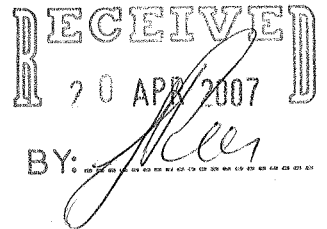


Submission 53
TT 6 December 2006



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Deputy Secretary

Telephone: 02 62611111
Facsimile: 02 62732081

20 April 2007

Mr James Rees
Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Rees

Thank you for your letter of 28 March 2007 regarding the *Agreement between Australia and the Republic of Indonesia on the Framework for Security Cooperation (Mataram, Lombok, 13 November 2006)*.

In response to your first question, regarding possible risks to Australia's interests in formalised security cooperation with Indonesia under the Agreement, we see no risks to Australia's interests from such arrangements. We believe strongly that the Agreement will serve to advance Australia's national interests. The Agreement creates an overarching framework for deepening and expanding bilateral cooperation and exchanges with Indonesia on a range of matters affecting our common security.

In response to your second question, regarding legal advice obtained by the Department in relation to Article 2(3) of the Agreement, both the Attorney General's Department and the International Legal Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade were involved closely in the development of advice to the Government concerning the Agreement. While it would not be appropriate to go into the nature of that advice, I can confirm that it was consistent with the contents of the National Interest Analysis.

I look forward to answering any other questions the Committee may have about the Agreement during the forthcoming hearing in Sydney on 30 April 2007.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Bird'.

(Gillian Bird)