

PRESENTATION BY JACQUES BERTRAND, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

I would like to begin by echoing the optimism that most of the previous speakers have stressed. The election is of course a very significant landmark in Indonesia's progress with democratic experience. I really think we need you to echo very strongly this kind of message. I say this because many of the rest of my remarks are not going to be nearly as uplifting, because of the issues that I want to address. Nevertheless, there are a lot of reasons to be optimistic about the election of SBY and the recent elections, both parliamentary and presidential. Most significantly of course, this is the first direct presidential election and it was well-run and clean. That is a significant achievement. And this is leading to a smooth transition of power and that in itself is a great achievement as well. This was also Indonesia's second openly contested election, and this may mean that from a procedural perspective Indonesia's democracy is increasingly good and doing very well.

It has also previously been mentioned that Indonesia presents the best model for the Muslim world at the moment and this needs to be reinforced repeatedly, as this is a means of showing the compatibility of Islam and democracy. One thing that Canadians might do as well from where we are positioned in the world is to perhaps work through our own educational environment and our media, as well as those of our neighbours to the south, to emphasize how Indonesia is and continues to be the largest Muslim country in the world and yet democracy is nonetheless taking hold in the political culture of the nation. This may help to correct the skewed vision of the Muslim world, as interpreted through extremist events and other experiences in the Middle East.

Another source of optimism, I think, in some ways this reinforces what other have said, is what seems to be the base of support for SBY's election. I think we need to emphasize that this was a protest vote. This was in large part due to the dissatisfaction resulting from continued corruption under the previous administration and the inability to address some important problems. So this is a good sign, as this may be the beginning of a rejection of voting on the basis of ideology and on the basis of personality and a shift to focusing on important issues that are not being resolved. In this sense, corruption