



National Democratic Front of the Philippines Chief Political Consultant

November 30, 2003

To the Family of Bung Drs. Bakri Iijas
Through Bung Hardojo
Coordinator, Redaksi Wahana

Dear Friends,

My wife Julieta de Lima and I are deeply saddened to know that Bung Drs. Bakri Iijas has passed away. We share the grief of his family and we convey our sincerest condolences.

We were close friends with Bakri in the sixties when he was taking his masteral course in business administration in our alma mater, the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. We met frequently and exchanged ideas about the history, conditions and future of the Philippines and Indonesia and the world at large.

He encouraged me to take a scholarship to Indonesia in 1961. Thus I left for Djakarta in 1962 and stayed there for some months. He introduced me to leaders of the student, youth and other mass organizations. I learned much from observing the Indonesian situation and reading so many revolutionary books.

After I returned to Manila, we organized the Philippine-Indonesian Friendship and Cultural Association of which I became the secretary general. We were successful in promoting the friendly relations between Philippine and Indonesian institutions, parties and mass organizations.

We worked together to develop these relations on the basis of the common interest of the Filipino and Indonesian peoples in national independence, democracy, development, social justice and world peace against imperialism and all reaction.

Between our two countries, we succeeded in realising the closest relations of the most progressive parties and mass organizations of the workers, peasants, students, youth and other sectors. When I returned twice to Indonesia, I was able to interact fruitfully with progressive Indonesian leaders at the highest level.

To a significant extent, as an internationalist, he was able to contribute to the development of the then newly resurgent national democratic movement by offering his views, experience and connections. He left for Indonesia sometime before the sustained anti-communist terror of 1965 and thereafter.

We resumed communications only in the early nineties. We were able to exchange ideas, experiences and lessons concerning the struggle between the broad masses of the people and the worst of regimes like those of Suharto and Marcos, and also concerning how the people through their own struggle can obtain justice.

I was aware that he had become sickly and yet he was striving to work with others in reviving the progressive forces and mass movement. He was strongly motivated to obtain justice for the great number of massacre victims, the released political prisoners who continued to suffer discrimination and the broad masses of the Indonesian people who suffer worsening levels of oppression and exploitation.

There is not enough space here for me to state everything that I know about Bakri as an outstanding Indonesian patriot, revolutionary and internationalist. But I pledge to make sure that his writings within my access and his deeds within the range of my knowledge will go into historical record.

To the extent that his friends have assessed Bakri's life, we can all agree that he did the best that he could in the service of the Indonesian people, especially the toiling masses, and that he lived a full and meaningful life. This is a source of comfort and inspiration for those who bid him farewell.

(Sgd.) Prof. Jose Maria Sison

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