

Statement of Hans G. Klemm
Ambassador-Designate to The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

May 22, 2007

Madame Chairwoman, Members of the Committee:

I am honored to have the privilege of appearing before you today as President Bush's nominee as Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (East Timor). I am appreciative of the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Rice have shown in nominating me and grateful for the opportunity to serve in this position.

Madame Chairwoman, I am a member of the Senior Foreign Service currently assigned as Minister-Counselor for Economic Affairs at our embassy in Tokyo, Japan. I have previously served overseas at our missions in Germany, Korea and Trinidad and Tobago. At the Department of State, I have served as the director of large management and policy program offices within the Bureaus of Human Resources and Economic and Business Affairs. If confirmed by the Senate, I will work to the best of my ability to advance U.S. interests in East Timor and the Southeast Asian region and look forward to working with the Members of this Committee and others in Congress to achieve our objectives.

East Timor achieved its independence on May 20, 2002, becoming the first new nation of the twenty-first Century. With the firm backing of the international community, the Timorese people set out on a path towards freedom and democracy. Even at that time, everyone understood that the country would have to overcome many obstacles.

Fortunately, East Timor has many partners willing to assist in times of need. As a friend of long standing, the United States wants East Timor to succeed in its transition to a stable democratic state. The United States has supported both the deployment of international forces and the establishment of the UN Integrated Mission in East Timor (UNMIT) in response to the political crisis and violence of 2006. The United States also supported the

international community's humanitarian efforts by providing food and non-food assistance to address the immediate needs of the tens of thousands of internally displaced persons, many of whom remain in camps around the country.

We support the strengthening of multi-party democracy on a foundation of security and the rule of law. We support the protection of human rights, including freedoms of speech, press, and assembly. We support the development of a free-market economy. We believe that democracy, good governance, and economic growth offer the best chance for East Timor to succeed. We support our allies in the region who have committed both human and financial resources to assist East Timor to recover from the turmoil of the past year. A stable and prosperous East Timor will not only fulfill the aspirations of its people arising from the country's long struggle for independence; but it will also serve as an inspiration to other peoples around the world.

We welcome the progress that East Timor has made in recent months toward consolidating its democratic institutions. The Government has completed the first step, organizing its first sovereign national election for president, with assistance from the UN Integrated Mission in East Timor and other donors. Our Embassy in Dili supported these efforts by publicly promoting peaceful, free, and fair elections in coordination with other diplomatic missions in-country. The parliamentary election scheduled for this summer should provide a further opportunity for the Timorese people to choose a government with a mandate to move the country forward. I look forward to continuing our support for the Timorese in their effort to put democratic government on a solid footing.

Security remains essential to restoring political stability and building a foundation for a more prosperous future. The police and the armed forces need to become cohesive, accountable organizations that earn the trust of the Timorese people. We are working with other donor nations and organizations to provide training and assistance to these institutions to promote professionalism and functional expertise in accordance with principles of human rights. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Timorese government and international donors on the need for security sector reform that is achievable and results in the growing stability of the state and its institutions.

The violence and unrest that engulfed East Timor in 2006 underscored the urgent need to foster good governance. The crisis flowed from institutional weaknesses that will continue to generate problems if left unremedied. These include weak state institutions, politicized security forces, an inadequate system of justice, widespread absence of reliable information, and a disaffected population. The challenge in addressing these issues goes beyond restoring peace and requires laying a solid foundation for good governance in the future. I look forward to supporting our foreign assistance programs that seek to redress these root causes. More must also be done to promote the rule of law. If confirmed, I will continue to press for addressing accountability for the violence of 2006 as well as the crimes against humanity committed in 1999.

Recent events also highlight the need to promote economic growth, with a particular focus on job creation. Democracy is often at risk when there is no economic opportunity, and lackluster economic performance underlies much of the popular frustration in the country. We will assist the Government of East Timor to improve the economic policy environment and best utilize the country's potentially significant natural resource wealth. For example, if confirmed, I look forward to supporting ongoing initiatives to improve the security of property rights, vitalize the private sector and increase economic opportunity. These programs promise to encourage private investment and improve private sector agricultural performance, where 80 percent of Timorese make their living.

The Government of East Timor has done commendable preparatory work since the country became eligible to propose a Compact with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in 2005. The Government could complete its Compact proposal as early as the end of this calendar year, if the Timorese are able to complete detailed analyses on program elements, maintain Compact eligibility, and conduct serious consultations with civil society and other stakeholders. Early drafts of the proposal suggest that it will focus on much-needed infrastructure projects. I understand that after MCC completes due diligence on the proposal, a Compact could be signed and implementation could begin as early as 2009.

I look forward to continuing our efforts to reach out to like-minded international partners to reaffirm to the Timorese authorities what they must do to lay the foundation for a better future. Australia leads the military peacekeeping force in East Timor. Other nations, such as New Zealand,

have also contributed. We have close working ties with the UN Mission in East Timor, which includes over 1,600 UN Police. Portugal, Japan, the European Union, Brazil, Malaysia, and other nations also have a significant diplomatic presence in East Timor.

Madame Chairwoman, I firmly believe that the successful establishment of democratic institutions and vibrant free markets in East Timor will send a tremendously important signal to the world. East Timor is a country that has inspired the global community with its longing for self-determination, freedom, and democracy. This shared commitment to the highest ideals for government makes East Timor a natural friend of the United States and an example to others around the world.

There are many ways the United States, and particularly our Mission in Dili, can help East Timor. Currently over 140 people make up the Mission staff, including 14 Americans, and over 120 foreign service nationals. I look forward to leading this team as we meet the challenges ahead.

Madame Chairwoman and Members of the Committee, thank you again for granting me the honor of appearing before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.