

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, DURING THE CEREMONY ON THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY RELATING TO THE DELIMITATION OF THE TERRITORIAL SEAS AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE DELIMITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY IN THE GULF OF THAILAND AND IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AS WELL AS THE EXCHANGE OF THE INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THAI PRIME MINISTER H.E. GEN. TUN KRIANGSAK CHOMANAN IN KUALA LUMPUR ON 24TH OCTOBER, 1979.**

It is my pleasure to most warmly welcome His Excellency General Tun Kriangsak Chomanan and members of his delegation to Malaysia. I hope General Tun Kriangsak, who is no stranger to most of us, has found, as I do, this visit most useful and fruitful.

A few minutes ago you would have witnessed what Gen. Tun Kriangsak and I would, I am sure, consider on historic event in Malaysia/Thailand bilateral relations. Both of us have exchanged, in the first instance, the Instruments of Ratification on the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of a Joint Authority for the Exploitation of the Resources of the Seabed in a defined area of the Continental Shelf of the two countries in the Gulf of Thailand. You would recall this Memorandum was signed by both of us during my visit to the beautiful and refreshing city of Chiangmai in February this year. I regard the final act on this particular exercise today as a unique and a great step forward in the development of close cooperation and friendly relations for mutual benefits of our two countries. What we have agreed to, in fact, is to cooperate and proceed in sharing alike the costs and benefits accruing from the still unresolved triangle claimed by both countries in the Gulf of Thailand for the next fifty years. This constitutes a significant landmark and achievement which goes to prove that through friendly negotiations two neighbouring countries can transform and seek solutions on bilateral problems on such a magnitude as of territorial claims based on bonds of friendship, cooperation and understanding.

It is with much pleasure for me to inform you, Mr. Prime Minister, that my government is now ready to proceed with the next step on the setting up of the Joint Authority by appointing a six-member Imple-

mentation Committee on the Malaysian side for the Authority. I will be announcing the members of the Committee at the appropriate time.

In addition to the exchange of Instruments of Ratification on the establishment of the Joint Authority, we have also signed the Treaty on the Delimitation of the Territorial Seas as well as the Memorandum of Understanding on the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf Boundary in the Gulf of Thailand and in the South China Sea.

In the Treaty on the Delimitation of the Territorial Seas we have agreed that the boundary of the Malaysia/Thailand territorial seas in the Straits of Malacca, where overlapping occurs, shall now be based on straight lines drawn from the points situated in mid-channels between Pulau Terantau and Pulau Langkawi, as enunciated in the Boundary Protocol annexed to the Treaty of 1909. This Treaty also defines the boundary of the territorial seas between the two countries in the Gulf of Thailand. While the Treaty demarcates our territorial seas, we have, through the Memorandum of Understanding also completed the first stage of our exercise on the delimitation of the Continental Shelf Boundary in the Gulf of Thailand and South China Sea. We believe this Memorandum would form the basis for further negotiations in this respect. A provision to this effect has expressly been provided in the Memorandum.

The signing of the Treaty on the Delimitation of the Territorial Seas and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf Boundary, besides solving the boundary problem, also paves the way to further cooperation in the field of exploration and exploitation of natural gas, petroleum and other mineral deposits. In this regard, we have also agreed that if any single geological petroleum or natural gas structure or field, or any mineral deposit of whatever character, extended across the boundary lines the two government shall communicate to each other all information and seek to reach agreement as to the manner in which the structure, field or deposit will be most effectively exploited and all expenses incurred and benefits derived therefrom will be equitably shared. Now that the maritime boundary between our two countries has been demarcated, economic activities pertaining to the exploitation of natural resources can therefrom be maximised to bring benefits for the well-being of our people.

Your Excellency, your visit this time is undertaken at a time when both our countries as well as other countries in Southeast Asia are witnessing a worsening in the situation and widening of hostility and

conflict in the Indochina states, bordering Thailand. The situation constitutes a destabilising factor that would directly effect peace and security of the region of Southeast Asia. In reiterating our call to all parties concerned to immediately end the armed hostilities by demonstrating their positive attitude to contribute to peace and stability in the region, Malaysia reaffirms its firm support and solidarity with the government and people of Thailand in the preservation of its independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Your Excellency, our two countries have also demonstrated most firmly our cooperative efforts on a joint and balanced development along the border areas which will certainly bring about greater economic and social benefits to our two people. Let us further enhance our cooperative endeavours to greater heights in these fields in the way we both know best in order that progress and prosperity be achieved for our peoples and their future generations. I am convinced that the two documents we have signed and the Memorandum of Understanding just ratified signify our sincere efforts in working towards these aspirations and objectives.