

SPEECH BY: DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD  
( PRIME MINISTER )

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THAILAND,  
HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL TAN SRI PREM TINSULANONDA

VENUE: BANGKOK

DATE: 08 DEC 1982

TIME:

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Prem;  
Distinguished Guests;  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of my wife, my delegation, and myself I wish to express my appreciation to His Excellency Prime Minister Prem and the Government and people of Thailand for the warm hospitality accorded to us. We are happy to be in Bangkok at a time when the City is celebrating its 200th Anniversary and the Bicentennial year of the Chakri Dynasty. On this auspicious occasion I wish to extend our greetings and best wishes to the people of Thailand.

2. This is my second visit to Thailand as Prime Minister, and it is reflective of the Malaysian commitment to strengthening the bonds of friendship between our two countries. Mr. Prime Minister, I am in total agreement with your sentiments that Malaysia and Thailand should continue to strengthen the close links of friendship and intensify the cooperation that have always characterised our relations. Beyond mere words or statements of intent our commitment is manifested in our deeds: from our close bilateral cooperation in the security and socio-economic areas, to our mutual commitment to the objectives of ASEAN.

3. As close neighbours, common sense dictates that in our relations with each other there can be no alternative to mutual trust and the willingness to work together in facing our common problems. Indeed, our two countries are also brought together because of our affinity for each other and the many common perceptions we share. Among others, we share the common conviction that our peoples should continue to live in an environment of peace and stability, so that we can get on with the business of providing our peoples with a better life and a brighter future. The priority that we have mutually given to our relations is unquestionable; so too, our need for each other is unquestionable.

4. These are troubled times: not only have we to contend with a major world-wide economic recession, but also serious challenges to the peace and stability of our region. It is,

therefore, all the more imperative that we continue working together both bilaterally and within the context of ASEAN. Mr. Prime Minister, my discussions with you this afternoon only serve to reinforce my conviction that we are of like-mind, that none can drive a wedge in our bonds of friendship. We have the fullest confidence in one another's commitment to a policy of mutual respect, close cooperation and good neighbourliness. The wide ranging areas of our cooperation exemplify the close and active relations between our two countries. These encompass international, regional, and bilateral issues.

5. On the international plane we are in constant consultations with one another on a wide range of issues, from trade to international relations, and at the United Nations.

6. In the regional context, through our unwavering support for ASEAN, we have chartered a course of regional cooperation which has brought about a high degree of cohesion among the ASEAN countries. It is through this ASEAN spirit and our commitment to the objectives of ASEAN that today we have in our region an association of nations that we can be justly proud of, for the simple reason that it works.

7. The motive-force for the success of ASEAN lies in our firm belief in peace and in working together for the prosperity of all in the region. Consistent with this conviction and a sense of a common destiny ASEAN sponsored the concept of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) for this region. We are convinced that through ZOPFAN we can eliminate outside interference and ensure regional stability, so that we can concentrate on improving the lot of our people.

8. It is with the same spirit that ASEAN has approached the issue of Kampuchea. Vietnam's military intervention and continued occupation of Kampuchea represents not only a direct interference in the internal affairs of the country, but a threat to the peace and stability of the whole region. The unresolved situation in Kampuchea also invites and encourages outside interference, in a way that can only be detrimental to the region's interest. It is for this reason that we are making vigorous efforts to achieve a political solution of the Kampuchean problem so that the Kampuchean people will again enjoy their freedom and independence, and countries in the region will enjoy durable peace and stability. The establishment of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) is an important and historic event in the achievement of a political solution to the Kampuchean problem. Malaysia welcomes the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea headed by His Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk as it represents a positive development. We must continue to urge for a political solution based on the ICK declaration and UN Resolution.

9. As close neighbours, Malaysia stands by Thailand in the face of events in Kampuchea. Particularly for Thailand the situation in Kampuchea poses a direct threat to its security and also places undue burdens on it, given the many thousands of refugees who have fled into the country. Malaysia will work closely with Thailand for the preservation of peace and stability in the region.

10. I wish to reiterate, Mr. Prime Minister, that the corner-stone of Malaysia's foreign policy vis-a-vis Thailand, is, and will always be, one of good neighbourliness through mutual assistance and cooperation. In the security field Malaysia will continue to give the highest priority in our joint war against the communist terrorists in our common border area within the context of the General Border Committee (GBC). We will also, through joint action and cooperation, continue in our endeavours towards the social and economic upliftment of our peoples in the common border area.

11. Malaysia and Thailand have shown through examples our conviction that cooperation and mutual respect are the true ingredients for stability and prosperity. This is manifested in the various agreements of a cooperative nature that we have institutionalised in our relations. Besides the GBC, the Memorandum of Understanding between our two countries on the Establishment of a Joint Authority for the Exploitation of the Continental Shelf in the Gulf of Thailand is a unique example of how problems between nations can be resolved. It symbolises our maturity and good sense and is particularly relevant today when issues of territorial claims often constitute major irritants between nations. (Personally I would like to thank you, Mr. Prime Minister for making available one of your most capable rice experts. I am glad to inform you that he is doing a very good job.)

12. In addition our two countries have also identified many areas of common endeavour to benefit our two peoples: from the joint development of the Golok River Basin and other agricultural cooperation, to joint exploration for coal and other mineral deposits.

13. Your Excellency, the friendship between our two countries is not skin-deep. It is truly tried and tested and built upon many years of goodwill and trust. I have every confidence that none can destroy the bonds of friendship between Malaysia and Thailand. The spirit of give and take, and good sense will always prevail in our relations.

14. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, may I invite you now to join me in a toast to the good health of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Thailand, and to His Excellency Prime Minister Prem, the Government and people of

Thailand.  
Thank you.