would of course be the continuity aspect of our foreign policy orientation. It means at the present day and age, it is basically the capacity for independent decision making. If there is ever some fine tuning of this concept in the years to come, it would be our inclination to also focus on what I would like call “bridge building.”

Indonesia believes that we have those qualities that make us able to address or build bridges between different interests and different inclinations – and this has been, and is increasingly the case in terms of Indonesia’s foreign policy orientation. How we can build greater efforts at bridge building to bridge differences and be a part of the solution, given Indonesia’s unique qualities.

A second element of continuity, I would say, would be the attempt to continue to consolidate the transformation in Indonesia’s foreign policy started under my predecessor, Dr. Hasan Wirajuda, as foreign minister for much of the reform era. As you recall, Indonesia underwent quite substantive transformation in its political system in 1998. In fact, for 8 out of those 10 years Minister Hasan Wirajuda has been the chief diplomat responsible in bringing changes to the way of our foreign policy is conducted – what I would call a “democratization of our foreign policy.”

Here democratization is both in terms of substance as well as in terms of process. In terms of substance it means that we are now increasingly preoccupied on issues that are to do with human rights, to do with good governance, to do with even issues such as protection of our nationals abroad. In other words, the widening of the kind of concerns on foreign policy that we would otherwise not be preoccupied on.

Democratization also relates to the process of foreign policy making. Here, I think the preoccupation over the past ten or eight years has been how to ensure that foreign policy making becomes more engaging – how do we ensure that we have sense of ownership in foreign policy making. And here,

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colleagues would understand that in many instances, Indonesia in formulating its foreign policy have been engaging the think tanks, the academic community, and the parliament to ensure that at every step of the way, we have a good constituency and support for our foreign policy.

Such a trend, namely the democratization of our foreign policy, I believe, will become more pronounced in the next five years—both in terms of substance and in terms of process. In terms of substance, I would want to see situation where on key issues we would be on the right side of the argument. In terms of democratization and in terms of good governance, because we would want to be sure that our foreign policy reflects our own domestic internal preoccupation with matters to do with democratization and human rights. That also would also constitute the continuity aspect of our foreign policy in the immediate future.

The second tag line, or key thought, would be ASEAN. Now of course, we have used a number of terms to describe our interaction with ASEAN—whether it be as the “cornerstone” of our foreign policy, or whether it be as a “home” in our foreign policy. I’d like to emphasize here that so far as Indonesia is concerned, our engagement in ASEAN is not optional in its nature. In other words, ASEAN is a fact of life—we are as a country of the region. It is our vital national interest to see an ASEAN that is strong, that is vibrant, and that is therefore in line with our own national interest.

I’d like to recall here back in 2003 when Indonesia assume the chairmanship of ASEAN it was a conscious effort in our part to engage people like Rizal Sukma in particular to sit together and to think how and where we want to see ASEAN move in terms of its immediate future. We could have adopted a more automatic pilot attitude seeing through our chairmanship for the year, chairing various meetings, or we choose to add value to our chairmanship. And back in 2003, we strategically decided we need to develop ASEAN to become a community.

And as you recall back in 2003, ASEAN promulgated the notion of an ASEAN Community with its three pillars. From 2003 to 2008 and 2009, we have seen tremendous architecture building and institutional building within ASEAN—with the three pillars, the plan of action, the ASEAN charter, the strengthening of the ASEAN secretariat, so all the wherewithal are there. We have these instruments within ASEAN, and now after 6 years of efforts. It is all there and now Indonesia’s interest is simply to deliver.

I think it is enough to say that we do not want to see a situation where we simply have more documents emanating from ASEAN—we’ve had your blueprint, and we’ve had your plan of action. It’s just time to do the thing that we say we want to do. So Indonesia’s foreign policy will be really focused on ASEAN to ensure that all the commitments we have made and all the instruments we have created, actually

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delivers. Otherwise, there is a risk of disconnect, a risk of cynicism. Because there is an accusation that ASEAN is self-absorbed and do not actually deliver concrete results. Our interest therefore is to see ASEAN that is truly moving towards a community spirit and community relationship in the immediate years to come.

The next tag line, the third one, I'd like to mention is our constant preoccupation to be leading voice in regional architecture building. This is an issue that very much preoccupies many of us. As I said, I just returned from the APEC leaders meeting a few hours ago and about couple weeks ago we were at the ASEAN Summit, and one of the main discussions in those two forums have been the notions of an Asia Pacific Community introduced by Australia and the notion of East Asia Community introduced by Japan. Both ideas have been eloquently presented by the two countries, and ASEAN countries have been listening, have been absorbing the concepts, and have been questioning what ASEAN's view on this subject is, and indeed, what Indonesia's view is as well.

What is wonderful and what is pleasing is that this is not a new subject for us, because we've dealt with it back in 2003. Again, because as we mentioned before, when we decided in 2003 to invest in ASEAN, in building the ASEAN Community, it was because of precisely the anticipation that we will be moving towards an East Asia wide Community. So our thought is that in anticipation of such trends, we had better put our house in order to make sure we have a head start so that ASEAN can truly be in the driver seat, or central position, once this momentum picks out. Of course, the issue is very much at the forefront of the current debate, thanks to Australia and Japan's initiative, but for us, certainly for Indonesia, we said "well, this is nothing new", because we've been thinking about this in 2003. We are ready, we have the wherewithal as far as ASEAN is concerned.

