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CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROLONGATION OF THE

ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

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PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL

Fortv-second year

Letter dated 23 July 1987 from the Permanent Representative Of the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the answer of
M. S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party
of the Soviet Union, to questions from the Indonesian newspaper Merdeka (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate this text as an official document
of the General Assembly, under items 48, 63, 64, 68, 70 and 74 of the provisional
agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. BELONOGOV

* A/42/150.

ANNEX

Answers of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of the Soviet Union to questions from the
Indonesian newspaper Merdeka

On 21 July 1987, M. S. Gorbachev received at the Kremlin B. M. Diah, publisher and editor-in-chief of the Indonesian newspaper Merdeka, and replied to questions from the newspaper.

A lively conversation took place between M. S. Gorbachev and B. M. Diah, the content of which is given below.

M. S. GORBACHEV. I am happy to know YOU, Mr. Diah. I have heard a great deal about your work. You have been involved in journalism for several decades now.

B. M. DIAH. I am glad to meet you, Mr. General Secretary. This is a great honour for me. In fact, I have been working in the world of journalism for SO years now,

M. S. GORBACHEV. This is solid experience, And experience is not burdensome, especially when it is used correctly. Well, we are now tackling new tasks in our country. And at this stage of development, we are constantly being enriched by experience and by the lessons of history.

B. M. DIAH. We are closely following your statements and the processes taking place in the Soviet Union.

M. S. GORBACHEV. Thank you. Have our words "perestroika" and "glasnost" reached you? Have they been translated into the Indonesian language?

B. M. DIAH. These words are quite familiar to us, and they need no translation.

M. S. GORBACHEV. Before giving you written answers to the questions, I should like to make some brief but, in my view, important comments. I should be grateful if you and the editorial staff of your newspaper could draw attention to the forthcoming anniversary of my speech at Vladivostok. The Soviet leadership attaches great significance to what was said at Vladivostok. We tried then to state our policy towards a huge region - a region where hundreds of millions of people live. By so doing, we hoped for a suitable understanding of our policy.

I regard the questions which you have submitted as evidence of the Indonesian society's interest in our policy, in our assessment of the situation in the Asian-Pacific Region and in our reflections on the future of this region in the context of world politics.

My comments in this connection are as follows.

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We have tried to look at **today's** world from a **strictly scientific, realistic viewpoint**. The analysis made has led **us** to a new vision of the world and to a new **policy**, which we announced at our Party Conference.

The analysis helped us also to **look** at the realities which **characterize** the present-day world. The picture is quite **different** from what **it was** 30 or 40 years ago.

Above all, **human civilization is** threatened by the accumulation of vast stockpiles of nuclear **weapons**. This is a fact which **must be** reckoned with. Moreover, a **correct assessment** of this fact leads to the conclusion that **today it is** impossible to solve world **political** problems by **military** means. The **military approach** would be **fraught** with unpredictable **consequences**, and so corrections must be made in the world outlook and the **policy of States**.

The problems **existing** in the world require joint **efforts** by all **countries**. And in **general**, when we consider the **progress** of science and technology, we **see** that this is bringing us closer and **linking us** more intimately than ever before. We **depend on each other** more and more and we are **becoming necessary** to each other.

B. M. DIAH. As I recall, you put forward **this** same idea in **your** speech at Vladivostok.

M. S. GORBACHEV. Indeed, I should like to **say** that in the Vladivostok **speech** we stated our view of the modern world.

I **deliberately did not mention this** at the **beginning of** our meeting, so as to provide a bridge to the next part of my reflections. I am **referring** to the fact that one of the realities of **this** world is the **emergence on the international scene** of dozens of States which have embarked on the path of **autonomous, independent development**. This is a **huge world**, with its vast interests and accumulation of **major problems**.

B. M. DIAH. I am glad to hear at **first hand** the **things** which you **spoke of** during your official visit to India, at the Moscow forum "For a nuclear-free world, for the survival of mankind" and in your speech at Vladivostok.

