CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Australia-Indonesia relations are considered as lukewarm at best. The two-way deficit that exist, particularly in the wake of the establishment of East Timor, puts a strain on the relations that should be of paramount. Since 1975 Australia has started to pay attention on East Timor case, because of the occupation from Indonesia showing from the declaration as its 27th province. Another thing is, the issues of human rights abuse such as the Balibo tragedy made the Australian government wanted to involve deeper into East Timor case. Although there were several human rights issues attached to Indonesia, during the era of Gough Whitlam until Paul Keating, engaging with Jakarta still became the most important agenda for Canberra which made Australia support the integration of East Timor with Indonesia. Furthermore, in 1991 when Santa Cruz Cemetery Massacre happened the Australian government started to reconsider their position towards Indonesia. It was because of those actions marked the highest accusation of human rights abuse done by Indonesia. Forcing Australia to conduct further actions and involved deeper in East Timor case.

Apart from that, in the late 1998, when Indonesia was hit by Asia financial crises, the chaos in its domestic conditions and governmental transitions made the East Timor problems seems to be neglected. This chance was used by Australia to interfere through the suggestion of East Timor liberation. The dispatch of John

Howard letter which urged the act of self-determination and the referendum decision for East Timor resulted misconception from Indonesia.

The Australia's changing positions resulted distrust and misunderstanding from Indonesia side. It became a problem since Indonesia started to postpone several cooperation's that might threaten Australia's interest in Indonesia. As shown several bad perceptions from society and the severance in government and military aspect made Australia in a very difficult position. To that extent, it needed a further cooperation on how Australia would repair the relations with Indonesia. Trough the decision-making process, the government decided to use soft power by the implementation of bottom-up CBMs. The bottom-up CBMs was the combinations between CBMs and track two diplomacy. Underlining the role of society and less governmental intervention as a way to reengage relations with Indonesia. The approach was assumed to build trust, confidence and also reduce the tension by seeking common interest.

The bottom-up CBMs has implemented through the foreign aid that spread in several sectors. In the aspects of health, the aid was given by NGOs to conducting a socialisation towards the danger on HIV/AIDS and also women health. Secondly, Australian gave humanitarian relief during the Tsunami Aceh and Bantul earthquake which directly initiated in people-to-people basis. Furthermore, the culture and educations are very crucial sector brought the initiations by AII helping Australian to know deeper about Indonesia and making it easier to reengage and alleviate trust from Indonesia. Several turbulences happened making many agreements and program postponed. Through those initiations, Australia is

succeeding to reengage with Indonesia not only in society but also in governmental level. It can be seen from the continuation of security cooperation with Indonesia that is going to become more advance.

Apart from that, as the problem between Australia-Indonesia might be unpredictably occurred in the future, maintaining its bilateral relations becomes very crucial. It forces Australia to have strategy that can be used not only to repair the relations after East Timor problem but also its aftermath to maintain their peaceful relations. Thus, it makes the bottom-up CBMs approaches might still be an effective strategy for Australia to secure their interest in Indonesia and prevent any problem escalations during the time of peace.

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