Our interest now is how we can live up to this notion of ASEAN-led, or ASEAN centrality. I often spoke with my ASEAN's colleagues to say that "you cannot simply, as a matter of constant pronouncement, and the centrality ASEAN will come about. It has to be earned. It is not a mantra that you keep on saying; and simply by saying that "ASEAN is central and that ASEAN is in the driving seat," as a matter of course that will happen. We believe ASEAN needs to earned that status, it must show that is able to assume such a responsibility. And this is not an easy task. Because as you know, notwithstanding the various wonderful documents that we have relating to the ASEAN Community, even in the recent day and recent weeks we have seen relations between individual ASEAN member countries are somewhat challenged.

So we must really ensure that there is no gap between our supposed regional aspirations and the reality of bilateral relationship. And in this connection, Indonesia has been active and yet low key in offering its good offices if asked to try to build bridges, and as I mentioned before, to ensure that between the

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ASEAN member countries there is no complication in their relationship. Thus, this notion of regional architecture building in East Asia is not a new concept. We are familiar with it. ASEAN has begun the whole process, and now we are simply seeing others also following on ASEAN's footsteps.

Our view, certainly at this time, is that the idea of East Asia Community is not something that can simply be promulgated or enacted overnight. A sense of community is not something that you can simply have happened through declarations and through resolutions, but it is something that develops overtime in a building block, in a "step-by-step" kind of process.

And in this connection, again, we already have those processes. We have the ASEAN Community, ASEAN plus one, ASEAN plus three, the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and APEC. We see this as being a multi-track path towards an East Asia Community. With the greatest respect to those who wish to present new ideas of an East Asia Community, or Asia Pacific Community, our concern is that if you simply try to keep announcing that you have a new organization, or a new forum of this type, it will become obsolete almost immediately.

Because the region is so fluid, so dynamic, it is in a constant state of change. A mere announcement of a forum or an organization made of country A to country Z will immediately raise the questions of the borderline; how come that country is included and not that country. So we think it is very distracting and it is best to get on with the business of deepening cooperation, greater interaction, greater integration even, and eventually, naturally it will lead to some kind of community conditions be built in the East Asia settings.

Very quickly, a number of more by way of domestic foreign policy concerns, again as by way of our tag line or sub theme, is the idea of "debottlenecking and acceleration." I am not sure whether debottlenecking is already considered an English word but the idea is to remove bottlenecks. This is a preoccupation of the present government: how we can ensure that in every undertaking we remove bottlenecks and ensure acceleration of efforts.

In Indonesia's foreign policy, this means that we must ensure that our foreign policy is firmly based on the domestic requirement of contributing to our economic development efforts, the promotions of investment, promotions of trade, and ensure that there are no bottlenecks that prevent the attainment of those objectives.

Another tag line that is often cited recently, and so far as the present Indonesia's government is concerned, is this notion of "zero enemy and a thousand friends." This is the notion of Indonesia being in a state of positive relationship practically with all countries. And in a way this is being acknowledged

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by *The Economist* magazine recently in its special report, which had the article headed by the words “everybody’s friend.” And certainly Indonesia is keen to ensure to have a very comprehensive and multi-directed foreign policy and establishing friendly relations with as many countries as we possibly can.

Two final thoughts if I may. One is the efficacy of “soft power.” Indonesia believes that its strength in terms of diplomacy lies in its soft power. And here where we have been dealing with the question of overcoming the threat of terrorism by promoting interfaith dialogue, in promoting cooperation between different faiths, and in engagement is the clearest example of how we believe “soft power” can be the key effective instrument in dealing with many of the world’s challenges.

One final thought with respect to the identification of new opportunities. Here, as you would recall, Indonesia is recently now included formally as permanent member of the G-20. Of course at this time the G-20 is principally an economic and a financial forum, but we do foresee a situation where it might develop to be of concern to other issues as well. Hence, we see our membership of G-20 as offering valuable opportunity Indonesia to project its role onto the world stage as responsible power. And we will certainly be ensuring that we are playing a key role in that forum.

All in all, I’d like to say therefore that I’m sure in the next few days, in the next few sessions, you would have productive sessions discussing various facets of the security threats in the Asia Pacific region.

I have tried in the best way to illustrate some of Indonesia’s foreign policy concerns or ideas at this time. What you can be sure of is that the Indonesian government and Indonesia’s foreign policy in dealing with all these various issues and challenges, we will present ourselves as being part of the solution. We are not interested in accentuating differences. We are not interested in making life more difficult for anyone. Rather, we wish to be seen to be part of the solution and we will be working hard at that.

And that means sometimes we may have to lead, being at the front, but sometimes we may lead by being at the back. So to those who are watching and analyzing Indonesia’s foreign policy, what is obvious may not often be the case. Hopefully, we will see more “statecraft” and probably less “stage craft.” Because there are some matters that can be dealt with in low key, especially when it relates to disputes among neighbors entangled with sensitive issues. And I will be more inclined to address this issue in a low key, and yet effective way by giving enough space to the parties concerned to feel that there is a sense of ownership in their undertaking.

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I hope, as a final thought, to be able to rely on this tremendous body of collective experience and knowledge that is gathered in this room, to be Indonesia's ally in strengthening and refining its foreign policy. And I shall be extremely humble in acknowledging that we simply do not have the monopoly of wisdom, and we need to be informed, we need to be advised in how to proceed. Because in this day and age, foreign policy is too far an important subject to be led to people like myself wearing dark suit and bureaucrats in the foreign policy department. But we need truly the inputs and valuable advice learned from people such as yourself.

Thank you very much for this opportunity and I hope you have a very productive session.***

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