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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4904

March 21, 2006

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

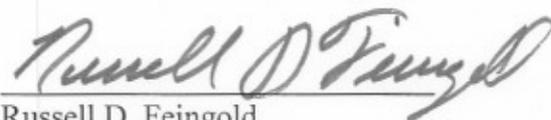
Dear Secretary Rice:

I am certain you share my deep concern over the reports of clashes between security forces and protestors in Indonesia's eastern province of Papua. These recent events further demonstrate that the Indonesian government needs to address the simmering political tension in the region, and that human rights abuses by the military have not yet been fully addressed. While the protestors must not turn to violence, the Indonesian security forces in the region must show restraint in dealing with the protesters and must respect their human rights.

As I stressed to President Yudhoyono during my visit to Indonesia last month, the Indonesian government should use Papua as an opportunity to show the world that it can deal with political discord peacefully and without unlawful or abusive force. I was encouraged that President Yudhoyono promised that he would review his government's policies barring international journalists from visiting the province of Papua. I have written to him to again urge him to open Papua to international observers, journalists, and to investigate the recent violence thoroughly.

The recent events in Papua highlight the still-fragile nature of the relationship between the national security forces and the Indonesian people, and demonstrate the need for the Indonesian government to abide by human rights standards and the rule of law. I will be watching this issue closely and look forward to working with you to ensure that the U.S.-Indonesian relationship—and particularly our military assistance program—is founded on respect for the principles of human rights, rule of law, and accountability.

Sincerely,



Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator

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