

CLOSING SPEECH FOR THE PUTRAJAYA FORUM 2012
19/04/2012

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim,
Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very good afternoon.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Speakers and Forum Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the participants of the Putrajaya Forum 2012 and thank Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security (MIDAS) for giving me the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences on the very important topic of regional defence and security at this forum today.

2. Even though security is a broad topic, I believe the focus of this forum on issues that affect the regional security environment will benefit us all. Furthermore, as ASEAN is emerging as a new engine of robust economic growth, security and stability of this region becomes our top priority. In this particular context, regional security and economic progress become mutually reinforcing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Throughout the years, ASEAN has always been at the forefront of efforts to maintain regional peace and security as well as to promote regional integration and community building. This is evident in our continuing initiatives to align ourselves with the paramount objective of creating a stable, peaceful and prosperous ASEAN community by the year 2020.

4. In its 45 years of existence, ASEAN has grown from a regional organization to a caucus that other regions and countries are willing to be part of. ASEAN's Dialogue Partners have now expanded and participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum has increased, including countries that have registered their interests to become "observers" to the Forum. This is indeed a major achievement that we in ASEAN should rejoice.

5. We realize that the process of ASEAN community building is a result of significant changes taking root in the region in the past two decades. The end of the Cold War, the advance of globalisation and the increasing influence of China and India as emerging political and economic power houses have forced ASEAN to shift from its original preventive diplomacy of maintaining peace and harmony to the constructive diplomacy of community building. This strategic re-alignment of ASEAN's mission helps the association to address the increasing political and economic competition in the global world.

6. Despite important milestones such as the adoption of the Phnom Penh Agenda for ASEAN Community Building in the recent ASEAN Summit in Cambodia, we in ASEAN and our neighbours in the region are confronting new threats to our security and stability that are very

unconventional and non-traditional. We are coping with transnational crime, terrorism, illegal immigration and piracy that endanger the security and stability of our region.

7. The war on terror for instance has in a very short time changed the underpinnings of the post-Cold War geopolitics. What is perhaps most significant about the changes is the unpredictability of future event, and the extent of their significance on global politics and economics. We are witnessing a structural change every bit as significant as what occurred in the World War II and the Cold War. The difference is that these changes have already altered the way most people in the world live today, and they will impact our lives in ways we have never imagined before.

8. We in ASEAN have to come to grip with the reality that terrorism is not a threat that is confined to a particular country or a group of countries. The span of terror networks and activities is cross-border and its impact is transregional. In coping with the threat of terrorism, it is important for ASEAN countries to step up collaborative efforts to terminate the root of terror network through effective preventive measures mechanism. We need to strengthen cooperation on extraterritorial legal processes, share technical expertise and information, and act as a forum in which to continue discussions on effective ways to fight against terrorism.

9. Apart from war on terror, we are confronting a host of other issues that pose imminent threat to the security of our region and harm the economic and social well-being our people. Illegal immigration, human trafficking, drug trafficking, piracy and transnational environmental crime have devastating consequences on the security as well as social and economic well-being of a sovereign nation. The emergence of these non-traditional security threats, if left unchecked, will destabilize our region and halt the process of creating a prosperous, harmonious and peaceful ASEAN Community. These threats, which are transnational and transregional in nature, require collective and multilateral responses from all ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners.

10. Indeed, regional forum plays an important role in addressing these threats through collaborative use of political, economic, diplomatic and legal means in the true spirit of regional security and defence cooperation. Regional forum on security and defence therefore serves as an important mechanism that will enhance the collective capability of ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners to swiftly and effectively respond to those threats, and in turn strengthen regional security cooperation. This will of course accelerate the realization of ASEAN Security Community that embodies ASEAN's aspirations to achieve peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the region where ASEAN Member Countries live at peace with one another and with the world at large.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. I gather that for the past two days various pertinent issues on defence and security have been discussed at this forum, ranging from regional security, transnational security, soft power military development and humanitarian management. It is my fervent hope that this forum enhances our understanding of the complexities of today's challenge in maintaining peace and security in the region as well as promoting regional integration and ASEAN community building. I am very pleased to see the participation of local and international delegates comprising representatives from defence and security agencies, defence industry and academia in this forum.

12. On this note, I would like to congratulate the Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security or MIDAS, for successfully organising this very important forum. I would also like to thank all participants and speakers of this forum and hope that every discussion, every deliberation and exchanges of thoughts and ideas will deepen multilateral defence and security cooperation among ASEAN Member States and its Dialogue Partners. This will of course support our effort to create a stable, peaceful and prosperous ASEAN region. I hereby officially close Putrajaya Forum 2012.

Wabillahi al-taufik walhidayah wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Thank you.