

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE DINNER
GIVEN IN HONOUR OF H.E. MR. GASTON THORN,
PRIME MINISTER OF LUXEMBOURG, AT PARLIAMENT
HOUSE ON 19TH JANUARY, 1979.**

Your excellency, Mr. Gaston Thorn, Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Madame Liliane Thorn, Your Excellencies, Members of the Delegation, Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers, Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Honourable Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mr. Prime Minister, we are very happy to welcome you, your charming wife and members of your delegation to Malaysia. You are the first Head of Government of a European country to pay us an official visit. It will make known to more Malaysians your country, and at the same time, give my Cabinet colleagues and I an opportunity to know you and members of your delegation.

Allow me to say a few words about you personally. You are a lawyer and were practising law until you succumbed to politics. You have been, and still are, active in European affairs. You were a member of the European Parliament and was three times Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the European Communities and was President of the European Council. You were awarded the Robert Schuman Prize in 1977. You were elected the President for the 30th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1975-1976. You are active and are playing an important role in the European Economic Community.

It appears that men, like pets, are created to be caught by women. A Prime Minister can be likened to a poodle dog which is a woman's favourite. In your case Mr. Prime Minister, Madame Liliane has caught you ——— and I don't think you really mind. Speaking of Madame Liliane Thorn — I am informed that she specialises in French and German literatures. She is also a student of psychology. If I may be permitted to say so, she has chosen a very useful subject to experiment on her Prime Minister husband. She is a journalist as well ——— a working journalist I am told. That being the case, I have to exercise caution in what I say to her. I wonder whether Mr. Thorn has ever got into trouble as a result of what he says to Mrs. Thorn!.

Mr. Prime Minister, relations between our two countries, I am glad to say, are very friendly and cordial. This morning we had a very useful

discussion on a number of matters, especially those relating to trade, air cargo services and technical cooperation between our two countries. We also signed an Air Services Agreement this morning. This is a good start. We look forward to its implementation which will further enhance our bilateral relations. Your country has great experience in air cargo services and Malaysia will benefit from it.

As regard other matters, we have indicated to you that we will make further studies with regard to the possibility of importing steel and utilizing the financial facilities available in your country.

When visiting this region, one cannot overlook the larger community which is ASEAN. ASEAN's mineral and agricultural resources are enormous; its market, currently and more so in the future, is vast; its importance to the world economy should not be underestimated; its strategic value in terms of balance of power and political influence is beyond doubt. Peace and stability in this region is vital. Any threat to the peace and stability of the region will automatically cause serious concern to the countries in it. The industrialised and developed countries should look at this region in its proper perspective, and not be selfish and think only of getting as much and as cheaply as they can. The peoples in the region must get an equitable return for their products and labours. They also wish to have a decent standard of living, education, basic social amenities. Their appeals for stable prices for their products should be given due consideration. Do not make the mistakes of the past of giving when it is too late.

Mr. Prime Minister, this morning we took the opportunity to brief you with regard to the Vietnamese illegal immigrants in Malaysia. As their number continues to grow, we inform you that Malaysia has given notice to the world and the United Nations that it cannot accept anymore these illegal immigrants from Vietnam. We already have over 53,000 of them on our hands and ways must be found to get them out of Malaysia. Malaysia will not tolerate any criticism for her change of policy in this regard. Since 1975, we have been receiving these people on humanitarian ground. We have been considerate, patient and understanding. What more is expected of us.

Tomorrow, you and your delegation will be visiting Penang. You will be very welcome and be received there with the same warmth and friendliness. We hope that your short visit to our country is an enjoyable and a beneficial one. We express the same hope to your charming wife and the other members of your delegation. We wish you all a safe journey to Peking and back home.

Before I sit down I would like to invite distinguished guests to join me in a toast to the good health and happiness of His Excellency Mr. Goston Thorn and Madame Liliane Thorn and to the prosperity and well-being of the people of Luxembourg.

Thank you.