

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010

Remarks at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, Indonesia

November 10, 2010

The President. Terima kasih. Terima kasih. Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. Selamat pagi.

Audience members. Selamat pagi!

The President. It is wonderful to be here at the University of Indonesia. To the faculty and the staff and the students, and to Dr. Gumilar Rusliwa Somantri, thank you so much for your hospitality.

Assalamualaikum dan salam sejahtera. Thank you for this wonderful welcome. Thank you to the people of Jakarta, and thank you to the people of Indonesia.

Pulang kampung nih. I am so glad that I made it back to Indonesia and that Michelle was able to join me. We had a couple of false starts this year, but I was determined to visit a country that's meant so much to me. And unfortunately, this visit is too short, but I look forward to coming back a year from now when Indonesia hosts the East Asia summit.

Before I go any further, I want to say that our thoughts and prayers are with all of those Indonesians who are affected by the recent tsunami and the volcanic eruptions, particularly those who've lost loved ones and those who've been displaced. And I want you all to know that as always, the United States stands with Indonesia in responding to natural disasters, and we are pleased to be able to help as needed. As neighbors help neighbors and families take in the displaced, I know that the strength and the resilience of the Indonesian people will pull you through once more.

Let me begin with a simple statement: *Indonesia bagian dari diri saya.* I first came to this country when my mother married an Indonesian named Lolo Soetoro. And as a young boy, I was coming to a different world. But the people of Indonesia quickly made me feel at home.

Jakarta—now, Jakarta looked very different in those days. The city was filled with buildings that were no more than a few stories tall. This was back in 1967, '68—most of you weren't born yet. [Laughter] The Hotel Indonesia was one of the few high rises, and there was just one big department store called Sarinah. That was it. *Becaks* and *bemos*, that's how you got around. They outnumbered automobiles in those days. And you didn't have all the big highways that you have today. Most of them gave way to unpaved roads and the *kampung*s.

So we moved to Menteng Dalam, where—[applause]—hey, some folks from Menteng Dalam right here. And we lived in a small house. We had a mango tree out front. And I learned to love Indonesia while flying kites and running along the paddy fields and catching dragonflies, buying *sate* and *bakso* from the street vendors. I still remember the call of the vendors: "Sate!" [Laughter] I remember that. "Bakso!" [Laughter] *Enak, ya?* But most of all, I remember the people: the old men and women who welcomed us with smiles, the children who made a foreign child feel like a neighbor and a friend, and the teachers who helped me learn about this country.

Because Indonesia is made up of thousands of islands and hundreds of languages and people from scores of regions and ethnic groups, my time here helped me appreciate the common humanity of all people. And while my stepfather, like most Indonesians, was raised a

Muslim, he firmly believed that all religions were worthy of respect. And in this way he reflected the spirit of religious tolerance that is enshrined in Indonesia's Constitution, and that remains one of this country's defining and inspiring characteristics.

Now, I stayed here for 4 years, a time that helped shape my childhood, a time that saw the birth of my wonderful sister Maya, a time that made such an impression on my mother that she kept returning to Indonesia over the next 20 years to live and to work and to travel and to pursue her passion of promoting opportunity in Indonesia's villages, especially opportunity for women and for girls. And I was so honored when President Yudhoyono last night at the state dinner presented an award on behalf of my mother, recognizing the work that she did. And she would have been so proud, because my mother held Indonesia and its people very close to her heart for her entire life.

Now, so much has changed in the four decades since I boarded a plane to move back to Hawaii. If you asked me—or any of my schoolmates who knew me back then—I don't think any of us could have anticipated that one day I would come back to Jakarta as the President of the United States. And few could have anticipated the remarkable story of Indonesia over these last four decades.

The Jakarta that I once knew has grown into a teeming city of nearly 10 million, with skyscrapers that dwarf the Hotel Indonesia and thriving centers of culture and of commerce. While my Indonesian friends and I used to run in fields with water buffalo and goats—*[laughter]*—a new generation of Indonesians is among the most wired in the world, connected through cell phones and social networks. And while Indonesia as a young nation focused inward, a growing Indonesia now plays a key role in the Asia Pacific and in the global economy.

Now, this change also extends to politics. When my stepfather was a boy, he watched his own father and older brother leave home to fight and die in the struggle for Indonesian independence. And I'm happy to be here on Heroes Day to honor the memory of so many Indonesians who have sacrificed on behalf of this great country.