M. S. GORBACHEV. I believe that it is necessary to speak of these matters until they are not **only fixed** in the **minds** of politicians but reflected in the real **policy** of states. The point is that in our times it is impossible to **organize** international relations **without taking into account** the interests of all States. There must be a **balance of interests**. **Only this will produce** a reasonable **policy**. This is **also what I wanted to say** in the Vladivostok **speech**.

B. M. DIAH. It seems to me that at Vladivostok you taught the world another lesson too. You stressed that on its **own** the Soviet Union is unable to solve all these problems. A contribution must be made by the other Asian States, including China, India, Indonesia and other countries. I think this was a very accurate and shrewd comment.

M. S. GORBACHEV. I **very** much welcome **your opinion** that **speech**. We do not **aspire** to **anything** more than to **forae**, with all the **States of the Asian-Pacific reaion**, new **international** relations **reflecting** the **realities of the contemporary world**.

It is true that, in **enumerating** the States of the **region**, you did not mention the United States. Yet we hope to co-operate also with that country, although **time** and **again** we hear from the United States **araumente** **to** the effect that the USSR is **allegedly engaged** in efforts which **represent a** threat to the States of that reaion. But this is quite absurd. We invite all States - and this was said in Vladivostok - to **enaaae** in co-operation in the Asian-Pacific reaion in the interests of **peace** and mutual understanding.

In the answers to your questions, I tried to dispel **any suspicions** about the **policy** of the Soviet Union in this **regard**. Our **goal** is co-operation with the States of that **region** and, in order to **confirm** these **words** and our **political** statements, in **my** answers I made new **specific** proposals. In particular, reference **is** made to a **major** initiative - the elimination of all our **medium-range** missiles in the Asian **part of** the USSR. Of course, **on the** basis of "**global zero**" with the United States.

I have the **impression** that the **few short comments** to which I had intended to limit myself are extending into a second interview.

B. M. DIAH. We are sincerely **aratetul** tot this **meetina**, Mr. **General Secretary**. For me **personally**, it represents the **crowning moment of my 50 years of journalism**.

M. S. GORBACHEV. Thank you. I am **happy** to **participate** in this coronation.

B. M. DIAH. There is one more **question which** we should like **to ask you**. Within the context of the ideas **which** you **out** forward at Vladivostok, is there a **possibility** that **you** may visit **Indonesia** at some time?

M. S. GORBACHEV. **We have** long-standing relations with Indonesia. Tradition⁶ have evolved. Of course, **there have been ebbs and flows**. But we value the ties with Indonesia. We **hope** that the advances **recently** made in our relations will **be** enhanced. This will require contacts - **including**, of course, contacts at the **political** level. They will **probably be not only possible but necessary**. In the mean time, we await the visit of the President **of** Indonesia.

B. M. DIAH. I am really **grateful** to YOU for this **meeting** and for **your** answers,

M. S. GORBACHEV. Thank **you** for **your** co-operation. I wish you a fruitful and interesting **stay** in **our** country. **Until our next meeting!**

. . .

QUESTION: It will soon be the anniversary of your **speech** at Vladivostok, in which you advanced broad-ranging **proposals** for the strengthening of **peace** and **security** in the Asian-Pacific region. Much has **happened** since then in that **large** region. Do YOU see any positive **trends** in the development of these events?

ANSWER: I can answer that right away: Yes, I do.

The main events **of** the past year, **including our** talks with **Rajiv Gandhi**, the Prime Minister of **India**, convinced us **still** more that **raising the questions concerning security in the Asian-Pacific region was** correct and timely. Our **approach** to the search for a solution - openness to democratic discussion **of any** ideas and proposals - has also **proved** to be **justified**.

What do we see now that one year **has elapsed**? In all the **complexity and diversity of the Asian-Pacific picture**, **among** all the nuances in the distribution of **light** and dark colours, the anti-nuclear **composition** of the overall picture is **apparent**.

These are some of the signs: the South Pacific Forum **produced** the Rarotonga Treaty. Indonesia is an active supporter of the concept of a nuclear-free zone in South-East Asia. Australia and New Zealand **strongly oppose** French **nuclear** testing in the **Pacific** Ocean and **they are supported by** world public **opinion in general**. There are **increasing demands** for the Korean peninsula to be free of nuclear **weapons**.

