

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
REGARDING EAST TIMOR**

June 28, 2006

Mr. Chairman:

Let me begin by thanking the Chairman for holding his meeting, during a time of great concern both for myself, and for the other members of the Subcommittee.

In August 1999, the people of East Timor voted for their independence. The East Timorese people have worked steadily towards building a free and independent people since that time. While the violence of that year was a setback, it was not a roadblock. East Timor has also been an example to another illegally occupied area West Papua, which it is hoped will soon also receive its long promised vote for self determination.

East Timor has engaged in two internationally monitored elections. In addition, East Timor has attempted to manage the results of its long occupation with trials of human rights violators in Indonesia and the joint Truth Commission.

Since March of this year, however, major setbacks have ensued. Accusations of supporting violent militias from a member of his cabinet have caused mass rioting and the recent resignation of the Prime Minister.

Is East Timor on the verge of further instability? How have the Australian peacekeepers on the ground reacted? What circumstances are needed to encourage future stability?

Once again, let me welcome our witness, and await his comments this afternoon.