

The Official Dinner In Honour Of H.E. Junichiro Koizumi Prime Minister Of Japan

Seri Perdana, Putrajaya, Malaysia 10 January 2002

Allow me first of all to extend a warm welcome to Your Excellency and members of your delegation to Malaysia and to our new administrative capital, Putrajaya. I am glad to be able to reciprocate the gracious hospitality accorded to me and my delegation on my visit to Tokyo last June. I hope that your stay in Malaysia although brief will provide you with a glimpse of Malaysia and the efforts being made by Malaysians to develop the country.

2. I am happy to note the close and cooperative ties that exist between our two countries. The frequent exchanges of high-level visits, the substantial growth in trade, investment, technical cooperation and the expansion of our collaboration into new areas such as Information Technology are testimonies to the healthy and dynamic partnership that we have nurtured over the years. Your visit today and the discussions we had this afternoon will no doubt expand further the scope and depth of our bilateral cooperation.

3. We have always regarded Japan to be an active partner in the economic development of Malaysia and we are confident that it will remain so. Japanese investors have continued to contribute to the development of our manufacturing industry. Japanese technology has facilitated our industrial development and Japanese institutions of higher learning have assisted in the training of our human resources. Japan's financial assistance has also allowed us to proceed with our financial development particularly during the crisis of 1997. Malaysia truly appreciates your country's contribution and hopes that Japan will continue to be an active and reliable partner in development.

4. In terms of Foreign Direct Investments, Japan continues to be an important source for Malaysia. For the period January-October 2001, a total of 134 projects with capital investments of RM3.05 billion were approved. Japan remains the second biggest foreign investor after the United States. However the involvement of Japanese companies in Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor, the country's R&D hub for IT, has been somewhat limited. We hope the level of investments will improve.

5. As for trade, Japan is also Malaysia's second most important trading partner accounting for about 17 percent of Malaysia's global trade. Last year, 21 percent of Malaysia's imports came from Japan and 13 percent of our exports went to

Japan. We hope that more Malaysian products could find greater access into the Japanese market. We are told that Japanese tourists fear coming to Malaysia because it is a Muslim country. We have been a Muslim country since independence and Japanese businessmen and tourists have been coming here. We have not changed one bit. There is no ground for this fear. The Japanese press which is familiar with Malaysia should clear this misunderstanding.

6. In 1982 Malaysia adopted the "Look East Policy" as part of our development strategy. We were convinced that Japan's phenomenal rise as an industrialised nation after the Second World War, was due in part to the work ethics and values adopted by the Japanese workforce. Eager to emulate Japan's success, Malaysia decided to send students and trainees to Japan. Since then, more than 13,000 Malaysians have obtained their tertiary education as well as benefited from advanced training under the policy. We still believe that the Look East Policy is relevant. We trust that Japan would be ready to provide more concessions and places for Malaysian students and trainees in Japanese universities and technical institutions in the future.

7. Malaysia is very concerned to see the economic recovery of Japan. We know of Your Excellency's determination to implement the economic structural reforms aimed at revitalising the economy. We hope your plan will succeed given the longer time that you will get to see it through.

8. At the regional and international level both our countries are active participants and closely cooperating in many important forums such as ASEAN+3, ARF and ASEM. Malaysia is especially pleased that Japan has continuously taken a great interest in ASEAN affairs and rendered her assistance in numerous programmes including trade and investment, human resource development and information technology.

9. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks in the US, the international community has been grappling with how to stop terrorist attacks. Malaysia believes that even if we wipe out the Talibans, there is no guarantee there will be no future acts of terrorism. The only way is to examine the root causes and remove them. There is no doubt that the Palestinian issue needs to be resolved if we want to stop others from taking the law into their own hands and deciding to criminally terrorise the world. World opinion must be brought to bear on this issue if we are serious about ending terrorism.

10. Let me take this opportunity to again express my sincere appreciation to you for making this official visit to

Malaysia. I hope that your short visit here will be a memorable one to you and members of your delegation.