



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim meeting Malaysians at an event in London on Friday. PIC FROM ANWAR'S FACEBOOK PAGE

TRUMP PRESIDENCY

'MALAYSIA RESOLUTELY NEUTRAL'

Anwar: Country will remain 'open and pragmatic' in engaging US and China

LONDON

MALAYSIA will continue with its policy of neutrality to navigate global political or economic uncertainties.

Speaking at an engagement session with more than 700 members of the Malaysian diaspora here on Friday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia had been resolute in its neutral stance in engaging other countries, including the superpowers.

With United States president-elect Donald Trump to be sworn in tomorrow, speculation is rife that US-China tensions may be heightened.

Already, tycoon-turned-politician Trump has spoken of plans to impose additional tariffs on China, the world's second-largest economy.

"Maybe there will be some minor volatility," Anwar said at the event, according to Bernama.

"But I am sure we will be able to engage with both China and the US," he added.

The prime minister is on a five-day visit to the United Kingdom.

Anwar, however, said it was still too early to tell if a second Trump presidency would heighten tensions between US and China.

Malaysia and Asean, he said, had been engaging both global powers for decades, and that Malaysia's neutral approach would not change.

China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner since 2009, while the US remains the largest investor in Malaysia, Anwar said, citing investments from Google and Amazon.

Malaysia's position where US and China are concerned was also raised in Anwar's lecture at the London School of Economics and Political Science earlier in the day.

He said Malaysia would continue its "open and pragmatic" approach in engaging both US and China based on mutual respect and shared interests.

"It's as clear as day that there is no zero-sum game here. Maintaining robust ties with the United States and China is not merely a matter of economic pragmatism but a strategic imperative to safeguard our national interests in an increasingly volatile world.

"By cultivating a balanced and

constructive engagement with both, Malaysia ensures a diversified economic base, reduces over-dependence, and a strengthened position as a resilient, open and competitive economy," he said at the lecture titled "The Adaptive Edge: Malaysia's Global Strategy in an Uncertain Era".

Anwar, who is also finance minister, added that Malaysia's approach to navigating global uncertainties was to engage with all key players without taking sides.

"In times of flux, uncertainty is the only certainty. We cannot simply endure, we must thrive. Resilience will guide us, and clarity of purpose will be our compass," he said.

The increasingly dynamic global environment was also the reason why Malaysia decided to join BRICS, which represents 40 per cent of the world's population, in October last year.

In his lecture, Anwar said the decision was not about aligning with any superpower, but rather out of the need of strategic adaptation.

As an international trading nation, Malaysia must adapt and remain ambitious while prioritising sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth, he said.

Anwar said Malaysia was also focused on positioning itself as a

key hub for trade, investment, and technological advancement.

"It is through this forward-looking and holistic paradigm that Malaysia made the strategic decision to join BRICS.

"It is not, as some of the pundits would like to claim, about Malaysia choosing a side.

"It is about a clear-sighted recognition of the geopolitical and geoeconomic changes that are happening around us and expanding our options," he said.

He also said neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia had made similar strategic calculations.

Anwar added that with Malaysia assuming the Asean chairmanship this year, he would bring this adaptive mindset, focusing on strengthening the bloc's connections with other regional organisations, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Union.

BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, and China, was established in 2009 as a co-operation platform for emerging economies.

South Africa joined the bloc in 2010.

The bloc has since expanded to include Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates, and now accounts for 26.2 per cent of the world's gross domestic product.