

By : **DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK**  
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Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, salam sejahtera and salam 1Malaysia.

**Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah Mu'izzadin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddien,**

**YBhg. Dato Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein,**

Defence Minister of Malaysia,

**HE Dr. Ng Eng Hen,**

Defence Minister of Singapore,

**HE Scott Morrison,**

Minister for Immigration and Border Protection Australia,

Deputy Defence Minister Malaysia,

**HE Tomas Kuchta,**

Deputy Defence Minister of Czech Republic,

**HE Baguslaw Winid,**

Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland,

**HE Sjarie Syamsoeddin,**

Deputy Defence Minister of Indonesia,

**HE Pehin Dato Lailara Mej Gen (r) Dato Paduka Seri Hj Halbi b. Hj Md Yussof,**

Deputy Home Affairs Minister of Brunei,

Ladies and gentlemen.

1. On behalf of the government of Malaysia, I wish you all a very warm welcome to the Putrajaya Forum 2014. This is the third such Forum; I remember the first one, back in 2010, which focused on *'The Emerging Regional Security Architecture'*. Addressing the forum, I spoke about the rise of non-state players and criminal groups which threatened the peace and security of the region.

2. Since then, we have seen conflict in Lahad Datu, kidnapping in Sabah, and the resolution of a decades-old civil war in Bangsamoro. Thanks to a strong security understanding between ASEAN members, and Malaysia's own security and negotiation professionals, we were able to restore the integrity of our borders, and help bring peace to the Southern Philippines.

3. But although the risk of conflict between ASEAN members seems remote, security relationships can be tested by chance events, as the global response to MH370 showed. As the recent kidnappings in Semporna suggest, non-state threats remain serious. And in the four years since the first Putrajaya Forum, pressure over contested maritime territories has intensified.

4. In the face of such challenges, Malaysia believes that we must embrace greater co-operation, and encourage deeper commitment to the rule of law. That is what I would like to talk about in today's session – *'Strengthening Security and Regional Stability'*.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Fifty years ago, Asia accounted for less than 15% of global output; today it is more than 40%. Fifty years ago, Kuala Lumpur was not even classed as a city; today, on population alone, it would rank as the fifth largest city in the US.

6. Within the next decade, China will become the world's largest economy. By the end of the decade, Asia's output will exceed that of Europe and North America put together. And this economic development has been accompanied by waves of political reform.

7. So it is little wonder that Asia is commanding a greater share of world attention. President Obama, who attended school in Indonesia, has recalibrated his nation's strategy toward Asia. But the 'pivot to the Pacific' is not just about one country: Russia, Australia and the European Union are also looking Asia's way.

8. And within the continent, Southeast Asia remains a region of interest for many countries; due to its strategic location, and its resources. The Strait of Malacca retains a position of critical strategic and economic importance.

9. The South China Sea is another vital sea line of communication, connecting the Indian and Pacific ocean, and harbouring potentially large energy reserves. With a history of non-traditional security threats, and tensions over disputed islands and maritime claim, it remains an area of concern – for Malaysia, and for our international partners. So too do the various non-state conflicts in our region – from the Southern Philippines to Southern Thailand.

10. I believe that the growing global interest in Asia – and Southeast Asia – brings opportunities as well as risk. By working with our friends and neighbours, we can choose to share the dividends of stability, not the cost of conflict.

11. There are two things we must do.

12. First, we must continue the work of a generation: to strengthen ASEAN, the regional economic, social and security group that grants its members a collective power far beyond their individual means.

13. As one of the five founding members, Malaysia's foreign policy cannot be understood without ASEAN. We believe that a strong and successful ASEAN is not only an economic necessity, but also a strategic imperative.

14. As Malaysia prepares for the Chair of the ASEAN next year and a possible inclusion into the UN Security Council, I am encouraged that security issues are one of the ASEAN Community pillars which all members have pledged to support and uphold from 2015 and beyond.

15. The institutions that ASEAN leads – such as the ASEAN Plus One Dialogue Process, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus and the East Asia Summit – are critical. They provide the necessary platform to promote confidence, transparency and the developments of rules and norms.

16. For example, discussions between ASEAN and China on the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (COC) are making good progress. The COC will be the key instrument in ensuring the proper management of these vital sea lanes, upon which so much depends.

17. There are positive precedents for handling such situations. The dispute between Malaysia and Indonesia over the islands of Sipadan and Ligitan were settled amicably in the International Courts of Justice. Similarly, the disagreement between Malaysia and Singapore over Pedra Branca took a similar path, showing that diplomacy and adherence to internationally accepted law can and must prevail.

18. ASEAN also plays a strong role in promoting a culture of peace. Conflict within ASEAN members, be they due to ethnic strife or political differences, continue to be a cause of concern.

Malaysia will continue to play a facilitative role in addressing these internal conflicts, whenever such a request is made.

