Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste relating to the Unitisation of the Sunrise and Troubadour Fields

Invitation from the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties into the Timor Sea Treaty to comment further on the above agreement

The Sunrise Commission

- Based on the crucial importance of the oil revenue to the future of Timor-Leste (National Interest Analysis, Annex 2) it is, therefore also crucial that the Government of Timor-Leste has an appropriate input to the management of the Sunrise Commission.

- The proposal to have a two (Australia) one (Timor-Leste) representation on the Commission is appropriate if one looks only at the total financial value of the oil field to both countries.

- It is not appropriate when two other issues are taken into consideration. First, that the income stream from the oil field is crucial to the future of Timor-Leste and second, the inexperience of the representation from Timor-Leste in this matter and many other matters relating to international policy and management.

- If Australia truly has the interest of Timor-Leste in mind (which seems to be the public policy) and keeping in mind the growing ‘arc of instability’ in our region, it seems appropriate that Timor-Leste has at least equal representation on the Sunrise Commission. This would allow their representation more flexibility in terms of skills and day-to-day oversight of the operation.

- Given that this operation will run more smoothly in an atmosphere of trust this change to the treaty seems appropriate and just.

I hope this change can be made.

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12 June 2003