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Remarks With Florida Governor Jeb Bush and Indonesian Foreign Minister Noer Hassan Wirajuda

Secretary Colin L. Powell

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Jakarta, Indonesia

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FOREIGN MINISTER WIRAJUDA: Secretary Powell, Governor Bush, and colleagues from the media, I would like first of all to extend once again my warm welcome and appreciation to you, Secretary Powell, and Governor [Jeb] Bush, for your visit to Indonesia, despite your hectic schedule at home.

The personal presence of Secretary Powell and Governor Bush here reflects the magnitude that the United States Government has attached to the monstrous calamity and its consequences. The visit will also be essential in boosting solidarity and alleviating the sufferings of the victims and survivors, and consolidating efforts at addressing post-catastrophic consequences in the Indonesian provinces of North Sumatra and Aceh.

We in Indonesia are grateful and touched by the enormity of international response in meeting the needs of the victims and survivors. The continuing support and assistance of the United States government provided to the people and government of Indonesia are of great importance in order to mitigate and alleviate the sufferings of the victims. We particularly appreciate the crucial role that the United States Armed Forces play in providing helicopters for relief assistance for victims and survivors at the remote and isolated areas.

We are also very thankful for the participation of the honorable [Jeb] Bush, and the Special ASEAN Leaders Meeting on the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami. We look forward to working closely with you, Secretary Powell and Governor Bush, and also with the United States delegation in reaching a fruitful outcome of the summit. We also hope that the summit, which we call the "Special ASEAN Leaders Meeting on the Aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunami," will agree on commitments to help the affected countries in a sustainable and coordinated way.

Our meeting today also touched upon some bilateral issues of concern to our two governments, and in the spirit of cooperation and dialogue, we were able to discuss matters of concern in a very productive and constructive manner. We

believe that the visit of Secretary Powell at the same time will hopefully strengthen Indonesia's national capacity in addressing the humanitarian calamity caused by natural or man-made disaster.

We will continue our dialogue with a view to improving the relations between our two largest democracies. Meanwhile, close cooperation between our two countries in providing assistance to the victims and survivors is strengthening and enlarging this reflex that we both share: that humanity is one and compassion is a key concept that should ensure the survival of humanity regardless of challenges that the world is currently facing.

Thank you very much, Secretary Powell.

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. It's a pleasure to be with you again. We were together just a few days ago in Washington. We meet on a regular basis, which shows the strength of our bilateral relationship, and I do appreciate all the support that you have given to me over the last four years.

Governor Bush and I are here to extend condolences to the people of Indonesia over this tragic event, and to extend our sympathy to the families of all those who are lost. The president wanted Governor Bush and I to come and make an assessment, talk to the leaders of Indonesia, and then report back to him on what else might be necessary from the United States Government to help in this difficult situation.

The American people are opening their hearts as well as their pocketbooks to provide support to Indonesia, as well as the other countries that have been affected in the region. As you know, yesterday President Bush announced that former President Bush and President Clinton will head up a private fundraising effort, and that has already started to show quite a bit of success, and significant amounts of private money are being raised to go along with the \$350 million that the United States has committed so far to relief efforts.

I am especially impressed by the response of the entire international community, and the Secretary General of the United Nations has indicated over two and a half billion dollars have been raised already.

Of course, in addition to these straight cash outlays, you have the presence of the United States forces in the region, the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln and the amphibious group called the Bonhomme Richard and other ships are heading into the region as well, to provide helicopter support and also fixed-wing support, and we've established a Joint Task Force headquartered in Utapao, Thailand, that will be coordinating support for the whole region.

Mr. Minister, I just want you to know that the American people stand in solidarity with our Indonesian friends. We will do everything we can to help you. It's amazing the scale of this disaster.

When you and I first spoke, on Sunday I think it was, the estimates for that first day were something like perhaps 1800 lives were lost, and now, just a week later, as the enormity of the situation is becoming more apparent and we approach 100,000, it truly is a calamity which will have far-reaching implications. And as we discussed in our meeting, this is not just a one-time humanitarian relief effort or rescue effort; this has to be a long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation effort to rebuild homes and to rebuild families and rebuild lives. And you can count on the United States being with you for this longer rebuilding period.

