

**THE STATE BANQUET HOSTED BY H.R.H. SAMDECH KROM PREAH NORODOM
RANARIDDH FIRST PRIME MINISTER, AND H.E. SAMDECH HUN SEN,
SECOND PRIME MINISTER OF THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA**
CAMBODIA, 14 APRIL 1994

Your Royal Highness Prince Ranariddh, First Prime Minister;
Your Excellency Samdech Hun Sen, Second Prime Minister;
Excellencies;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My wife and I are greatly honoured to have been invited to visit the Kingdom of Cambodia. We are touched by the warmth and friendliness extended to us since our arrival. We are especially honoured that your Government has agreed to receive us and our delegation during the Cambodian New Year. May I, on behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, extend our warm wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year to all Cambodians.

2. My wife and I are also moved by the honour granted us by His Majesty Norodom Sihanouk Varman, King of Cambodia, and Her Majesty Queen Norodom Monineath Sihanouk, for receiving us in audience and for hosting the gracious luncheon today. His Majesty stands in high regard and esteem among Malaysians. To this day Malaysians remember with gratitude the role played by His Majesty in persuading the then Malaysian Prime Minister and the President of the Philippines to come to Cambodia for a summit meeting in 1964 to reconcile differences between the two countries.

3. While relations between Cambodia and Malaysia have always been cordial, this visit is especially historic as it takes place 30 years after the first Prime Minister of Malaysia came to Cambodia. The intervening years unfortunately did not provide Malaysian leaders with the opportunity to visit Cambodia. Nevertheless Cambodia has always remained close to our hearts. We have always been concerned with the situation in Cambodia and the plight of Cambodians during those years when your country was undergoing the traumas of war. But we are happy with the positive results of the efforts put in by friends and neighbours and, most importantly, the commitment of Cambodians themselves to bring about lasting peace in Cambodia.

4. Malaysia is pleased at having participated in the Cambodian peace process and in the UNTAC operations. We consider our participation as a responsibility, being a close neighbour and ally of Cambodia. To us, peace in Cambodia is vital for the stability and prosperity of all of Southeast Asia. As the leader of a coalition government, I salute the wisdom of

Cambodian leaders in selecting this common course in the building of a peaceful and united Cambodia.

Your Royal Highness And Your Excellency,

5. A new dawn has broken over Southeast Asia. The return of peace in Cambodia and other changes in the region have now presented us with an unprecedented opportunity for enhancing cooperation between and among the countries of Southeast Asia. Never before have we got the opportunity for all the Southeast Asian countries to work together towards wider regional cooperation in the true spirit of goodwill and harmony. The time has now come to forge a more united Southeast Asia.

6. A more united Southeast Asia will make us all stronger in meeting future challenges. It is my hope that ASEAN would ultimately comprise all the 10 countries in Southeast Asia. Together we can work with the other countries in East Asia to develop a more resilient and progressive crescent of prosperity in this region. Laos and Vietnam have taken steps to prepare for their eventual entry into ASEAN. Both have now become observers of ASEAN. I hope your Government will consider Cambodia's participation in ASEAN as Laos and Vietnam have done, so as to eventually blend into the ASEAN tapestry of regional cooperation.

7. Now that a new era in the Cambodia-Malaysia relations has begun, Malaysia will take every measure to reinforce existing interaction between the peoples of Cambodia and those of Malaysia, begun centuries ago. Your Royal Highness and Your Excellency,

8. I am confident that the bond of friendship and cooperation between Cambodia and Malaysia will be further enhanced following today's meeting. Our discussion this afternoon has been most fruitful. Malaysia admires the commitment of your Government towards promoting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia and your will and determination to nurture national reconciliation to enhance peace and stability in the Kingdom. We recognise that you have an enormous task ahead. Nevertheless, we fully support your efforts. I would like to emphasise that the Malaysian Government will continue to cooperate with Cambodia in your reconstruction and development efforts. The presence of Malaysian corporate leaders and entrepreneurs in my delegation, attests to their interest to help explore mutually beneficial projects with Cambodia. They are here to learn how best to put their expertise and funds in joint efforts to develop your country.

9. In order to strengthen our cooperation, it is fitting that both countries set up appropriate frameworks to facilitate the

signing of bilateral agreements between us. Towards this end, it is my great pleasure to invite both Your Royal Highness and Your Excellency to make an official visit to Malaysia which will certainly reinforce efforts at cooperation.

10. I have come to Phnom Penh with the hope that there can be put in place a new framework for sustained cooperation between Cambodia and Malaysia and between us and the rest of Southeast Asia. We should aim towards regional partnership. It is also with this objective that I shall proceed from your beautiful Kingdom to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, another one of Malaysia's close friend and neighbour.

11. Once again, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to us by both Your Royal Highness and Your Excellency and the Government and people of Cambodia.