



PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

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ADDRESS AT THE STATE BANQUET GIVEN BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

It is an honour for me to visit Indonesia as a guest of the Indonesian Government and people, at your personal invitation.

In your recent speech to the House of People's Representatives, on Independence Day this year, you spoke of your deep concern that Indonesia build up the production of its farms and factories, you spoke also of the visible signs of achievement. The new Palapa satellite system for domestic communication symbolises the progress Indonesia has made under your leadership.

The importance of communications is just as great in relations between countries. We need to continue the habit of close and frank communication, and by doing so, create an atmosphere which makes difficult the development of decisive issues. When there is a firm basis for mutual understanding, these issues can be handled in the calm atmosphere of discussion as between friends. This is why it is important that contacts at all levels between Australia and Indonesia should be encouraged.

There exists already a broad range of contact and cooperation. This is reflected not only by growing economic investment in Indonesia by Australian firms, but also by extensive Government to Government cooperation that covers a broad range of matters.

I hope and confidently believe that this relationship will consolidate with time and that it will always be beneficial to both nations.

There is a growing cultural awareness in Australia of Indonesia which has been promoted in large measure by the depth, richness and diversity of Indonesia's culture.

At the same time, Australian culture has also become more accessible to other countries.

Indonesia and other countries of the region have seen exhibitions of Australian art, photography, graphics and Aboriginal art and crafts.

Performing groups have visited Indonesia, including the Australian Marionette Theatre, an orchestra of young players from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and smaller musical groups. Libraries of Australian books have been given to universities and other learned institutions. The small Australian cultural centre in Jakarta also makes its contribution. We are planning to increase its activities. Australians have increasingly had the opportunity to appreciate examples of Indonesian culture, in particular we remember a visit paid to several Australian states by Misi Kesenian, a talented company of Indonesian dancers and musicians last year. The Australian Government was happy to assist with their tour.

Perhaps even more important in the longer term, some twelve thousand Australian school children now learn Bahasa Indonesian - a three fold increase in the last decade.

This means that at some time in the near future, if not already, Australia will be the largest Indonesian speaking nation in the world outside Indonesia itself.

The next generation in Australia will be able to talk to the youth of Indonesia in Indonesian. Surely this augurs well for the future of our relationship.

Mr President, you have steered your nation through a most difficult period, with great skill. It is today, a more prosperous and respected nation because of your leadership.

The hospitality you have extended to us has been greatly appreciated. Our discussions have already been very valuable in extending our understanding of each other's views.

I look forward to continuing our talks tomorrow.

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