

**SPEECH BY  
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER IN HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY PHAN VAN  
KHAI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC  
OF VIETNAM AT KUALA LUMPUR  
21 APRIL 2004**

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YOUR EXCELLENCY, PRIME MINISTER PHAN VAN KHAI,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. I AM VERY DELIGHTED TO BE ABLE THIS EVENING TO EXTEND A VERY WARM WELCOME TO YOU, EXCELLENCY, PRIME MINISTER PHAN VAN KHAI, AND TO MEMBERS OF YOUR DELEGATION. I DO SO NOT ONLY ON MY OWN BEHALF BUT ALSO ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA.

2. WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR EXCELLENCY IN MALAYSIA FOR YOUR FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO OUR COUNTRY. WE HAD WISHED TO RECEIVE YOU EARLIER BUT THAT WAS NOT POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, WE ARE VERY GLAD THAT YOU ARE NOW WITH US.

3. IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS, I ALSO BELIEVE IN THE ENHANCEMENT OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BETWEEN LEADERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. I HAVE MADE VISITS TO HANOI AND THE OTHER ASEAN CAPITALS AS SOON AS I COULD AFTER TAKING OFFICE AS PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA IN NOVEMBER 2003.

4. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS, ONCE AGAIN, MY DEEP APPRECIATION TO YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM FOR THE WARM RECEPTION AND GENEROUS HOSPITALITY ACCORDED TO ME AND MEMBERS OF MY DELEGATION DURING OUR BRIEF VISIT TO HANOI ON JANUARY 26, EARLIER THIS YEAR.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

5. THIS AFTERNOON, WE CONTINUED OUR DISCUSSIONS WHICH WE BEGAN IN TOKYO IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR WHEN WE MET IN THE FRINGES OF THE ASEAN-JAPAN SUMMIT. TODAY, WE REAFFIRMED OUR COMMON RESOLVE TO DEEPEN AND WIDEN THE SCOPE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. WE AGREED THAT BOTH

MALAYSIA AND VIETNAM COULD, AND INDEED SHOULD, INITIATE SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES TO PROMOTE CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

6. THE JOINT DECLARATION WHICH WE SIGNED TODAY, TOGETHER WITH THE TWO MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING ON EDUCATION AND ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ATTEST TO OUR FIRM COMMITMENT TO INCREASE THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WHICH ALREADY COVERS A WIDE SPECTRUM OF ENDEAVOURS FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT.

7. I CAN SAY WITH SATISFACTION THAT MALAYSIA-VIETNAM BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE PROGRESSING WELL. THE INCREASING VOLUME OF TRADE, TOTALLING US DOLLARS 1.2 BILLION IN 2003, IS INDICATIVE OF THE EXTENSIVE LINKS WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITIES OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES. I BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THERE REMAINS VAST POTENTIALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR TRADE TIES. IN THIS REGARD, THE MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITIES OF BOTH OUR COUNTRIES MUST CREATIVELY FIND WAYS AND MEANS TO EXPLOIT THESE POTENTIALS WHICH CONTINUE TO EXIST IN THE AREA OF TRADE, BOTH IN THE TRADING OF GOODS AS WELL AS SERVICES.

8. THE BUSINESS FORUM WHICH IS BEING ORGANISED ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR EXCELLENCY'S VISIT IS INDEED TIMELY AND RELEVANT. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE EVENT WOULD ASSIST TO BOOST CLOSER INTERACTION AND INCREASED NETWORKING AMONG THE BUSINESS LEADERS OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

9. I AM ALSO PLEASED TO OBSERVE THAT MALAYSIAN INVESTMENTS IN VIETNAM HAVE BEEN QUITE SUBSTANTIAL AND HAVE, NO DOUBT, GENERATED MUTUAL BENEFITS. CURRENTLY, MALAYSIA IS THE TWELFTH LARGEST INVESTOR IN VIETNAM, NOW TOTALLING US DOLLARS 1.02 BILLION. WE WOULD CERTAINLY BE ENCOURAGING MALAYSIANS TO VENTURE AND INVEST MORE IN VIETNAM. IN THIS CONNECTION, YOUR EXCELLENCY'S OWN EFFORTS TO FURTHER OPEN UP YOUR COUNTRY, INCLUDING PROVIDING BETTER INCENTIVES TO FOREIGN INVESTORS, IS MOST WELCOME INDEED.