Governor Bush?

GOVERNOR BUSH: Thank you, Secretary. Mr. Minister, we are here with a heavy heart, on behalf of the President and the First Lady, and all Americans, to express our sincere condolences.

We have had natural disasters in our country, like any country has had, but nothing compares to what you all have gone through in this last week, and what faces you now over the next years to come. And I would just like to reiterate what Secretary Powell said so eloquently: that the friendship that exists between our countries will sustain the kind of support that would be deserving; that the American people, from the littlest child that will be in school wanting to raise money for supplies for their counterparts in Aceh, to the President of the United States, will be there in support of the rebuilding and reconstruction efforts.

QUESTION: Peter Mackler, AFP. Mr. Minister and Secretary Powell, the conference that will be held here on Thursday, exactly what is the bottom line that you're expecting to be accomplished concretely? Is this a donors' conference? Are you expecting more money? Or are you expecting other pledges in other forms of cooperation?

FOREIGN MINISTER WIRAJUDA: Well, we have the affected countries; we have the—no we don't call them donor countries—but certainly countries which have so far openly said that they are committed to help, not only in the emergency reliefs, but in the future rehabilitation and reconstruction in the affected countries. Of course, through this conference we not only hoped to generate international solidarity, but also to coordinate relief assistance better, and also the sustainability of the process, in particular the future rehabilitation and reconstruction.

SECRETARY POWELL: The way the Minister has organized the conference, those of us who are coming from outside the region will have the opportunity to hear from each of the affected countries as to the impact that the tsunami had on their economy or their people, their infrastructure, and what help they need. And this will give us an opportunity to make sure we all have a good understanding of the need, because the need is different in every country.

I am sure that some nations will come with additional pledges, but I think what we really want to do is to make sure that the money that has been pledged, and the resources that are on the way are properly and appropriately distributed to deal with the need.

QUESTION: (inaudible) Mr. Secretary of State, how far can we say the generous financial support by the United States for the, you know, the affected area would help to strengthen the relationship between the United States and the Islamic world? On the other point, Indonesia is suffering in a way from the embargo imposed on its, you know, government, concerning equipment, especially that the aid, the affected areas need the helicopter, needs, you know, who are the government here say they cannot do much without, you know, without lifting this embargo. So, what's the United States going to do and has this issue been raised in this meeting?

SECRETARY POWELL: The first question: the United States is responding in a way that it is because this is a human catastrophe. In my career in public service I have never seen anything like this: close to 150,000 lives lost in a few hours time, in 12 different countries covering two different continents. And so, we're responding because of the human dimensions of this catastrophe.

It turns out that the majority of those nations affected were Muslim nations, but, we'd be doing it regardless of religion. But, I think it does give the Muslim world and the rest of the world an opportunity to see American generosity, American values in action, where we care about the dignity of every individual and the worth of every individual, and our need to respond to

the needs of every individual of whatever faith. America is not an anti-Islam, anti-Muslim nation. America is a diverse society where we respect all religions.

And I hope that, as a result of our efforts, as a result of our helicopter pilots being seen by the citizens of Indonesia helping them, that value system of ours will be reinforced. I'm well aware of the transport difficulties that the government has with some of their aircraft, and some of the laws that I am bound by, and the Minister did raise it with me and I told him I would look into it immediately and see what could be done. That's all I will say now.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, just to follow up on your last response, on Sunday you said that American aid generally, not for the tsunami, but generally, partly has a national security component and that you hope that as you try to address hunger, poverty, disease, that you help people to turn away from radicalism. Should the aid be given for this reconstruction effort be seen in any way in the same light, in the sense that you may hope that by being seen to be generous and helpful in the time of need? You may help drain away some of the anti-American, anti-western sentiments that one has seen in this region, notably in the Bali bombing here in Israel...here in Indonesia...excuse me.

