

THE OFFICIAL DINNER IN HONOUR OF PRIME MINISTER OF THAILAND, H. E.
GEN. TAN SRI PREM TINSULANONDA
SRI PERDANA, KUALA LUMPUR

15 FEBRUARY 1984

Your Excellency General Tan Sri Prem; Excellencies; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Your Excellency and members of your delegation to Malaysia. I am particularly happy to receive Your Excellency, as it affords me the opportunity to reciprocate the warm and generous hospitality accorded to me and my delegation on our two visits to Thailand.

2. Your Excellency, your visit affords us an opportunity to continue our discussions and to exchange views on matters of interest to both our countries. Your visit also signifies the importance that we in ASEAN place on regular consultations at all levels. This tradition can only enhance our understanding of one another and can only contribute towards strengthening our bonds of friendship.

3. Indeed, Malaysia and Thailand, as neighbours, have a long tradition of working together. We are brought together by the many shared perceptions and aspirations. Our desire is for our peoples to continue living in an environment of peace and stability so that we can get on with the task of national development for the welfare of our peoples. We are joined in these common aspirations by our friends in ASEAN. Indeed, ASEAN is a testimony to our belief that the road to stability and prosperity is through cooperation and negotiation in a spirit of give and take. It was the common desire to see a region free from turmoil and conflict that we conceived ASEAN.

4. Consistent with our conviction for a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia, ASEAN steadfastly pursued the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, or ZOPFAN, for this region. We are convinced that through ZOPFAN we can eliminate outside interference and ensure regional stability.

5. We in ASEAN believe that the continued occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnamese forces constitutes a threat to the peace and stability of the whole region, as the situation encourages outside interference. We are mindful of Thailand's particular concern in view of the direct threat posed

to Thailand by the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea. Malaysia and ASEAN will work closely with Thailand in cooperation with all peace loving countries to secure a political solution, and ensure the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces and the restoration of Kampuchean sovereignty and independence so that the Kampuchean people will be able to exercise their rights. For this reason, ASEAN supports wholeheartedly the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, CGDK, under the leadership of His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk, as it represents a positive development in the effort to find a political solution to the Kampuchean problem. ASEAN's efforts towards this end continue to receive the support of the international community.

6. Mr. Prime Minister, the wide ranging areas of cooperation between our two countries exemplifies the priority that we give to our relations with one another. Malaysia-Thai cooperation covers a myriad of matters; indeed cooperation has become institutionalised in our relations. Under the security framework of the General Border Committee, we have cooperated closely on eliminating the communist terrorists operating in our joint border area. Through our joint efforts we have eliminated a large number of the communist terrorists and have frustrated their movements, and until their final elimination, we must persevere in our effort and intensify our cooperation.

7. Malaysia-Thai cooperation on socio-economic development also forms an important aspect of the GBC because of its direct relevance to security. Towards this end we have also jointly embarked on many projects in our endeavours for the social and economic upliftment of our peoples in the common border area.

8. The tradition of working together and our confidence in one another have also enabled us to even resolve conflicting maritime claims in a most novel way by agreeing to jointly exploit and share the resources of the area. By our example we have shown how problems between nations can be resolved through cooperation and mutual respect.

9. Mr. Prime Minister, in reviewing the depth and extent of our bilateral cooperation, I would like to make special mention of our joint efforts in the area of agriculture. This is a sector of equal importance to us as the majority of our peoples depend on the land for their livelihood, particularly so for those living in the proximity of our common border. It is therefore imperative that we continue to give emphasis to cooperation in this field. In this respect I note with deep satisfaction our agreement to jointly develop the Golok River Basin, and the possible channelling of water from south Thailand to the northern padi lands of Malaysia.

10. Thailand is an acknowledged leader in agriculture, and the advancements made in agricultural technology in Thailand have even enabled grapes to be grown in the tropics. I am sure we can learn a lot from Thailand.

11. It is my fervent belief, Mr. Prime Minister, that the reservoir of goodwill and the close cooperation which has characterised our relations will continue to grow.

12. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, may I invite you now to join me in a toast to the good health of His Excellency Prime Minister Prem, the Government and the people of Thailand.