In many countries, communities and cities are **declaring themselves to be** nuclear-free zones. There **are cases** in which entire States have taken such a position. The **Philippines** and some other States have included anti-nuclear provisions in their basic **laws**. The People's Republic of China is increasingly vocal about disarmament problems.

In **connection with the** talks between the USSR and the United States, the Asian countries have expressed **an** interest in the **complete** elimination of **medium-range missiles** not only in Europe but in Asia as well. **They view** this issue in the context of their own national security.

The Soviet **leadership** has adopted a very **serious** and **responsible** attitude towards these **wishes**.

And now I can announce: the Soviet Union, in an **effort** to accommodate the Asian **countries** and take their concerns into account, **is** prepared to proceed with the **elimination of all its** medium-range **missiles** in the Asian **part** of the **country as well**, i.e. **it** is prepared to remove the question of retaining those 100 warheads on medium-range missiles which are **being** discussed at the Geneva talks **with the** Americans. Provided, of course, that the **United States does the same**. **Shorter-range** missiles will also be eliminated.

In other words, we **shall proceed from the concept** of a "global double zero".

We do not link this initiative **in this case** with the question of the **United States** nuclear **presence** in Korea, in the Philippines, on the island of Diego Garcia. We **should** like to hope, however, that **it will at least** not increase.

QUESTION: We know that there are also trends of a negative character emerging in the Asian-Pacific region. What could you say about them?

ANSWER: I have already said something. The complications and contradictions have not diminished; the trend towards confrontation is increasing and the signs of a settlement of the regional conflicts are still very faint. In the Persian Gulf, the situation is even deteriorating.

In the Vladivostok speech, I gave the reasons for this and enumerated specific military factors creating a permanent danger.

Now I would add to this the refusal of the United States, the United Kingdom and France to accede to the Rarotonga Treaty and the American "warnings" to States which do not want to tolerate nuclear weapons on their territory off their shores.

QUESTION: What measures aimed at reducing tension in Asia and the Pacific do you consider to be the most timely and realistic?

ANSWER: First of all, one has to point over and over again to nuclear weapons.

A year and a half ago, we put forward a programme for the complete Dhasina-out of nuclear weapons everywhere by the year 2000. This was based on a possible conceptual breakthrough at the Soviet-United States summit meeting in Reykjavik. For the first time, people glimpsed the prospect of a nuclear-free world.

An attempt was made to block this. we did not agree. we put forward additional proposals, which made it possible to move the preparation of an agreement on medium-range and shorter-range missiles into a practical phase.

Just now I announced our new step directly related to the Asian-Pacific region.

I shall refer now to several other possible measures.

FIRST, The Soviet Union is prepared to assume an obligation not to increase the number of nuclear-capable aircraft in the Asian part of the country, provided that the United States does not deploy in that region, additionally, nuclear systems capable of reaching the territory of the Soviet Union.

SECOND, I reiterate our readiness to reduce the activities of the naval fleets of the USSR and the United States in the Pacific. I spoke of this in Vladivostok. But the United States gave no reply. Meanwhile, it is obvious that the line of confrontation there goes through contact areas between the fleets. Hence the risk of conflicts.

We could agree to restrict the areas where vessels carrying nuclear weapons move, so that they would not be able to approach the coastline of the other side within range of their on-board nuclear systems.

We could **agree to curb** the rivalry in anti-submarine **warfare systems** and to ban anti-submarine activities, **including such activities in the air, from specified zone 8.**

Confidence would be enhanced by Limitation of the **scale of naval** exercises and manoeuvres in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and in the **adjoining** seas: no more than one **or two major naval (including naval aviation) exercises** or manoeuvres **annual ly, prior notification thereof** and mutual renunciation of **naval** exercises Or manoeuvres in international straits and **adjoining** areas and of the **use of combat weapons** in the **course** of exercises in the areas of traditional **sea routes.**

This "model" could be tested, **starting** with the northern **part of the Pacific Ocean**, where there are few **protagonists.** This practice could then be extended to the South **Pacific**, to other countries in the **region.**

THIRD. The **United Nations Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace** was adopted over 15 **years ago.** Preparations have been under way for some **years now** for the **convening** under **United Nations** auspices of an international conference on the Indian Ocean. Now it is scheduled for **1988.** However, as before, there is **no certainty** that it will be held. For **experience shows** that, **as** Soon as there are **signs Of progress,** Washington breaks off the talks.

