

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE DINNER IN HIS HONOUR BY H.E. MR. ALEXIE KOSYGIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE USSR, MOSCOW ON 20TH SEPTEMBER, 1979.**

I would like to thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for your kind invitation to me to visit the USSR. The members of my delegation and I would also like to thank you, the government and the people of USSR for the kindness and warmth with which we have been received.

My visit, I hope, will further strengthen the friendly relations and understanding between our two countries. As you are aware Mr. Prime Minister, my country wishes to be friendly with all countries, big and small, whatever may be their political or social systems. We believe in and have put into effect the policy of peaceful co-existence and mutual respect. We are not aligned to any power blocks and adhere strictly to our policy of equidistance. This is not a passive policy, but an active and positive one. By this policy we seek to establish a new political and economic order and promote international peace and security.

It is seven years since my predecessor, the late Tun Abdul Razak visited the Soviet Union. During that visit he signed the economic and technical co-operation agreement and the cultural and scientific co-operation agreement. Both these agreements, together with the trade agreement of April 1969, have provided two framework for co-operation in trade, economic, social cultural and sports fields. The air agreement of September 1969, has linked your country and mine. We should continue to encourage activities within the framework of these agreements and thus enhance the friendship and co-operation between our two countries for our mutual benefit.

Trade has been a very important feature in our relations. We have been trading with each other even before we established diplomatic relations. The USSR is one of the major consumers of our rubber. Even though she is also one of the largest producers of synthetic rubber, this has not prevent our two countries from co-operating with each other in this field. Indeed, rubber experts from our two countries have met twice since 1978 to exchange information. Besides rubber, there are other areas for expansion of trade between our two countries. For instance, Malaysia could supply other primary commodities such

as tin and palm oil, and semi-manufactured products, such as rubber products footwear, canned pineapples, pepper, plywood and timber products.

At the same time, there is a market in Malaysia for a number of Soviet products such as machinery, mechanical handling equipment, pharmaceuticals and other consumer products.

I would like to turn now to my part of the world, that is Southeast Asia. As you are aware Mr. President, currently the region has once again become an area of tension, conflicts and instability. The countries of ASEAN are deeply concerned with this situation. We need peace and stability in order to further our economic and social development. We are therefore anxious that the present conflicts in Indochina which are establishing the region should be solved as quickly as possible. There is great danger that the situation will get worse. I hope that USSR as a major power, would use its influence and assist in finding a peaceful solution to the problem. In this conflict the ASEAN countries have been strictly impartial. We are only concerned in finding an early peaceful solution to the problem.

I am aware that the search for a peaceful solution acceptable to all the parties concerned is not going to be an easy task. However, every effort must be made towards this end. Perhaps with the assistance of the USSR, the prospect of such a solution would become greater.

As you are aware the ASEAN countries are endeavouring to establish a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in Southeast Asia. With the current development in the region, the ASEAN countries are more determined to continue with their efforts to realise this concept.

Needless to say, the support of all the big powers is essential if the zone were to become a reality. As a country which as strongly advocated peaceful co-existence, and detente, I am sure the USSR can well understand and sympathise with our aspirations. At the same time, I also hope that you will encourage us in our efforts and lend us your support so that the zone can become a reality.

We are committed to strengthening ASEAN as a viable, cohesive and effective vehicle for regional co-operation. Our aim is to promote and intensify co-operation among ourselves, and indeed with others, in the economic, social and cultural fields. Our record speaks for itself. Let me emphasise that ASEAN is not and will not be a military grouping.

I had the honour this afternoon of calling on the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Mr. Breshnev, with whom I had a beneficial exchange of views on a number of matters. I welcome the discussion which I had with you, Mr. Prime Minister, and I am looking forward to having further discussions tomorrow. I am sure those discussions will bring mutual benefits to our two countries.

Before I sit down may I respectfully request you to raise and join me in a toast to

- 1) to the good health of His Excellency Mr. Brezhnev, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet,
- 2) to the good health of His Excellency Mr. A.N. Kosygin the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and
- 3) to the continued success and prosperity of the government and people of the USSR,
- 4) to the growing friendship between the USSR and Malaysia.