When I moved to Jakarta, it was 1967, and it was a time that had followed great suffering and conflict in parts of this country. And even though my stepfather had served in the army, the violence and killing during that time of political upheaval was largely unknown to me because it was unspoken by my Indonesian family and friends. In my household, like so many others across Indonesia, the memories of that time were an invisible presence. Indonesians had their independence, but oftentimes they were afraid to speak their minds about issues.

In the years since then, Indonesia has charted its own course through an extraordinary democratic transformation, from the rule of an iron fist to the rule of the people. In recent years, the world has watched with hope and admiration as Indonesians embraced the peaceful transfer of power and the direct election of leaders. And just as your democracy is symbolized by your elected President and legislature, your democracy is sustained and fortified by its checks and balances: a dynamic civil society, political parties and unions, a vibrant media, and engaged citizens who have ensured that in Indonesia, there will be no turning back from democracy.

But even as this land of my youth has changed in so many ways, those things that I learned to love about Indonesia, that spirit of tolerance that's written into your Constitution, symbolized in mosques and churches and temples standing alongside each other, that spirit that's embodied in your people, that still lives on: *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*—unity in diversity.

This is the foundation of Indonesia's example to the world, and this is why Indonesia will play such an important part in the 21st century.

So today, I return to Indonesia as a friend, but also as a President who seeks a deep and enduring partnership between our two countries. Because as vast and diverse countries, as neighbors on either side of the Pacific, and above all, as democracies, the United States and Indonesia are bound together by shared interests and shared values.

Yesterday President Yudhoyono and I announced a new comprehensive partnership between the United States and Indonesia. We are increasing ties between our Governments in many different areas, and just as importantly, we are increasing ties among our people. This is a partnership of equals, grounded in mutual interests and mutual respect.

So with the rest of my time today, I'd like to talk about why the story I just told—the story of Indonesia since the days when I lived here—is so important to the United States and to the world. I will focus on three areas that are closely related, and fundamental to human progress: development, democracy, and religious faith.

First, the friendship between the United States and Indonesia can advance our mutual interest in development. When I moved to Indonesia, it would have been hard to imagine a future in which the prosperity of families in Chicago and Jakarta would be connected. But our economies are now global, and Indonesians have experienced both the promise and the perils of globalization, from the shock of the Asian financial crisis in the nineties to the millions lifted out of poverty because of increased trade and commerce. And what that means, and what we learned in the recent economic crisis, is that we have a stake in each other's success.

America has a stake in Indonesia growing and developing, with prosperity that is broadly shared among the Indonesian people, because a rising middle class here in Indonesia means new markets for our goods, just as America is a market for goods coming from Indonesia. So we are investing more in Indonesia, and our exports have grown by nearly 50 percent, and we are opening doors for Americans and Indonesians to do business with one another.

America has a stake in an Indonesia that plays its rightful role in shaping the global economy. Gone are the days when seven or eight countries would come together to determine the direction of global markets. That's why the G-20 is now the center of international economic cooperation, so that emerging economies like Indonesia have a greater voice and also bear greater responsibility for guiding the global economy. And through its leadership of the G-20's anticorruption group, Indonesia should lead on the world stage and by example in embracing transparency and accountability.

America has a stake in an Indonesia that pursues sustainable development, because the way we grow will determine the quality of our lives and the health of our planet. And that's why we're developing clean energy technologies that can power industry and preserve Indonesia's precious natural resources, and America welcomes your country's strong leadership in the global effort to combat climate change.

Above all, America has a stake in the success of the Indonesian people. Underneath the headlines of the day, we must build bridges between our people because our future security and prosperity is shared. And that is exactly what we're doing, by increasing collaboration among our scientists and researchers and by working together to foster entrepreneurship. And I'm especially pleased that we have committed to double the number of American and Indonesian students studying in our respective countries. We want more Indonesian students

in American schools, and we want more American students to come study in this country. We want to forge new ties and greater understanding between young people in this young century.

These are the issues that really matter in our daily lives. Development, after all, is not simply about growth rates and numbers on a balance sheet. It's about whether a child can learn the skills they need to make it in a changing world. It's about whether a good idea is allowed to grow into a business and not suffocated by corruption. It's about whether those forces that have transformed the Jakarta I once knew—technology and trade and the flow of people and goods—can translate into a better life for all Indonesians, for all human beings, a life marked by dignity and opportunity.

