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NTU confers honorary doctorate on Indonesia's Yudhoyono

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By Saifulbahri Ismail

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The Nanyang Technological University conferred a honorary doctorate on Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in recognition for his outstanding leadership and contributions on Monday.

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Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (L) being conferred a honorary doctorate by Singapore's President and Nanyang Technological University Chancellor Tony Tan Keng Yam in Singapore. (AFP PHOTO / HO / NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY)

ENLARGE

SINGAPORE: The Nanyang Technological University conferred a honorary doctorate on Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in recognition for his outstanding leadership and contributions on Monday.

Dr Yudhoyono is the first Indonesian head of state to receive a honorary degree from a Singapore university.

The doctorate is in recognition of Dr Yudhoyono's outstanding leadership and public service in many areas.

In his acceptance speech, Dr Yudhoyono said one of the things which Indonesia has been able to break is the notion that democracy and economic growth cannot go hand-in-hand.

He said: "We have become a solid democracy, with three periodic elections in 1999, 2004, and 2009 while at the same time attaining high economic growth, around 6 per cent."

Dr Yudhoyono added Indonesia has proven that democracy, Islam and modernity can go well together.

He said Islamic political parties in Indonesia have become staunch defenders of democracy and religious freedom.

He said Indonesia's democratic development can offer valuable

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lessons to Arab Spring countries that are now facing challenges.

Another myth that Indonesia dispelled was the relationship among democracy, national unity and security.

Dr Yudhoyono said even though Indonesia is not free from security challenges, a good portion of the security problems from the past have dissipated.

The Indonesian president is in Singapore for a two-day visit, which includes a leaders' retreat with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Dr Yudhoyono has high hopes that Indonesia can continue its partnership with Singapore.

He said: "Like Indonesia, Singapore has much to offer to the world. Singapore has the most advanced economy in Southeast Asia, is an essential member of ASEAN and has become a valuable global player. Much is riding on our positive relations, not just from the bilateral standpoint, but also for our common regional and global interests."

President Yudhoyono has established strong links with Nanyang Technological University. He encouraged close ties between the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies and the Indonesian Defence University.

Dr Yudhoyono ends his term in office next year. He will become the longest-serving president in Indonesia's democratic era after two full presidential terms.

- CNA/xq

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