The time has come to establish international **guarantees for the safety of shipping** in the Indian Ocean, in the seas, straits and bays **of** which it is **composed.** There is also the question of the safety of **air** communications. This too can be solved, **given the political will.** The question of collective measures to combat terrorism in **sea and air** communications in the Indian Ocean is an **urgent** one.

In Short - quite useful **steps** can be **taken** for the strengthening of **security** in the Indian **Ocean.**

FOURTH. The question of nuclear testing stands out, **particularly.** Mankind has not forgotten that the first American atomic-weapon tests after the war were conducted in the Pacific Ocean. They destroyed the health and even the **lives Of many** inhabitants there. And we understand **why** there is such a **strong feeling** Of resentment here at the **refusal of the United States, the United Kingdom** and France to halt nuclear tests.

We **appreciate** the **support of the** countries Of **Asia and the Pacific Ocean for the Soviet moratorium.** We have not relaxed the struggle for a nuclear test ban and we shall strive persistently for an all-embracing **agreement.**

We value **highly** the co-operation extended **by the** countries **from** the Asian-Pacific **region** which are **participating** in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. The question of the **Prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons** is now at a **decisive stage at this** Conference. We **hope** that we shall **succeed through joint efforts in drafting and adopting** a historic convention which will - i am convinced - **encourage progress** also on the road to nuclear disarmament,

/...

Other measures are apparently also possible to **reduce** military **tension** in the Asian-Pacific region, **emanating** from **the countries** of the region themselves. The special nature of their world outlook and **their** political and cultural originality **may** also **be** a **source** of ideas **on this subject** that are out of the ordinary, understandable and acceptable to all.

QUESTION: In your Vladivostok speech you **suggested** - maybe **not** as an immediate goal - a Pacific Ocean conference to be attended **by** all the countries that gravitate towards the Pacific, along **the lines** of **the Helsinki** Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. The reaction to this idea in Asia and the Pacific Ocean countries was mixed, What is **your** attitude now?

ANSWER: I raised this in Vladivostok **as** a kind of working hypothesis **or**, **rather**, an invitation to discussion, **I mentioned Helsinki only because the** world **community** does **not** yet have any other experience of the kind. This does not, Of course, mean that **the European experience** can **be automatically** transplanted to Asia and the Pacific.

Nowadays, though, any international experiment has **some common**, global features. That is natural, **since** we live in **an interdependent**, largely integrated world,

Take **the Delhi Declaration on the** principles of a world free from nuclear weapons and violence. It is **a completely** new example of **the** political and philosophical approach to **the root problems** of **communication between** States. It goes well beyond the bilateral and regional framework: it expresses the longings of all mankind, although it **stems from the** growth of relations **between two** countries.

Relations between India and the USSR could be called **exemplary** in a number of **senses**. They cover a great variety of political, economic, **scientific**, technical and cultural topics, they display deep mutual respect and sympathy **between the** peoples of **the** two countries and in tone they reflect reciprocal trust combined with a deeply-felt **mutual** need for **friendship**.

Why is it that such unalloyed relations have been **able to grow up between** India and the Soviet **Union, States** with different social and political **systems**? **Because both** sides - **not just** in words but in deeds - base their policies on **the** principles of sovereignty, equal **rights**, non-interference in internal affairs, co-operation, and the acknowledgement of every nation's **right** to select **its own** **political system** and its **own** forms of **social** development,

We say with pride, therefore, that the Soviet Union and India are creating **such** a valuable model of relations **between** States that they may become an example for others.

The Indian festival **now** under way in the USSR, unique in scope and very **much** devoted to the ideals of peace and **goodness**, is, **like the forthcoming** Soviet festival in India, an embodiment of the present and future of **just such** relations **between our States** and peoples.

