Australia Timor-Leste Business Council
Briefing by the Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste

On Monday 7 December 2015, Mr Denis Fernandez, President of the Australia Timor-Leste Business Council (ATLBC) met with His Excellency Mr Peter Doyle, Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste.

The ATLBC and the business communities in both countries have been observing how the effect of not having a maritime boundary is limiting business investments in both countries. The ATLBC encourages the Australian Government to negotiate with Timor-Leste to establish a maritime boundary guided by international law.

The ATLBC believes certainty provided by a permanent maritime boundary is good for business in both Timor-Leste and Australia.

The ATLBC aims to assist both the Commonwealth of Australia and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to develop mutually beneficial business relationships in accordance with the organic law of Timor-Leste.

During the discussion the Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste discussed the bilateral relationship with Timor-Leste, including the Timor Sea. The Ambassador informed that following the consultation between the Commonwealth of Australia and Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in regard to establishing a framework to establish a maritime boundary between Australia and Timor-Leste, which at the conclusion of the timeframe set by Timor-Leste occurred in March 2015 and that a framework for future consultation had not been reached. The Ambassador informed that nothing had been determined and it was in Timor-Leste’s “court” to resolve and not the Australian Government.

In regard to the development of Greater Sunrise, the Ambassador informed that that Australian Government’s position is that the Treaty on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea is still in place. This is despite that the Timor-Leste Government has declared that the treaty is void as the nation claims that the Australian Government carried out espionage during the course of the negotiation of the treaty.

As a part of the discussion, Mr Fernandez informed the Ambassador that one of the underlying principles of companies doing business in Timor-Leste is the assessment of sovereign risk; and that a number of companies have not established a presence in Timor-Leste because both nations have not reached agreement on a maritime boundary.
Today, also marks the 40th Anniversary of the arrival of the Indonesian military into Timor where countless atrocities occurred to the Timorese.

Lest We Forget!

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