

Remarks by Ben Goddard Welcome to the President

Members of the International Association of Political Consultants, guests, members of the media, distinguished guests and, most significantly Mr. President.

Welcome to the 40th annual conference of the IAPC. Some have asked just what this organization is, what is its' reason for existence. The IAPC was founded forty years ago by two pioneering political consultants, Joe Napolitan who literally wrote the book on political consulting – a tome entitled *The Election Game and How to Win It*, a dog-eared copy of which I carried with me for many years – and by Michael Bongrand, a French pioneer in advising candidates. Over the years IAPC has grown to an organization of political professionals scattered over six continents. Our membership includes those who manage political parties, direct campaigns and lead polling and political consulting companies. We are all working political professionals. We may not always agree on parties or candidates but we share a common mission: to foster the development of democracy around the world. Conferences such as this one is where we meet to share ideas, update ourselves on political technology and discuss the most important issues facing democracies around the world.

Most of us in this room fancy ourselves to be experts in the art and science of politics. And for good reason. We've spent our careers planning and executing campaigns to get the people we call "clients" elected to public office. We understand strategy and tactics. We know how to communicate and motivate voters.

But I would suggest there is one skill that is generally not part of our portfolio – the ability to inspire and lead. That is why we are called consultants and the man I am about to introduce is called Mr. President.

His Excellency Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, popularly known in his nation as SBY, is the sixth President of the Republic of Indonesia. More importantly to our IAPC members, he is the first truly democratically elected President. In the first ever direct presidential election in Indonesia, held in 2004, he won 60% of the popular vote. There are those of us in this room who have never achieved that level of success with a client. Those of us who have never stopped talking about it – and probably never will.

So how did SBY, if I may use that popular term, achieve that landslide victory? Well, he had a little bit of experience. After graduating at the top of his class from the Military Academy in 1973 he won his fourth star in 2000. Along the way he demonstrated his leadership both on the field of battle and at headquarters. He served as Commander of United Nations Military Observers and Commander of the Indonesian Military contingent in Bosnia. He received two dozen military medals and awards including the highest national medal for service above and beyond the call of duty.

Moving from the military into politics is served as Minister of Mining and Energy, and Coordinating Minister for Political, Social and Security Affairs under two different Presidents. In that role he became internationally recognized for leading Indonesia's counter-terrorism efforts, an accomplishment that suggests he is prepared to play a larger role on the international stage.

That is an impressive resume. But we all know of candidates with impressive resumes who fell far short of a 60% landslide when they had to face the voters. Our most honored guest today seems to be what all we consultants seek – a natural: A natural leader who inspires confidence in his people. When he campaigned for a "more just, more peaceful, more

prosperous and more democratic Indonesia” he was not just repeating a slogan. He was imparting a vision. A vision of the future that his people believed he could deliver. That, my friends, is leadership. And it is with great honor that I welcome the man who is leading the world’s third largest democracy to our conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen: may I present to you His Excellency Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia.

Presentation of award.

Mr. President, one of the most important symbolic acts of our organization for the past 25 years has the presentation of the International Democracy Medal each year. I should point out that there have been a few years when no medal was awarded because the members did not believe anyone worthy. In 2007, however, that was not the case. By a nearly two to one margin the members of the IAPC voted the award this year to the people of Indonesia. Like you, they won a landslide victory. Allow me to read from the award to help explain why that decision was made:

“The Indonesian people brought democracy to their country beginning with a series of demonstrations that ultimately, in 1998, forced the collapse and end of 35 years of autocratic rule. The people’s movement led to Indonesia’s first democratic elections in 1999. Participatory democracy has continued to flourish. In April of 2004 the citizens of Indonesia successfully held the largest single-day election in the world. Over 155 million potential voters were registered, 24 political parties certified, and almost 450,000 candidates were fielded in two thousand legislative districts. Some 660 million ballots were distributed across 18 thousand islands.”

Mr. President, that is an historic accomplishment. And direct democracy continues to flourish with the extension of direct election of Governors and Mayors.

The people of Indonesia, through their courage and their peaceful commitment to the electoral process, with their respect for the rights and responsibilities of each eligible voter, have demonstrated an important truth to a troubled world. Islam and democracy can not only coexist, they are compatible, durable and can be protective of each other. The citizens of Indonesia have proven all who would doubt that principle wrong. Mr. President, you, your nation and most important your fellow Indonesian citizens are a shining beacon of hope in our modern world. It is with humility and pride that I present you with the 2007 International Association of Political Consultants Democracy Medal.