

## Speech by Takeo Fukuda

President Marcos, Madam Imelda Romualdez Marcos, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

My journey through Southeast Asia, which began in Kuala Lumpur with my meetings with the leaders of ASEAN, is now approaching its end. I am delighted, as a kind of finishing touch to this journey, to be able to share my ideas with you, here in the Republic of the Philippines, our nearest neighbour, in the distinguished presence of one of Asia's most eminent leaders, and my close friend, President Marcos.

Let me begin with one strong impression I gained from my tour.

It was the spectacular and rich diversity of the area I have just visited, the diversity in ethnic composition, language and religion, in the cultural impact of distinct histories, and in economic structures. Southeast Asia is by no means a homogeneous or uniform part of the world. It is no wonder that some have been sceptical of the prospects for intraregional cooperation in this area.

Yet, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which has just celebrated its tenth anniversary, is now in the process of firmly establishing itself as a self-reliant organization for regional cooperation in the area. The first summit conference in Bali was a milestone in progress toward solidarity, and the success of the summit conference which has just ended confirms the belief that the determination of the ASEAN members to strengthen their solidarity is now irreversible.

ASEAN is, indeed, a historic and successful attempt to seek and create a regional identity of this area through the strengthening of solidarity, while affirming the rich diversity of its membership, and respecting the proud nationalism of each member country. I saw, and was impressed by one expression of these creative efforts, the ardent dedication to solidarity of the ASEAN leaders whom I had the pleasure of meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

The solidarity of ASEAN, strengthened by the success of cooperative undertakings, in turn opens up new opportunities for useful collaboration, thus further strengthening solidarity. This dynamic and self-reinforcing process will, I believe, characterize the future course of ASEAN. Progress toward regional solidarity may at times be slow, in comparison with more homogeneous regional groupings, such as Western Europe, and there may be occasional pauses.

But let me here offer a pledge to the leaders and peoples of ASEAN. My pledge is that the Government and people of Japan will never be sceptical bystanders in regard to ASEAN's efforts to achieve increased resilience and greater regional solidarity: but will always be with you as good partners, walking hand in hand with ASEAN.

The ASEAN heads of government, in our recent meetings, called Japan “an especially close friend” of ASEAN. A true friend is one who offers his hand in understanding and cooperation, not only in fair weather but in adverse circumstances as well. I know Japan will be such a friend to ASEAN.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should now like to say a few words about the basic position and posture of today’s Japan — the world role we see for ourselves, and, especially, what this means for our relations with our Asian neighbours and friends.

During the thirty-odd years since World War II, the Japanese people have worked hard at building a free and democratic society. In the course of those decades, this open system has made Japan a world economic power of 110 million people, with a Gross National Product of half a trillion dollars and the will — as well as the capacity — to participate constructively in world economic growth and development.

Throughout the world’s history, great economic powers have always been great military powers as well. Japan, however, has set for herself a new ideal, unprecedented in history, of relying for the safety and survival on the justice and good faith of nations. We have chosen not to take the path to great military power. Although we possess the economic and technological capability needed to produce nuclear arms, we have firmly rejected the acquisition of such weapons.

This is a challenging experiment, without parallel in history. I am, however, persuaded there can be no other proper course for Japan. My country, densely populated and with few natural resources, depends for its survival on free intercourse and cooperation with all countries. Moreover, I believe the path Japan has chosen also serves the best interests of Asia and, in the final analysis, of the world as a whole. A Japan which does not pose any threat to its neighbour countries, either in a military way or in any other way whatever, can only be viewed as a stabilizing force in the world, devoting its energies exclusively to peaceful and constructive purposes, at home and abroad. Thus can Japan best contribute to world peace, stability, and development.

I have often said that we live in an age which compels greater cooperation and solidarity among men. No human being can live in isolation. Society exists to serve each individual in the development of his or her potentiality, the fruits of which are shared and complement each other. As society is improved, each individual finds greater opportunities for total fulfilment.

So also in our increasingly interdependent world community, no nation can any longer do it alone. All nations must learn to help and to complement each other, sharing responsibilities in the world community. And as the world community is improved, each nation will find greater opportunities for fulfilling its people’s aspirations.