QUESTION : **Now I should like to turn to the subject of regional conflicts. Could you expand on this subject?**

ANSWER : This is a large and **complex question**. Every regional conflict has its own roots, its own "case history", so to speak, and its own specific cure.

Let me try to illustrate **this with the** example of Afghanistan, where the **Afghan** leadership's consistent policy of national reconciliation is gradually changing the **situation in the country**. **Whole** groups of rebels are stopping fighting, and refugees are returning to their abandoned **homes**. **Many** more would have returned if the Pakistan and Iranian authorities were not putting obstacles in their way. The idea of a coalition government **has** been put forward, and that presupposes a division of power **among** all the forces that are now pressing or **willing to** press for peace **within the country** and **an end to the** bloodshed. **A law** has **been** passed allowing political parties to function, **A new draft constitution** **has** **been put forward** for general discussion.

All this **is** paving the way for peace in Afghanistan. If **people cannot see it, it is because they do not want the Afghan question settled**.

National reconciliation in Afghanistan is, of course, exclusively a matter for the Afghans themselves, including those **now** outside **the** borders. What is needed **is** dialogue, talks, and greater **trust between the** opposing sides.

In principle, **the** question of whether to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan has **been** settled. We would like **the** time-frame for the withdrawal to **be short**. **But** interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs **must** cease, **and we must have guarantees that** it will not resume.

The **Kampuchean** question. There have, it **seems, been some** encouraging signs of the possibility of a **settlement**. **People have** accepted the notion that **the question can be** resolved **only by** political means. **A firm deadline has been set** for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, **and we are sure it will be met**. **But the most** important thing, in our view, is **that the** idea of a national entente is **slowly but** surely making headway. Here again, confrontation **must give way to dialogue**; here again a coalition **of national forces is a possibility**.

It is in **my mind**, as I say **this, that the ASEAN countries** can play a not insubstantial part in the process **now** beginning. We **know** of the initiatives **taken by** Indonesia **and a number of other countries, and welcome them**.

We are right **behind the** policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in seeking the peaceful unification of **the country and dispelling the military tension**. We also understand **the desire of the people in South Korea** to rid themselves of foreign forces and **military bases**, and of nuclear weapons **with them**.

The Iran-Iraq war. It has long **since** ceased to **be** a bilateral matter. The escalation of **the carnage is now a challenge to the world community and its ability to set limits on the growth of events that seriously endanger the entire world**. The United Nations Security Council has adopted a **resolution** demanding a

cease-fire, an end to all military action⁸ and the withdrawal by Iran and Iraq' of their forces to the internationally recognised boundaries. We voted for that resolution.

We recently officially spelt **out our** view of **the situation in the Persian Gulf and the reasons** for its deterioration. Let **me say** only that here, too, steps can **be taken to cool things down if there is the will. We** have the will,

As we try to douse fires **that** are already raging, we need to prevent new ones from **breaking out** or flaring up. I have in mind the strains associated **with the ethnic** problem *in* Sri Lanka. Luckily, **the** States involved are **showing** proper **restraint, but unfortunately the same cannot be** said of some others, whose geographical remoteness from the **scene** of the conflict is **in** inverse proportion to their patently inflammatory activities,

QUESTION: Everyone is well aware **how important Sino-Soviet relations are** for international **peace and security**, especially *in* Asia, **How have they been progressing** recently?

ANSWER: A gradual expansion of contacts is **becoming a distinguishing feature of our relations** with the People's Republic of **China**. There has **been** a marked advance in the development of trade, *economic*, scientific, technological and cultural ties **and** substantial reserves have **been** found in all these areas. Political dialogue is also going **on**. We **have no** desire to hold it **back**, Consultations are **taking** place, and talks on frontier questions have *resumed*.

Both nuclear Powers in **Asia, the USSR and China, have made a commitment** never to **be the first to use** nuclear weapons. It cannot be a matter of indifference to the **Asian** and Pacific countries whether the other **nuclear** Powers will eventually **make a similar commitment**.

QUESTION: How do you regard **the** development of relations between the Soviet Union and Japan?

