

Mallarangeng: As far as political society is concerned, I don't think people outside Indonesia can contribute much to the parties. It is worth trying because the parties are very important to Indonesia. However, they are very weak. Perhaps some financial contribution can be made to establish or to improve the library of our Parliament and its staffing. The members of Parliament have been relying more and more on the staff for a detailed knowledge of policy, a practice which I think ought to stop. In Indonesia a member of Parliament shares his or her room with three other people. They have to pay for the secretary, not to mention the research staff. But I don't think you have to go too far in financing the staffing. I think the most successful bilateral relations in terms of providing help to Indonesia can be a very simple thing, such as what happened in the 1950s when the Ford Foundation financially supported some bright young Indonesians to go to America to pursue PhD degrees. They were the first group of Indonesians who were systematically helped by a foreign government to continue their higher education. About five or six of them returned to the country and beginning at the end of the 1950s, and with the opportunities provided by Suharto, they contributed to the success of Indonesian economic development for the next 20 to 25 years. It was through this kind of education they had the chance to be exposed to ideas developed elsewhere in the world, such as theories of development, and they implemented them continuously and systematically in the country. Since the 1980s, the orientation of foreign aid has moved from education to what has been called the grassroots civil society, which was a popular term in the 90s. When I heard the term grassroots civil society, I become confused and often bored because it becomes more and more trivial. We've got to be focusing more on what it is that we want to do. Now if you tell me that you have some money and ask me to choose one field where the money should go, I think I would choose education. McGill University has a very excellent record of attracting students from Indonesia who wish to study at an Islamic university. You have a very few choice here. Do you want those students to study at the universities in Saudi Arabia or Egypt or do you want them to come to Canada. If they go to America or Canada, you will have people like Professor Azra. If they go to Egypt or Saudi Arabia you'll find a different person after several years of studying there. You have to choose smartly. In my opinion, if you have 24-25 million dollars, I think the best thing to do is to expose students to more