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JIMMY CARTER

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6/16/99

Visit to Indonesia, June 1-11, 1999

Background:

Following a preliminary visit to Jakarta in March-April of this year, we decided that The Carter Center should monitor the election in Indonesia, with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) as a partner. It was clear on our earlier trip that officials of the government, national elections commission, major political parties, the military, and domestic monitoring groups all desired our participation. This would be the first opportunity for a free and fair election in half a century, and domestic peace, political stability, and economic recovery would depend on success in this first step toward choosing a new parliament and then a president.

This would also be the largest and most complex democratic procedure in which we had ever participated. A national election commission (KPU) of 53 members had shaped the step-by-step process: first to elect 462 members of parliament on June 7, to which would be added 38 representatives of the military. Subsequently, each of the 27 provinces would add five members, and 65 more would be chosen by the KPU to represent "underrepresented groups." This would make a total of 700, who would constitute the People's National Assembly, with full authority to make laws and to elect the next president. This process is scheduled to be completed early in November.

Forty-eight political parties had qualified for the June 7 election that we would monitor, to present a total of 13,800 candidates for local, provincial, and national office, at about 300,000 polling sites. The key issue was whether the various "reform" parties would ultimately prevail over Golkar, the party of the incumbent, President B.J. Habibie. Another prevailing question in Indonesia is whether the more deeply religious Moslems will move the government more toward Islamic law. Although 90 percent of the population is Moslem, there is a strong preference for a secular government.

6-18 99

Sean -

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for processing?

Deb

YES

A number of international organizations, notably UNDP and USAID, had provided adequate funding to help us and others train almost 300,000 domestic observers and to establish an elaborate reporting system for election returns. We and NDI formed an alliance between our 100 foreign observers and Rectors' Forum, the university consortium observer group that would carry out a parallel vote tabulation (PVT), based on early reporting of results from 9,000 statistically representative polling sites.

Our trip:

Rosalynn, our son Jeff, and I traveled with Richard Blum in his Gulfstream G-4, and arrived in Bali on Wednesday, June 2. We stayed in the interior of the island in a picturesque little hotel near the village of Ubud. Our first impression was of the large posters and thousands of red flags along the roads, not more than 20 yards apart for miles, representing the PDI-P party of Mrs. Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of former president Sukarno, whose mother was Balinese. Even more remarkable was that at daybreak two days later, as required by law, every campaign poster in Bali had disappeared!

Saturday we flew to Yogyakarta to visit the huge and ornate Buddhist temple at Borobudur, and then joined the Carter Center's Chuck Costello, our grandson James, and others in our monitoring delegation in Jakarta. We had a total of 100 observers from 23 nations, who were thoroughly briefed and then dispatched to 26 of the 27 provinces. (The international community does not recognize that the province of East Timor is part of Indonesia, since it was taken by force from Portugal.) Prior to election day we had an extensive press conference, met with President Habibie and his cabinet, with domestic observers, leaders of major parties, and the KPU. We also had an extensive press conference.

An indication of the importance given to this election is that the UNDP, USAID, the European Union, Japan, Australia, and other donors have contributed \$100 million for election materials, training and deployment of observers, support of KPU, and computer equipment for collating election results.

On election day, Rosalynn and I visited our 18 assigned sites in and around Jakarta. Without exception, the officials were well trained and meticulous in their duties, materials were on hand, the turnout was about 90 percent, the voters were orderly with a majority of women, and everyone seemed to be in good spirits. All the polling sites were erected just for this purpose, outdoors but sheltered from the sun and rain, ranging

from handmade bamboo frames covered with plastic to elaborate fringed canopies decorated with bows and orchids. Since KPU allotted only about \$5.00 worth of Rupiah to each community, the citizens had to use their own contributions and initiative for the shelters. At the close of the voting, at 2 p.m., in a fully public count, each ballot was examined carefully and the vote was called for everyone to hear. There was a festive atmosphere, with either cheers or boos from the crowd after each vote was announced. After all, this was the first time in 45 years that the citizens had been free to make their own choices.

Our observer teams made detailed reports as they trickled back into Jakarta from their assigned locations. Despite a number of small discrepancies, the general consensus was that this first step in the election process had been honest, transparent, and peaceful.

