

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OFFICIAL DINNER IN HONOUR OF THE PRIME
MINISTER OF THAILAND, AT PARLIAMENT
HOUSE ON 14TH JUNE, 1971**

Mr Prime Minister, Toh Puan Kittikachorn, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure indeed, on behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, to extend to you, Mr Prime Minister, and to your gracious lady, the warmest of welcomes to our country.

We are also very happy to have with us His Excellency Mr Pote Sarasin, the Deputy Prime Minister; His Excellency Tun Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs and His Excellency Lt. General Swaeng Senanarong, Minister attached to the Office of the Prime Minister, as well as other distinguished members of your Delegation. It gives us special pride and pleasure to welcome so eminent a delegation to Kuala Lumpur.

Mr Prime Minister, you are no stranger to Malaysia or to the Malaysian people. You will know of the great respect, warmth and—if I may say so—the affection in which you are held among us here. And so, Mr Prime Minister, we welcome you to our country not only as the distinguished leader of our immediate neighbour whom Malaysia holds in high esteem and admiration but also as an old and personal friend who has played so significant a part in forging the very close bonds of trust and understanding which prevail between our two countries today.

Mr Prime Minister, when I welcomed you at the airport this morning, I felt very gratified in the knowledge that yours is the first official visit to Kuala Lumpur of a Head of Government since I assumed office as Prime Minister. You are aware that for my own part Thailand was the first country to which I paid an official visit after assuming my present office. These two facts symbolise in themselves the deep and cordial ties which exist between our two countries and our two peoples.

Mr Prime Minister, that this should be so is surely not surprising as we share so many common ideals and aspirations. Your Government and mine, Mr Prime Minister, are committed to

modernising our societies and to bringing the good things of life to our peoples within a free political system. We are committed also to the defence of our national integrity and independence against any forms of external encroachment and internal subversion by forces alien to our way of life and we have co-operated most effectively in that objective.

Mr Prime Minister, both Thailand and Malaysia are also firm believers in regional co-operation. Ten years ago when the idea of regionalism was less easily accepted than it is today, our two countries succoured and sustained that idea in A S A which has since blossomed into ASEAN, which in turn represents today the best hope for the future of regional co-operation in Southeast Asia.

But relations between states are, in the final analysis, concerned with relations among peoples. Our two peoples know each other well. We are the heirs to common traditions and ways of life of great serenity, ease and graciousness. And today, we both seek to sustain these qualities while at the same time moving our societies into the modern age of science and technology.

But, above all, the relations between states depend to a large degree on the spirit of understanding and mutual trust between their leaders. And, here, Mr Prime Minister, we in Malaysia are fortunate in having in your person a man of good faith, of moderation and courage, and of great wisdom.

Our country Malaysia has, in the recent past, particularly during its formation in 1963, seen some difficult days. But, Mr Prime Minister, you and your colleagues stood by us and did everything possible to resolve these difficulties. We shall always remember with gratitude the help, understanding and co-operation which you, Mr Prime Minister, and your able and distinguished Foreign Minister, Tun Thanat Khoman, showed to us throughout these years. Many developments have since taken place but I want to assure you, Mr Prime Minister, that the memories of the Malaysian people are long for all the assistance you have given us.

Mr Prime Minister, you have come to visit us at an opportune time. Although it was only last December that we met and exchanged views on matters of common concern, events within our region have moved with some rapidity since then and it is

useful that we should meet again to exchange ideas and take counsel together on these developments which so vitally affect the stability and prosperity of our respective countries and of our region.

We have a long tradition of such exchanges between us and our two countries have carried out important practical co-operation in many fields particularly in matters of security. It is in that spirit that I look forward to our discussions tomorrow.

Mr Prime Minister, it is now some six months since my wife and I made our visit to Bangkok. We still cherish today the most happy and pleasant memories of that visit and of the kind hospitality which you and your gracious lady extended to us. The friendliness of the Thai people, the beauty of your country and the long cultural traditions of Thailand, all helped to make the visit most pleasant and memorable.

Mr Prime Minister, although your stay here is all too brief, we hope that you and Toh Puan Kittikachorn will also have some opportunity to relax and enjoy yourselves while you are with us.

Now, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask you to rise and join me in a toast to His Excellency Tun Thanom Kittikachorn, Prime Minister of Thailand, and to the continued prosperity and happiness of Thailand and her peoples.