

A SEED OF ACCORD

CONVICTION IN THE IDEALS OF ASA REMAINS UNDIMINISHED

At the conference of Foreign Ministers of Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, held in Bangkok on 3rd August, 1966. Tun Razak said. "In the depth of my heart / think of ASA as a seed of accord, a seed of accord in the modern world. where in spite of the United Nations Charter. there is still a lot of discord." The main points of his speech

Mr Chairman, it was in this capital city of Bangkok five years ago that ASA was first launched. Today, after a period of three years of almost complete inactivity. Foreign Ministers of ASA countries are gathered here again to revive and to reactivate ASA.

Despite the temporary setback. I am pleased to see that our belief and conviction in the ideals, which inspired our three countries to form ASA. have not in any way diminished. On the contrary all the leaders of our three countries are more convinced than ever of the compelling need and urgency to strengthen ASA : to strengthen the concept of goodwill, friendship and co-operation among our three countries for peace, stability and progress, not only of our respective countries and people, but of this region of Southeast Asia.

Mr Chairman, our meeting here today is of great significance. The eyes of the world are now focused on this region of Asia and are focused on us today to see whether this, our concept of regional co-operation, will have any meaning and will become a reality. We have therefore a duty not only to our people and our respective countries, but also to the freedom-loving and peace-loving countries of the world to demonstrate clearly that ASA is a reality and that we here are determined that the activities of ASA will grow and expand and will give tangible results for all our people to see.

We have also a duty to show to our neighbours and the world that ASA is not directed against any nation or any ideology. As I said at the meeting of the Working Committee of ASA in Kuala Lumpur last April. ASA is not a power bloc. ASA stands for a common desire to strengthen goodwill, understanding and friendship among our peoples. ASA is an attempt to form a peaceful

bloc, powerful in goodwill, powerful in mutual understanding and in determination to enhance the welfare of our people. We are not against anyone, we are pro ourselves, we are pro peace, stability and progress of our region.

Mr Chairman, five years ago. we declared in clear terms the ideals and the spirit behind ASA in the Bangkok declaration. The ideals and the spirit of ASA mean one thing, and one thing only, and that is. we. the three countries in ASA. are determined to work together to progress and develop together, both economically and culturally, to ensure that our people, the Thais, the Filipinos and the Malaysians, will have a better way of life and a happier and fuller life so that we can take our rightful place as freedom loving people and as citizens of free sovereign nations. It is now the duty of all of us to turn these ideals into actions, into concrete proposals and projects. It is our duty to turn our words into deeds, to show that ASA does have a real meaning, a real place in the hearts and the minds of our people.

Mr Chairman, this region of Southeast Asia is one of the world's richest areas in terms of natural resources and economic potential. Through our own efforts, with a dynamic approach and imaginative planning and with determined efforts to implement plans into action, we can husband these resources and give our people that happiness and prosperity that they so much desire. Since the reactivation of ASA with the meeting of the Standing Committee on March 2nd. 1966. after a lapse of there years events for ASA have been moving fast indeed. The Standing Committee have met three times and the third meeting of the Joint Working Party was held in Kuala Lumpur on April 27th this year.

Mr Chairman, we have therefore before us a comprehensive review of the progress of ASA. recommendations on future action, programme of projects and priorities. The time has therefore come for us all to implement these recommendations, to begin action immediately to turn these recommendations into concrete results. I have no doubt that to do these require all the efforts and energies that our three countries can put into them. I am aware of the magnitude of the task confronting us. But with determination and a sense of purpose. I have no doubt we can produce the results, not only for our people to see, but for the world to see.

Mr Chairman, Southeast Asia today is still one of the most turbulent areas of the world. The human tragedy in Vietnam with

the danger of a possible direct confrontation between the major powers poses the greatest threat to world peace and security. But there are also encouraging signs—there is a new resurgence of the Asian identity and the recognition of the need to solve Asian problems in the Asian way without interference from outside powers. There is now a more encouraging trend with a greater willingness and an awareness among countries of this region of the need and value of regional co-operation for mutual benefit and advancement.

The formation of the Asian Development Bank, the Ministerial Conference of Southeast Asian Development in Tokyo and the Ministerial Conference for Asian and Pacific Co-operation are indicative of the prevailing mood and the acceptance of the idea of regional co-operation.

As we gather here today, we are conscious that our brothers in South East Asia are watching us. The objectives of ASA are positive and clear and it is my sincere hope that they will be convinced of our sincerity of purpose and of our determination to achieve these objectives. In this connection, my delegation considers it important that the third meeting of ASA Foreign Ministers should produce some results from those projects recommended by the Joint Working Party for priority implementation. It is the view of my delegation that some of the recommended projects, especially those in the economic field, such as telecommunications, ASA shipping line, the agreement on commerce and navigation, tourism and joint regional projects eligible for external financial assistance, should be immediately approved and implemented. It is, therefore, my earnest hope that out of this conference will emerge some positive and concrete projects which will bring benefits to all our peoples.

ASA, ladies and gentlemen, by coincidence in the three languages of the member countries, means hope, symbolising the natural aspirations of our people for economic advancement and for a better standard of living, for freedom and justice, we have a tremendous hope in the success of ASA. But as I said to the Joint Working Party in Kuala Lumpur in April last, in the depth of my heart I think of ASA as a seed of accord, a seed of accord 'n the modern world, where in spite of the United Nations Charter, there is still a lot of discord.

Mr Chairman. ASA signifies the hope of our people; signifies the accord in the hearts and minds of our people. If we, as members

of ASA, are loyal and persistent in our task in endeavouring to fulfil this hope and to cultivate this seed of accord, then there is no reason why our success should not be rewarded by the growth of a tree, the branches of which will stretch in brotherhood to other nations in this area. And with the frontier of ASA, this frontier of faith and hope among fellow freedom loving nations in this region of Asia we will show, in time to come, that Southeast Asia is an example to the world, of progress, of mutual understanding and of peaceful co-operation.

We have made our decision, we have charted our course let us, therefore, march forward resolutely with unyielding fervour and drive towards our ultimate goal.

Tun Abdul Razak paid a glowing tribute to Japan for the guiding example she has set for other countries of Southeast Asia. He was speaking at the Ministerial Conference on Economic Development in Tokyo on 12th April, 1966. Parts of his speech are reproduced here.

Mr Prime Minister, this morning you have given a most instructive picture of the need for progress and development in Asia and South East Asia. We have great admiration for the manner in which you and your colleagues as well as the people of Japan had successfully tackled the many economic and social problems in your country - problems which in many ways are similar to those in developing countries in South East Asia.

Japan has developed so rapidly in the last decade that not only has she the know how but also the resources, both human and financial, to share with other countries in this region. This is indeed, a matter of great satisfaction.

The rapid rate of progress and the outstanding recovery that Japan has made from the ravages of the second world war constitutes a real example to the people in South East Asia.

The skills, hard work, sweat and sacrifice which the people of Japan have made in nation building are guiding examples for other countries to follow.