10. ON MALAYSIA'S PART, WE STAND READY TO COLLABORATE AND COOPERATE WITH VIETNAM IN ALL AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. WE ARE PREPARED TO SHARE WITH VIETNAM OUR EXPERIENCE IN CAPACITY-BUILDING, IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND IN THE UPGRADING OF INSTITUTIONS.

11. UNDER THE MALAYSIAN TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME (MTCP), WE WILL CONTINUE TO OFFER PLACES TO VIETNAMESE FOR TRAINING IN VARIOUS FIELDS, AS PART OF THE REGIONAL EFFORT TO BRIDGE THE GAP IN DEVELOPMENT AMONG ASEAN COUNTRIES. UNDER THE INITIATIVE FOR ASEAN INTEGRATION (IAI), MALAYSIA HAS PLEDGED A TOTAL SUM OF US DOLLARS 1.3 MILLION FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (HRD) FOR VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, LAOS AND MYANMAR. THIS SPECIAL PROGRAMME COVERS 101 SHORT AND LONG-TERM POST-GRADUATE COURSES FOR THE 2002-2004 PERIOD.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

12. MALAYSIA LOOKS FORWARD TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH VIETNAM, JUST AS WE DO WITH ALL THE OTHER ASEAN PARTNERS, TO STRENGTHEN AND REVITALISE THE ORGANISATION. AT THE LAST ASEAN SUMMIT IN BALI, WE AGREED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASEAN COMMUNITY SHALL BE ANCHORED UPON THREE PILLARS NAMELY SECURITY, ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-CULTURAL.

13. ASEAN HAS INDEED BEEN A POSITIVE FACTOR FOR PEACE AND PROSPERITY IN OUR REGION IN THE PAST. WE MUST NOT DELAY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS ADOPTED IN BALI SO THAT ASEAN CAN EFFECTIVELY CONTINUE TO BE THE DRIVING FORCE FOR REGIONAL PEACE AND PROSPERITY WELL INTO THE FUTURE. AT THE SAME TIME, ASEAN MUST NOT NEGLECT TO CONSOLIDATE ITS TIES WITH THE COUNTRIES OF EAST ASIA AS WELL AS WITH ITS OTHER DIALOGUE PARTNERS.

14. AS WE CONTINUE TO DEVELOP OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATE TO ENHANCE REGIONAL INTEGRATION, WE MUST ALSO PLAY OUR PARTS AS RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. IN THIS REGARD, IT WOULD SERVE ASEAN COUNTRIES WELL TO MAINTAIN CLOSE COORDINATION AMONG THEMSELVES IN OTHER REGIONAL AS WELL AS GLOBAL FORA.

15. IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS, BOTH MALAYSIA AND VIETNAM HAVE STEADFASTLY UPHeld THE RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW AND ADHERED TO THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING INTER-STATE RELATIONS. IN FACT, AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY, I DO BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD GIVE APPROPRIATE ATTENTION TO GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS AND THE PROMOTION OF GREATER REGIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH ASEAN.

16. IN THE SPIRIT OF NEIGHBOURLINESS, ALLOW ME TO WISH YOUR EXCELLENCY AND MEMBERS OF YOUR DELEGATION A VERY PLEASANT STAY IN MALAYSIA.

17. I WOULD NOW LIKE TO ASK THE DISTINGUISHED GUESTS TO RISE AND JOIN ME IN A TOAST TO THE HEALTH OF HIS EXCELLENCY PRIME MINISTER PHAN VAN KHAI, AND TO THE EVER LASTING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA AND THE PEOPLE OF VIETNAM.