

RECEIVED

27 NOV 2006

BY: *J. J. J.*



THE HON ALEXANDER DOWNER MP

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

23 NOV 2006

Dr Andrew Southcott MP  
Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Southcott

Australia and Indonesia maintain a shared goal of peace, security and prosperity in the region and recognise the importance of continuing to cooperate closely to combat terrorism and other transnational threats in the region. These threats remain serious and present long-term challenges requiring sustained and coordinated action.

In this context, the Governments of Australia and Indonesia agreed to negotiate a balanced, forward-looking treaty to provide a framework for deepening and expanding bilateral cooperation and exchanges on matters affecting the security of both countries. Following two years of negotiation, I was pleased to sign the Australia-Indonesia Agreement on the Framework for Security Cooperation with my Indonesian counterpart, Dr Hassan Wirajuda, in Lombok, Indonesia on 13 November.

The Agreement provides a strong legal framework for encouraging dialogue, exchanges and implementation of cooperative activities. It draws together the threads of the security relationship with Indonesia and provides a firm basis for the conclusion of separate arrangements in specific areas. Existing and future MOUs on such issues as counter-terrorism, defence cooperation and police cooperation will operate within the overarching framework of the treaty-level Agreement and be guided by the principles enunciated within.

The Agreement is practically focused and seeks to provide direction to agencies involved in cooperative activities to combat terrorism and transnational crime. It aims to strengthen cooperation on defence, law enforcement, counter-terrorism, maritime security, and on emergency management and response. The Agreement also contains a clear undertaking of support for each other's territorial integrity.

Overall, the Agreement will be Australia's first security treaty with a regional government to cover comprehensively traditional and non-traditional security threats. It should set the benchmark for others in the region and will contribute to the security of both countries and the broader Asia-Pacific region.

I am writing to provide the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties with early advice of the proposed treaty action, and to notify the Committee that I intend tabling the Agreement in Parliament during the last sitting week of 2006 (4 to 7 December).

I thank the Chair and the Committee for their consideration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexander Downer', with a long, wavy horizontal line extending to the right.

Alexander Downer