

REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER IN HONOUR OF PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND, THE HON'BLE MR NORMAN KIRK, AT SRI TAMAN, KUALA LUMPUR ON 18TH DECEMBER, 1973

Mr Prime Minister,¹ our guests and friends from New Zealand Gentlemen,

I should like, first of all, on behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, as well as on my own behalf, to extend to you, Mr Prime Minister, and to members of your party, a very warm and cordial welcome to Malaysia. You are, of course, no stranger to us. During the course of a meteoric and distinguished political career, you have visited our country on several occasions and I recall particularly the very interesting and useful meeting we had in Kuala Lumpur in 1970. However, this is the first time that you are here since assuming the high office of Prime Minister of your great country and it is therefore with special pleasure that I welcome you here tonight.

Mr Prime Minister,

We last met very briefly while in transit on our way to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Ottawa. I was sorry that we had no other opportunity for a meeting then as my stay had to be shortened by the sad occasion of the passing away of the late Tun Dr Ismail.² I know, Mr Prime Minister, that he had been overwhelmed by the cordiality and warmth of hospitality that you had extended to him and his party, when he visited New Zealand in March. Your visit here, therefore, gives me and my colleagues a much awaited opportunity, not only to strengthen further our friendship but also to reciprocate in a small way the kindness and the hospitality which you had extended to the late Tun Dr Ismail and his delegation—a kindness and hospitality in which we all shared.

Mr Prime Minister, I am certain that we both agree that relations between New Zealand and Malaysia have always been especially

¹ Mr Norman Kirk.

² Deputy Prime Minister.

close and cordial. We in Malaysia, for our part, value greatly our ties with you. New Zealand is a true and tested friend of Malaysia for you have stood by us in time of difficulty and danger, during the Emergency and the unfortunate period of Confrontation. Through our long historical association, through the habit of co-operation we have developed, and the ideals and values we share in common, we have developed relations between our two countries which are mutually beneficial and immensely satisfying.

It is, therefore, with a feeling of genuine satisfaction that I observe the closeness and the warmth of our relations. It is my confident hope, Mr Prime Minister, that you and I will continue to build on the firm foundation of friendship, goodwill and understanding that has been laid over the years by our peoples and our governments.

During the course of your visit, Mr Prime Minister, you will see at first hand some of the tangible results of the fruitful co-operation between your country and mine. Kampong New Zealand, which you will be visiting, occupies a permanent place for New Zealand in Malaysia and in our hearts. I know and deeply appreciate Mr Prime Minister, the sympathetic understanding that New Zealand has shown for Malaysia's development efforts. As an agricultural country that has achieved an enviable measure of success, New Zealand is well placed to appreciate the enormity and importance of our task in the field of development and to contribute towards the realization of the objectives we have set ourselves.

It is true, Mr Prime Minister, that we in Malaysia have made significant progress over the years but much remains to be done. Your visit to the land development scheme at Kampong New Zealand and also the timber complex at Bukit Ibam on Thursday, will, I hope, give you a measure of satisfaction in seeing how the development assistance you have given us has been translated directly towards building a better and happier Malaysia. We believe we owe it much as to our friends as to ourselves to ensure that such assistance is put to the most productive and effective use.

We meet, Mr Prime Minister, in an atmosphere of goodwill and friendliness, that has happily characterised our relations, and that enables us to exchange views with candour and with frankness. Unfortunately, as we look over the wider international scene, the picture is less happy and dark clouds still loom across the horizon.

The shadow of war still hangs over West Asia, while over much of the world the shortage of petroleum is beginning to make itself felt. I fear that the longer the situation persists the greater will be the problems for the world. We have become so interdependent, politically and economically, that it is not possible for any nation, however big or small, to insulate itself from world affairs. So we have to be concerned at the tide of events and to contribute our utmost towards easing international tension.

To us in Malaysia, the situation is clear: there can be no peace in West Asia unless there is justice. The return to the Arab people of their lands which have been illegally occupied by Israel is fundamental to a resolution of the problem. It is on this basis that we have supported Resolution 242 of the Security Council which still provides the only framework for a just and lasting settlement in West Asia. It is our hope that the counsels of sanity will prevail, so that peoples of the world will be spared the hardship and the ordeal, if peace and justice do not come soon to West Asia.

Mr Prime Minister, in our own part of the world, there is much that needs to be done to bring about an environment of peace and security, under which small nations such as ours can be free to seek its political and economic destiny without fear or interference. The Vietnam peace settlement appears to be at a dangerous standstill and all of us must do what we can to urge the parties to the Paris Agreement, which had been so painfully worked out, to observe and to implement it scrupulously. The fate of Cambodia still hangs precariously in the balance.

Looking at the picture more broadly, however, it can be said that the politics of the East Asia-Pacific Region have veered significantly away from conflicts towards the direction of co-operation. Malaysia, for its part, intends, in the conduct of our own foreign policy, to reinforce the habits of co-operation with all countries who would be friendly with us.

It is time, we feel, that all of us adjust to new realities, leaving behind positions that are no longer relevant. It is in this context that the Kuala Lumpur Declaration for a zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality should be seen. We are aware that this cannot be brought about by words alone and accordingly we are doing our utmost within the framework of ASEAN, to make the objectives of the Declaration a reality.

I note with appreciation, Mr Prime Minister, that you had declared that New Zealand had very sympathy with the desire of ASEAN countries to limit outside interference in their affairs and had expressed New Zealand's good wishes for the success of the neutralization proposal. We look forward to the day, when with your continued support, Southeast Asia can truly enjoy peace and stability.

Finally, Mr Prime Minister, let me say once again how delighted I am to see you here in Kuala Lumpur. Your stay is unfortunately all too brief but I hope nevertheless that you will be able to capture something of the flavour and tempo of life in this country and the genuine friendship and affection that we in Malaysia have for New Zealand and her people.

Gentlemen,

May I now invite all present to join me in a toast to the good health of the Prime Minister of New Zealand and to the Government and people of New Zealand.