Now, this kind of development is inseparable from the role of democracy. Today, we sometimes hear that democracy stands in the way of economic progress. This is not a new argument. Particularly in times of change and economic uncertainty, some will say that it is easier to take a shortcut to development by trading away the right of human beings for the power of the state. But that's not what I saw on my trip to India, and that is not what I see here in Indonesia. Your achievements demonstrate that democracy and development reinforce one another.

Like any democracy, you have known setbacks along the way. America is no different. Our own Constitution spoke of the effort to forge a "more perfect Union," and that is a journey that we've traveled ever since. We've endured civil war, and we struggled to extend equal rights to all of our citizens. But it is precisely this effort that has allowed us to become stronger and more prosperous, while also becoming a more just and a more free society.

Like other countries that emerged from colonial rule in the last century, Indonesia struggled and sacrificed for the right to determine your destiny. That is what Heroes Day is all about, an Indonesia that belongs to Indonesians. But you also ultimately decided that freedom cannot mean replacing the strong hand of a colonizer with a strongman of your own.

Of course, democracy is messy. Not everyone likes the results of every election. You go through your ups and downs. But the journey is worthwhile, and it goes beyond casting a ballot. It takes strong institutions to check the power—the concentration of power. It takes open markets to allow individuals to thrive. It takes a free press and an independent justice system to root out abuses and excess and to insist on accountability. It takes open society and active citizens to reject inequality and injustice.

These are the forces that will propel Indonesia forward. And it will require a refusal to tolerate the corruption that stands in the way of opportunity, a commitment to transparency that gives every Indonesian a stake in their Government, and a belief that the freedom of Indonesians—that Indonesians have fought for is what holds this great nation together.

That is the message of the Indonesians who have advanced this democratic story, from those who fought in the Battle of Surabaya 55 years ago today, to the students who marched peacefully for democracy in the 1990s, to leaders who have embraced the peaceful transition of power in this young century. Because ultimately, it will be the rights of citizens that will stitch together this remarkable *Nusantara* that stretches from Sabang to Merauke, an insistence that every child born in this country should be treated equally, whether they come from Java or Aceh, from Bali or Papua, that all Indonesians have equal rights.

That effort extends to the example that Indonesia is now setting abroad. Indonesia took the initiative to establish the Bali Democracy Forum, an open forum for countries to share their experiences and best practices in fostering democracy. Indonesia has also been at the

forefront of pushing for more attention to human rights within ASEAN. The nations of Southeast Asia must have the right to determine their own destiny, and the United States will strongly support that right. But the people of Southeast Asia must have the right to determine their own destiny as well. And that's why we condemned elections in Burma recently that were neither free nor fair. That is why we are supporting your vibrant civil society in working with counterparts across this region. Because there's no reason why respect for human rights should stop at the border of any country.

Now, hand in hand, that is what development and democracy are about, the notion that certain values are universal. Prosperity without freedom is just another form of poverty, because there are aspirations that human beings share: the liberty of knowing that your leader is accountable to you, that you won't be locked up for disagreeing with them, the opportunity to get an education and to be able to work with dignity, the freedom to practice your faith without fear or restriction. Those are universal values that must be observed everywhere.

Now, religion is the final topic that I want to address today, and like democracy and development, it is fundamental to the Indonesian story.

Like the other Asian nations that I'm visiting on this trip, Indonesia is steeped in spirituality, a place where people worship God in many different ways. Along with this rich diversity, it is also home to the world's largest Muslim population, a truth I came to know as a boy when I heard the call to prayer across Jakarta.

Just as individuals are not defined solely by their faith, Indonesia is defined by more than its Muslim population. But we also know that relations between the United States and Muslim communities have frayed over many years. As President, I've made it a priority to begin to repair these relations. As part of that effort, I went to Cairo last June, and I called for a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one that creates a path for us to move beyond our differences.

I said then and I will repeat now that no single speech can eradicate years of mistrust. But I believed then and I believe today that we do have a choice. We can choose to be defined by our differences and give in to a future of suspicion and mistrust, or we can choose to do the hard work of forging common ground and commit ourselves to the steady pursuit of progress. And I can promise you, no matter what setbacks may come, the United States is committed to human progress. That is who we are. That is what we've done. And that is what we will do.

