

THE WHITE HOUSE LUNCHEON HOSTED BY PRESIDENT REAGAN
WASHINGTON, USA

18 JANUARY 1984

It is an honour for me and my delegation to be among the first to be invited for an official visit to Washington in 1984. This is a very important year for your country as it is the year for the presidential election. I observe that although no official statement has been made either confirming or denying Mr. President of your desire to seek re-election to the Oval Office, the air in Washington is however reverberating with keen expectation on your being voted to another term as the chief executive of the United States.

2. I fully appreciate the pressures this visit imposes over and above the competing demands on your time, arising from your many heavy duties and responsibilities as President, and indeed, as a world statesman. With the Presidential election just around the corner and the world continuing to throw up crisis after crisis, playing host to a small South East Asian country must be quite a strain. I am greatly flattered and honoured that you should deem it worth your time.

3. Mr. President, I am of the impression that our bilateral relations are on a sound footing and I concur readily with your sentiments that there is every reason for us to expect our co-operative relationship to expand further in the years ahead, in the spirit of global inter-dependence for mutual benefits.

4. Even though our two countries are on the opposite sides of the globe with a time difference of 12 hours, we have many things in common. We both subscribe to the democratic process and the rule of law, and we believe in the free enterprise system.

5. We also share a common perspective on the security and stability in the Southeast Asian region which has been severely threatened by recent events, such as the continued occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnamese troops, and slightly further afield, by the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan. Malaysia abhors military intervention, and for that matter any form or manner of interference of a state by another. We hope that there will be quick and peaceful solution to global flash points which is a prerequisite to security and stability which will in turn facilitate the urgent task of economic development and progress.

6. However, all this does not mean that we should take our sound and balanced relationship for granted. Nor does it imply that we have had no differences in views or problems. On the contrary, we are very conscious of the fact that your Administration has policies that cause some anxieties, even serious problems on occasions, in our bilateral relationship as well as in our respective multilateral policy postulates. Still, I feel confident that through continued and expanding direct contacts, such irritants in our relationship can be ameliorated if not indeed removed.

7. Let us pledge therefore our mutual commitment to widen as well as to deepen the channels of communication and contacts in the interest of further improving the tone and texture of the relationship between our two democratic societies.

8. I must confess Mr. President that I had looked forward to this privilege and pleasure of meeting you and your Cabinet colleagues with a certain sense of expectation. Now having met you, I can only say that I am truly pleased for having made this official trip to Washington. Mr. President, my delegation and I have been touched by the generosity and warmth of your hospitality and the cordiality which have been extended to us from the time of our arrival in Washington.

9. Before I conclude, let me on behalf of my delegation and myself, once again express our sincere thanks and appreciation for all the many courtesies so warmly extended to us. It is our hope in the traditional Malaysian spirit that we will be able to have the opportunity to reciprocate the kindness and the generous hospitality in the not too distant future. In the meanwhile, let us pledge to strengthen further the bonds of friendship, understanding and mutual respect which have existed between our two countries over the years.

10. Gentlemen, I would now like to invite you to join me in a toast to the President and to the friendship and positive cooperation of our two countries.