

*Senior Minister  
Singapore*

27 January 2008

Ms Siti Hardiyanti Indra Rukmana  
Jalan Cendana 8  
Jakarta 10350  
Indonesia

Dear Ibu Siti Hardiyanti

I am deeply saddened with the passing of your beloved father.

I have great respect for Pak Soeharto. He gave Indonesia political stability and order after the turmoil which followed the communist coup in 1965. Then he modernised the economy, generated high economic growth and lifted millions of Indonesians from poverty.

His contributions went beyond Indonesia. He was a strong and visionary leader of ASEAN. He played a critical role in its formation and growth into a respected regional organisation. Though Indonesia had the weight of size and population, Pak Soeharto never took a narrow, nationalistic view of ASEAN. By emphasizing regional cooperation, he had contributed to the stability and growth of our entire region. Our peoples enjoyed peace and improved standard of living.

Pak Soeharto was a friend of Singapore. As Prime Minister, I was able to build on the warm and close bilateral ties which he and Mr Lee Kuan Yew had forged. We worked on many projects together, like our cooperation in Batam and Bintan. He was a careful listener and a big picture man. He would agree readily to an idea so long as there were mutual benefits.

Pak Soeharto was persuasive in his own quiet way. I have had many conversations with him and also watched him put across his views during ASEAN, APEC and other international summits. At the APEC summit which he hosted in Bogor in 1994, he persuaded the leaders to accept the Bogor Goals to liberalize trade between APEC members. He was widely respected by world leaders.

Pak Soeharto was a patriot and a strong leader. He had done much for Indonesia. I was sad when the Asian Financial Crisis unceremoniously brought an end to his leadership. Whatever the criticisms against him, I am certain that history will honour him for his significant contributions to his country and our region.

Pak Soeharto was a leader and a friend whom I could trust and work with. He was always gracious and thoughtful. But beneath his quiet, smiling demeanour and gentle hand-shake was a man of steel. I was always struck by how he had, time and again, weathered adversity in a most calm and dignified manner.

I will always remember your father fondly.

My wife, who knew your father too, joins me in conveying our deepest condolences to you and your family.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Goh Chok Tong', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

GOH CHOK TONG

P.S. I will be away in Qatar and hence regret that I am unable to attend Pak Soeharto's funeral.