19. I am heartened that moderation has been adopted as a key ASEAN value. The challenge now is to turn this concept into specific actions. Organisations such as the Global Movement of Moderates should work closely with existing ASEAN institutions such as the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation. Programmes related to moderation must be included in the successor document to the Roadmap to Establish the ASEAN Community, which is to be adopted in Malaysia in 2015.

20. ASEAN should also continue to binds its members into shared prosperity through its network of Free Trade Agreements, which can help members not only adapt to emerging economic trends, but prosper from them.

21. Finally, ASEAN can play a greater role in responding to the demands of our peoples for better governance, helping to address the concerns which can drive political instability. ASEAN can strengthen its involvement in governance and democratic reform, including by adopting the ASEAN Declaration on Human Rights.

22. Through ASEAN, member states have substantially reduced intra-regional threats. ASEAN provides a forum for conflict resolution, and a bridge to security problems in the wider world; it also strengthens the bonds between members. As Malaysia knows from experience, those bonds are needed most – and tested most –in difficult times.

23. In February 2013, there was an armed intrusion in Lahad Datu, driven by a misguided belief to lay claim on the state of Sabah. After initially seeking a peaceful resolution to the violence, we were forced to react with military force. In the aftermath, we established the Eastern Sabah Security Command, which works to strengthen maritime security in the area.

24. The Lahad Datu incident reinforced the need for close cooperation with our neighbours, and I wish to acknowledge the role played by my friend His Excellency President Benigno Aquino III and the Philippine authorities in assisting us at the height of the crisis.

25. And I am pleased to report that we were able to repay the favour – and demonstrate our own commitment to lasting peace in the region – as the negotiations for the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro entered the final stretch this year.

26. Malaysia is honoured to have facilitated the final deal between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front; the culmination of many years hard work, and an enduring commitment to peace. The Agreement is a clear example of how close cooperation and camaraderie can overcome conflicts, and dampen potential flashpoints in the region.

27. When speaking of close cooperation, our thoughts turn to the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370.

28. Much has been said about this unprecedented incident in aviation history. Malaysia has given its all to find the plane; and in this dark time, we have drawn solace from the assistance granted to us by our friends from around the world and the region.

29. Over the course of the past month, we have seen Chinese ships entering Vietnamese waters to search for the plane; we have shared, and received, military radar data, putting the search above national security; we have seen assets from dozens of countries combined and deployed in a truly global effort.

30. These challenges were solved with assistance from our friends in ASEAN, but they also depended on relationships forged outside of formal ASEAN structures. So our second task, alongside strengthening ASEAN, is to embrace wider collaboration on security beyond the ASEAN region.

31. Cooperation with nations beyond ASEAN – including those who have the capabilities to address multi-dimensional security threats – remains a critical part of our regional security.

32. At the international level, we must explore ways to make a bigger contribution to the world's primary security challenges: non-proliferation, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, terrorism and piracy.

33. On non-proliferation, ASEAN has adopted a more comprehensive treaty, the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. Asian voices should strongly support the proposed conference on the establishment of a similar zone in the Middle East. Asia should also make a concerted effort to implement and enforce strategic trade controls to cut the risk of dual-use goods.

34. Our regional agreement on piracy is cited as a strong example of regional co-operation by the International Maritime Organisation, which seeks to replicate it elsewhere.

35. The same principles – of sharing information and building capacity – could be applied to anti-terrorism initiatives, which, despite their successes, have sometimes lacked the co-ordination needed to be truly regional.

36. The South East Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism, which was established here in Kuala Lumpur in 2003, and which has worked with ten countries outside the region, provides one forum in which such co-ordination may be discussed.

37. When it comes to peacekeeping and conflict resolution, Asian nations are already ramping up their involvement in the promotion of global peace. Japan has made peacebuilding one of its main diplomatic priorities, South Korea has markedly increased its peacekeeping and post-conflict work, and many ASEAN nations – such as Vietnam, which will join UN operations next year – are looking to play a more active role.

38. Malaysia, which has provided numerous deployments to ISAF in Afghanistan, has already played an active role resolving regional conflicts: not only by facilitating peace in the Southern Philippines, but also by taking the first steps towards negotiation in Thailand's restive south.

39. It is this commitment to regional peace through moderation and negotiation which underpins our bid for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2015-2016.

Ladies and gentlemen,

40. I believe that by working together – to strengthen ASEAN, and to develop deeper connections between our region and the world – we can be better prepared for the security challenges we will face in the years to come. In the midst of a period of sustained economic and geopolitical interest, we can ensure Asia's rise is both peaceful and prosperous.

41. As ever, co-operation depends on communication. And that is what the Putrajaya Forum is all about.

42. I wish to congratulate the Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security for successfully convening the Forum. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the defence ministers, and the heads of the various agencies involved, for your participation. I also wish to thank all participants for your presence, contribution and ideas, as we seek to build a consensus for regional stability and peace.

43. With that, I officially declare the 3<sup>rd</sup> Putrajaya Forum open.

Wabillahi Taufiq Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. Thank you.