ANSWER: Their status is not yet very **settled**. In **recent years there have been efforts to give them** a boost and establish a normal climate. We believe **both** sides have cause to do so - and not **just** economic cause. There could **be** a serious, solid partnership **between the** Soviet Union and Japan, and that, **I am sure, would be** a significant element in the stability of the entire Asian and Pacific situation,

Light seemed to be dawning **not so** long ago, and there was **even** some discussion of my *visiting* Japan. **Domestically, I** would have **been ready to visit that remarkable country**, which plays **such a major role in the world economy** and an increasingly conspicuous role in world politics, **But** forces in Japan proved capable of bringing clouds **back to the horizon**.

QUESTION: How do you see the role of the USSR **in the** development of regional *economic* co-operation?

ANSWER; Normal economic contacts can and must develop on the basis of sound, civilized relations of all types - whether political, diplomatic or simply human, Unfortunately, we have more than once been confronted with a situation where our desire to establish good, but simply diplomatic and trading relations with a particular country in a region has promptly been put down as a crafty political scheme. Heavy political guns are sometimes brought out in efforts to intimidate the Governments and public of small countries still struggling to their feet.

Can you imagine the Soviet Union protesting against the United States or the United Kingdom establishing normal relations with the island States of the Pacific or anywhere else?

It is absurd; we have never done so and never will, We do not build our relations with anybody at the expense of third countries' interests. The best and the only solid basis for international relations is equality, equal respect, non-interference in internal affairs and mutual benefit, It is these goals that the Soviet National Committee on Asian and Pacific economic co-operation, which we are now setting up, will serve.

Now to my next point. In keeping with our concept of accelerated national socio-economic development - especially since the CPSU Central Committee plenary meeting in June - we have been devoting increased attention to the lands beyond the Urals, which have several times the economic potential of the European part of the USSR.

Joint companies and enterprises established in co-operation with business circles in Asian and Pacific region countries could join in utilizing the wealth of these regions.

To us, the idea of comprehensive security naturally encompasses international economic security . Analysing the opportunities available has convinced us that the best way of achieving this is to put into practice the principle of disarmament for development .

Meanwhile, we could begin on a programme of immediate action to alleviate the debt burden of the developing world. Components of the programme could include restoring a net flow of financial resources to the developing countries and getting international lending away, as far as possible, from the mismanagement of the private banks. We think the way to do this is to provide more soft inter-State loans to these countries.

QUESTION : In conclusion, I should like to know your views on Soviet-Indonesian relations and the role Indonesia plays in world politics today.

ANSWER: Physically we are far apart, but the Soviet people have a good memory and keen historical insight, We remember the years of Soviet-Indonesian co-operation at the beginning of your post-colonial history, At that time, having won their independence, your people found a great many friends in the land of the Soviets. "Merdeka" - "freedom", from which your newspaper took its name - is a word we know, esteem and cherish.

The progress in relations between our countries, the recent high-level contacts, the planned visits to our country by the Indonesian President, Mr. Suharto, and the forthcoming meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kusumaatmadja, all suggest that Soviet-Indonesian co-operation is moving onto a qualitatively higher plane.

Indonesia is a dynamic developing State, a member of the non-aligned movement and **ASEAN**, and an active participant in efforts to resolve many world and regional problems. It will, we are sure, play an ever-increasing role. It is our belief that Indonesia, as one of the world's largest States, and the fifth largest Power today in terms of population, will have many more weighty contributions to make in international politics.

We share an awareness of the need to check the arms race and bring about international security, in the Asian and Pacific region and elsewhere. We are alike in believing that a transfer of the arms race into space is inadmissible. We have told the Indonesian leadership extensively and in detail of the dire consequences for peace if the ARM Treaty is broken.

Our position and the Indonesian one coincide on most key issues. There is, thus, a firm foundation for general, mutually advantageous contacts, both bilaterally and within **ASEAN**. We have plenty of opportunities. Is the prospect of Soviet-Indonesian co-operation in the peaceful conquest of space not proof of that?

I should **like to take** this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Soviet leadership and the Soviet people, my sincere respect for the Republic of Indonesia and the Indonesian people, and to offer them my heartfelt greetings and very best wishes.