We knew in advance that the official KPU returns would be very slow in coming out because of the tabulation method used. Because of that, an elaborate, expensive computerized parallel system called the Joint Operations Media Center (JOMC) was set up with donor funding to deliver much faster "unofficial but reliable" returns to the public and the media. However, the JOMC failed to deliver returns quickly, and by 72 hours after the polls closed had reported only about 13 percent of the national vote (its reporting system being dependent on returns from all polling stations in all villages in a sub-district before forwarding any returns to the JOMC in Jakarta). Tension was rising, and suspicions of vote fraud began to be voiced. At this point, Rectors' Forum wisely decided to go public with PVT results although its earlier intention was not to precede KPU/JOMC results. The press widely reported these outcomes, which showed the opposition PDI-P party in the lead well ahead of the government party Golkar in second place, thereby easing tensions.

Although it will be several weeks before final and official results are known, the first 2,500 of our 9,000 representative sites indicated:

Megawati's PDI-P	36 percent
Habibie's Golkar	23 percent
PPP	11 percent
Gus Dur's PKB	10 percent
Rais's PAN	10 percent

The Indonesian stock market surged 12 percent on news of the apparently successful election, and the rupiah jumped from 8,100 to 7,600 per dollar. In addition, the IMF immediately released a loan of \$450 million for Indonesia, and there is little doubt that public and private investors will have a similar response.

The next steps in forming a government are crucial and still quite uncertain. Following the identification of the 462 elected members and 38 to represent the military, the 27 provinces will each choose five (135). The KPU will select 65 "functional" representatives, with 20 religious leaders, nine weak economic groups, nine artists and intellectuals, five veterans, women, youth, ethnic minorities, and two handicapped. No one yet knows quite how this will be done, but it is certain to be hotly debated. University student leaders informed me that they will not accept youth representation in the assembly and prefer to remain a "constructive opposition." Once constituted, the National People's Assembly will form committees and prepare to elect a president who must obtain a majority of the 700 votes. Although most likely the leader of one of the major parties will prevail, a stalemate might bring the final choice to a respected business, religious, or academic leader. One possibility is an Islamic Sultan from Yogyakarta, and we met with another such prospect, Nurcholas Majid. He is a doctoral graduate of the University of Chicago and the president of a newly formed university in Jakarta.

I received approval from President Habibie to meet with Jose Alexander "Xanana" Gusmao, the imprisoned political leader from East Timor. Habibie had commuted his death sentence to life, then 20 years, and he is now serving under house arrest. Although he seems to understand English very well, he spoke Portuguese in a very soft voice. He is concerned that the scheduled vote on August 8, in which the East Timorese will express their desire to be an autonomous part of Indonesia or an independent nation, will be disrupted by violence and that the East Timorese who favor independence will be intimidated by the Indonesian military and other "integrationists." Habibie has proposed this public consultation as a solution to the crisis, and negotiations have been held among officials from Portugal, Indonesia, and the United Nations to orchestrate the election. No matter what the vote result, the People's National Assembly will have to make the final decision. I agreed to discuss Xanana's concerns with Habibie and to request that he be permitted to meet with the two East Timorese bishops, a few

leaders in exile abroad, and a half dozen others from East Timor to decide how best to meet the impending crisis.

Habibie agreed with my request that Xanana could meet with anyone who would be qualified by the United Nations to participate in the August election, and even offered to provide a place to meet in a Jakarta hotel, security, and to pay expenses. He would not agree to release the prisoner before then, stating that he would likely be killed by his enemies if he returned to East Timor. He also agreed to permit international monitors, provided UN officials would approve, since they are in charge of the process. I sent this information to Xanana, and have relayed his concern to the UN Secretary-General about the slow deployment of peacekeepers and election monitors.

We returned home still uncertain about the final vote count, but convinced that the Indonesians have made an irreversible commitment to freedom and democracy.

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The Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
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Staff Secretary

Maritza Rivera
1249 4th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

June 16, 1999

'99 JUN 18 PM1:13

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear President Clinton:

I write to offer this letter of resignation as the Hispanic outreach coordinator in the Office of Public Liaison. Mr. President, it has been an honor to work on behalf of the American people under your great leadership. I am also proud to have been a part of an Administration that has achieved so many accomplishments on behalf of the Hispanic community in the United States. My time at the White House has been extremely valuable and unforgettable. Thank you for this extraordinary experience.

Sincerely,


Maritza Rivera

6-18-99

To Dan B. for
reply?

yes ☒

no ☐