

14/07/1997

Developing promising relationship further

TODAY, July 14, as the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is in Paris, meeting with President Jacques Chirac and attending the traditional parade on the Champs Elysees, it is a special privilege to seize the occasion of the French National Day, to express on behalf of the French Government, a message of friendship to the Malaysian Government and the Malaysian people.

It is also an opportunity for France, which shares with Malaysia the same ideals of peace, freedom and justice, to pay tribute to her outstanding economic development, the fruit of her leaders' wisdom and of her Government's stability.

As a new impetus was given last year to the relationship between Asia and Europe at the Bangkok Summit, French President Jacques Chirac expressed in his Singapore speech his will to make Asia one of the priorities of the French foreign policy, a new frontier of French diplomacy.

It is true that Malaysia ranks among the top of these priorities, as the perfect symbol of the 21st century Asia, as a modern, inventive, open country, which, at the same time, has remained faithful and attached to her deepest cultural and religious values.

For France it appears most essential to reinforce the friendly and fast developing links which prevail between the two nations. The presence of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Paris today is a clear token of this mutual will.

If Malaysia has become our first economic partner among Asean countries and our fourth in Asia after Japan, Hong Kong and China, we naturally consider as essential that such a promising relationship should be developed furthermore. But such a relationship should also be strengthened and deepened by a real political dialogue and concertation, as the basis of a new partnership. And this is an easy task, as we share common views and approach on the major international issues.

To this message of hope for the future of our links, I would like to add my most sincere wishes of happiness and prosperity to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar, to the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to the Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and the members of the Government, to the people of Malaysia and to the French community whose dynamism is inspired by the country where they live.

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