

SPEECH BY: DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
(PRIME MINISTER)

EVENT: IN RESPONSE TO THE JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER, MR. YASUHIRO NAKASONE

VENUE: LUNCHEON IN KUALA LUMPUR,

DATE: 09 MAY 1983

TIME:

Your Excellency Prime Minister Nakasone;
Excellencies;
Distinguished Guests.

I am very delighted that this morning we had the opportunity to meet and to exchange views again on matters of mutual interest to us, just three and a half months after our first meeting in Tokyo. Our meeting this morning was indeed useful as did our previous meeting in January. Apart from acquainting each other of our governments' policies and matters that have bearings and effects on our two countries, we were able to promote deeper understanding between us and between our two governments. I certainly would welcome further opportunities like what we had in Tokyo recently, and again this morning, from time to time in the future.

2. Before continuing, I would like to express my deep appreciation and thanks for the very kind words which you have expressed about me and the Malaysian people.

Mr. Prime Minister,

3. We just heard from you, your Government's policy towards ASEAN. Malaysia is honoured to be the country you choose to announce your policy, and I am even more honoured to be given the opportunity to respond to you. However, I must make clear that I can only respond for Malaysia, as I cannot speak for the other ASEAN governments.

4. We in Malaysia receive with satisfaction and a sense of assurance the positive policy that you have just spelt out towards ASEAN. We certainly welcome and would like to reciprocate your good intention, not only to strengthen Japan's relations with us, but also to put our relationship in a new dimension. I fully agree with your view that we cannot afford to rest easy by merely pursuing existing policies. Quite naturally, I would hope that this new emphasis in your policy would result in a further intensification of cooperation and evolve into a more equal and mutually reinforcing partnership between Japan and us. It would be a matter of regret if the high hopes which have just been raised were to remain merely a cliché. In Tokyo last January, I said, inter-alia, that what is vital is not

merely a need for heart-to-heart diplomacy, but for positive results to follow upon these exchanges in terms of technology transfer, investments, economic, cultural and social cooperation. I am pleased to hear that among the measures to be undertaken by the Japanese Government in its new policy perspective towards ASEAN will be the transfer of technology and cooperation in the field of science and technology. For Malaysia at least we need your technology transfer as well as your cooperation in science and technology to continue our pace of economic development.

5. I would like to mention here that we in ASEAN have made a proposal to promote ASEAN-Japan scientific and technological cooperation. I am glad that there is a concurrence of views on both sides. We have also proposed an ASEAN Science Trust Fund which, it is hoped, will be favourably considered by us all. In making the proposal for cooperation in this field, we in ASEAN hope to reduce the technological gap so that ASEAN-Japan relations would be more stable. Your Excellency's proposal for a ministerial conference to discuss cooperation in science and technology is very much in line with our own thinking and is therefore welcomed.

6. I am also gratified to learn that the Japanese Government has taken into account our need for greater access to Japanese market. As a grouping, ASEAN is Japan's second largest trading partner, and it is only logical that Japan, should give serious consideration to further opening its markets to our export items. The resulting prosperity of the ASEAN countries would benefit Japan in terms of ASEAN being an even better customer and trading partner for Japan. Perhaps, if Japan would take the lead in this regard, the other developed industrialised countries of the West may be compelled to follow suit.

7. It is a pity, however, that during the time of economic recession, some of the largest industrial powers have bowed to the mounting domestic pressures for protectionism. This I consider as one of the most serious threats to the global economy and trade and constitute a real setback for the early realisation of the new international economic order. It is regrettable that those countries which proclaim to be the standard bearers of free trade have themselves become what I call "free traders of convenience".

8. We, in Malaysia, have on many occasions spoken against the rising tide of protectionism and we will continue to do so for the maintenance of the free enterprise system in which we place our faith. I would like, therefore, to welcome Your Excellency's determination to make efforts for the prevention of protectionism.

9. For unhindered progress and development to continue in Malaysia and the other ASEAN countries there must be peace, stability and security in the region. But these vital

ingredients are now being threatened by the continued occupation of Kampuchea by the Vietnamese forces. All efforts to bring about a peaceful and comprehensive political solution to the issue have not been successful because of Vietnam's defiance and obduracy. The situation in the region could only return to normal after the total withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea and the restoration of the right of self determination for the Kampuchean people. Malaysia is appreciative and thankful to Japan for its continued support of ASEAN's efforts in our common endeavours to find a speedy and peaceful solution to the Kampuchean issue in accordance with the ICK declaration and other relevant UN resolutions.

Mr. Prime Minister,

10. On the question of defence, Malaysia believes that every country must have the capability and right to defend itself. Malaysia, therefore, is not opposed to Japan upgrading its defence capability as long as it is intended purely for its own self defence. As far as the defence of the seelanes is concerned, we feel assured and satisfied that it is to be confined to Japanese's waters and would not be expanded to include zones in Southeast Asia, particularly the Straits of Malacca, the defence of which should be left to the littoral states themselves. Malaysia believes that Japan can best contribute to the security of the region by helping the member countries to develop economically so that they could strengthen their national resilience and hence ensure regional stability.

11. Malaysia also welcome the proposal to expand Japan-ASEAN relations, which presently is mainly cooperation in the economic field, to also include personal exchanges in order to strengthen mutual understanding among our peoples. We too believe, as you do, that this factor will positively contribute to stable and trusting friendship between countries. With deeper mutual understanding and appreciation of each other, particularly among the youths, we can be assured of enduring goodwill and ties of friendship. This policy that you have just spelt out, I am confident, will be welcomed by the other ASEAN countries.

12. Finally, Mr. Prime Minister, I would like to thank you once again for the positive attitude and policies that you have adopted towards ASEAN, and we in Malaysia, look forward with confidence to a more cooperative and long-lasting relationship between ASEAN and Japan in the future. Excellencies and distinguished guests,

13. May I now request you to join me in a toast to the health and happiness of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, His Excellency Prime Minister Nakasone, and to the further development of friendly relations between our two countries and also between ASEAN and Japan.