SECRETARY POWELL: We certainly hope that as people take a look at the full range of American expenditures, with respect to development assistance, humanitarian assistance, all sorts of foreign affairs assistance that we provide, whether it's \$15 billion dollars to fight HIV/AIDS or whether it's the new Millennium Challenge Account that is putting billions of new development dollars into the hands of those countries that are committed to democracy and openness., or whether it's the kind of humanitarian relief effort we're undertaking now, or that we undertook last year in a variety of places around the world, where we spent \$2.4 billion dollars for humanitarian relief, we hope that through these efforts, people will see that the United States is committed to helping those who are in poverty, those who are not able to educate their children, those who are looking for jobs and need a country that is based on law and a political system that is based on law to draw investment so they can get those jobs. I hope they will see that America is supporting these kinds of activities.

We are supporting these activities because we believe it is in the best interest of those countries and it's in our best interest, and it dries up those pools of dissatisfaction, which might give rise to terrorist activity. When people believe that there is a future in their country where their views can be dealt with in a political setting, an open political setting, where they have the right to vote and express their views, under such circumstances, we think it's less likely that terrorists find fertile ground. And therefore, that supports not only our national security interests but the national security interests of the countries involved.

QUESTION: Is it possible to reschedule Indonesia's payment to pay our debt due to financial condition caused by disaster?

SECRETARY POWELL: It has been suggested by a number of countries that Indonesia's debt should be examined and see whether it should be rescheduled in some way, in order that Indonesia have less of a burden on their budget for the immediate future. But this has to be dealt with not by the United States but within the Paris Club, and I know that the Paris Club meetings which will be held in the near future will deal with this question.

QUESTION: Corruption is endemic in this part of the world, and some anti-graft activists have talked about the potential for a lot of this donor money being siphoned off by corrupt local officials. What's your thoughts on that, and what is Indonesia doing to prevent this from happening?

FOREIGN MINISTER WIRAJUDA: Yes, our national relief agencies are working hard, not only dealing with emergency relief in terms of provisions of food and tents, but also medical relief assistance in order to prevent the outbreak of disease, such as malaria or cholera. We try as a government that the whole process should be as clean as possible, and we are fully

aware, because in Indonesia these days the anti-corruption drive is an issue of priority. So, for that matter, we try to be as transparent as possible. In the management of our relief programs we invite non-governmental organizations to work closely with governments. This is also one way to ensure the process is transparent but also clean, and this prevents the abuse of relief assistance that should actually go to the peoples in need.

SECRETARY POWELL: I think the UN agencies that will be providing assistance and the nongovernmental organizations that will be providing assistance we have considerable experience with and know how to funnel funds to them so that the funds will be used for their intended purposes.

One more?

QUESTION: To Foreign Minister Wirajuda: sir do you believe that the Indonesian people will be grateful, if you like, or will remember the nations that have been their friends in this dark hour for your country?

FOREIGN MINISTER WIRAJUDA: As we said openly that we were overwhelmed by the outpouring of support and assistance from the international community, not only at the government level but also at the people's level--and this is a matter of reality. It's not only political statements. That helps us certainly, because of the tragedy of this nature, we know that we cannot do it alone. For that matter, the international assistance are major components of the process, and that's why the conference that we'll organize on Thursday, because we believe that cooperation among countries and peoples to address and help address the tragedy and help the affected countries--we're not only speaking about Indonesia but other countries in the regions who are also badly affected by the crisis. So, we are very grateful. We thank all governments, international organizations and of course people all over the world for their assistance.

Yes, the last one.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. Mr. Secretary, the United States has been taking an active role and very significant role in providing aid, as well delivering aid, to remote areas, and you have also mentioned about a longer term plan in rebuilding. Does this mean the that United States is prepared to increase involvement in conflict areas, because Aceh and Sri Lanka are conflict areas and they are facing separatists? Thank you.

SECRETARY POWELL: We will do what is necessary to relieve human suffering. And we hope that this crisis, with respect to the situation in Aceh, as well as to the situation in Sri Lanka with the Tamil Tigers, might perhaps create some openings and opportunities that can be used by both sides in each of the two countries, might create some openings that might permit greater political dialogue. And some level of cooperation in dealing with this humanitarian crisis might translate into a higher level of political dialogue and cooperation. Let that be our hope. Thank you.

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