Now, we know well the issues that have caused tensions for many years, and these are issues that I addressed in Cairo. In the 17 months that have passed since that speech, we have made some progress, but we have much more work to do.

Innocent civilians in America, in Indonesia, and across the world are still targeted by violent extremism. I made it clear that America is not and never will be at war with Islam. Instead, all of us must work together to defeat Al Qaida and its affiliates, who have no claim to be leaders of any religion, certainly not a great world religion like Islam. But those who want to build must not cede ground to terrorists who seek to destroy. And this is not a task for America alone. Indeed, here in Indonesia, you've made progress in rooting out extremists and combating such violence.

In Afghanistan, we continue to work with a coalition of nations to build the capacity of the Afghan Government to secure its future. Our shared interest is in building peace in a war-torn land, a peace that provides no safe haven for violent extremists and that provide hope for the Afghan people.

Meanwhile, we've made progress on one of our core commitments, our effort to end the war in Iraq. Nearly 100,000 American troops have now left Iraq under my Presidency. Iraqis have taken full responsibility for their security. And we will continue to support Iraq as it forms an inclusive government, and we will bring all of our troops home.

In the Middle East, we have faced false starts and setbacks, but we've been persistent in our pursuit of peace. Israelis and Palestinians restarted direct talks, but enormous obstacles remain. There should be no illusion that peace and security will come easy. But let there be no doubt: America will spare no effort in working for the outcome that is just and that is in the interests of all the parties involved. Two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security; that is our goal.

The stakes are high in resolving all of these issues. For our world has grown smaller, and while those forces that connect us have unleashed great opportunity and great wealth, they also empower those who seek to derail progress. One bomb in a marketplace can obliterate the bustle of daily commerce. One whispered rumor can obscure the truth and set off violence between communities that once lived together in peace. In an age of rapid change and colliding cultures, what we share as human beings can sometimes be lost.

But I believe that the history of both America and Indonesia should give us hope. It is a story written into our national mottoes. In the United States, our motto is *E pluribus unum*—out of many, one. *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*—unity in diversity. We are two nations, which have traveled different paths. Yet our nations show that hundreds of millions who hold different beliefs can be united in freedom under one flag. And we are now building on that shared humanity, through young people who will study in each other's schools, through the entrepreneurs forging ties that can lead to greater prosperity, and through our embrace of fundamental democratic values and human aspirations.

You know, before I came here, I visited Istiqlal Mosque, a place of worship that was still under construction when I lived in Jakarta. And I admired its soaring minaret and its imposing dome and welcoming space. But its name and history also speak to what makes Indonesia great. *Istiqlal* means independence, and its construction was in part a testament to the nation's struggle for freedom. Moreover, this house of worship for many thousands of Muslims was designed by a Christian architect.

Such is Indonesia's spirit. Such is the message of Indonesia's inclusive philosophy, *Pancasila*. Across an archipelago that contains some of God's most beautiful creations, islands rising above an ocean named for peace, people choose to worship God as they please. Islam flourishes, but so do other faiths. Development is strengthened by an emerging democracy. Ancient traditions endure, even as a rising power is on the move.

This is not to say that Indonesia is without imperfections. No country is. But here we can find the ability to bridge divides of race and region and religion, that ability to see yourself in other people. As a child of a different race who came here from a distant country, I found this spirit in the greeting that I received upon moving here: *Selamat datang*. As a Christian visiting a mosque on this visit, I found it in the words of a leader who was asked about my visit and said, "Muslims are also allowed in churches. We are all God's followers."

That spark of the divine lives within each of us. We cannot give in to doubt or cynicism or despair. The stories of Indonesia and America should make us optimistic, because it tells us that history is on the side of human progress, that unity is more powerful than division, and

that the people of this world can live together in peace. May our two nations, working together, with faith and determination, share these truths with all mankind.

Sebagai penutup, saya mengucapkan kepada seluruh rakyat Indonesia: terima kasih atas. Terima kasih. Assalamualaikum. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gumilar Rusliwa Somantri, president, University of Indonesia; President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia; Masdar F. Mas'udi, deputy chairman of the Indonesian Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. No translation for the President's remarks in Bahasa Indonesia was provided by the Office of the Press Secretary.

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