This principle has special relevance to relations between Japan and the nations of Southeast Asia.

It is not enough for our relationship to be based solely on mutual material and economic benefit. Our material and economic relations should be animated by heartfelt commitments to assisting and complementing each other as fellow Asians.

This is the message I have carried everywhere on this tour, speaking repeatedly of the need to communicate with each other with our hearts as well as our heads, the need in other words for what I call "heart-to-heart" understanding among the peoples of Japan and Southeast Asia.

You, fellow Asians, will understand what I mean. For it is in our Asian tradition, and it is in our Asian hearts, always to seek beyond mere physical satisfaction for the richness of spiritual fulfilment.

There is no need for me to stress the important role cultural exchange plays in deepening mutual understanding and appreciation, heart-to-heart and person-to-person, between the peoples of Southeast Asia and Japan.

Today, between Japan and Southeast Asia, there are active programmes of exchange in scientific, artistic, sports, and other fields. This is no one-way street serving only to introduce Japan's culture to our neighbours. We are also introducing the ancient and glorious cultures of Southeast Asia to the Japanese people.

It goes without saying that the promotion of this two-way cultural exchange between Japan and the ASEAN nations should be further intensified. It should also be noted that as the sense of solidarity rises among the countries in the region, the increasing importance is being felt of the need to promote exchanges among the ASEAN nations in the fields of culture, sciences, and, in particular, regional studies. It is from this point of view that I have expressed Japan's readiness to extend our full cooperation in this regard in response to the concrete formulation by ASEAN of a workable scheme for such enhanced intraregional exchanges. This reflects the Japanese people's appreciation of the desire of the peoples of the ASEAN nations to enhance mutual understanding among themselves.

I was gratified that all the leaders of the ASEAN nations expressed their enthusiasm for this proposal of mine as timely in my meeting with them, and I feel certain that we will before long see this idea translated into concrete action.

Furthermore, when I responded positively to the request for cooperation to the value of \$1 billion for ASEAN industrial projects, it was because I believed it important to respond with "heart-to-heart" understanding to the hearts of the peoples of the ASEAN nations, who fervently desire the strengthening of regional solidarity. I expect that Japan's cooperation will expedite the realization of these projects, which are of historical significance

as an experiment in intraregional division of labour, and that it will give momentum to the strengthening and development of various other intraregional cooperation efforts within ASEAN.

Japan has already announced a policy of more than doubling its official development assistance within the next five years. We anticipate that an important part of this assistance will continue to be for industrial projects, or for infrastructure improvement which will facilitate industrialization in Southeast Asia. At the same time, we shall intensify our cooperation in areas close to the people's welfare — agriculture, health, and education.

As may be noted from the fact that half of Japan's official development assistance is now directed toward the ASEAN nations and Burma, our economic relations with all six nations are already close. Following up the results of the summit meeting in Kuala Lumpur, and the meetings with the individual leaders of these countries in their respective capitals, we shall continue to have close consultations with these countries to further explore ways of strengthening our ties. Needless to say, as a world industrial power, Japan has inescapable responsibilities to the world economy as a whole, particularly in the field of trade. A world divided into exclusive economic blocs would be something suicidal for all the nations on earth. Such a world would certainly go against the interests of the ASEAN nations, whose future lies in expanding export markets throughout the world. In seeking specially close trade and economic ties with the ASEAN nations, we should of course act with a full understanding of each other's long-term and wider interests and respective positions in the world economy. This is very important when we aim at the building of an enduring cooperative relationship between Japan and the ASEAN countries.

Finally, we all recognize that the future stability and prosperity of the ASEAN area can only be assured within a framework of peaceful progress throughout Southeast Asia as a whole. Now that decades of war and destruction have finally come to an end, we have a chance to work for enduring peace and stability in the whole region. Let me pay tribute here to the ASEAN countries for having expressed, in the joint communique of the ASEAN summit, their desire to develop peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with the nations of Indochina, enunciating their policy that "further efforts should be made to enlarge the areas of understanding and cooperation with those countries on the basis of mutuality of interests". I believe that these patient efforts will eventually expand the scope of mutual understanding and trust throughout the breadth of Southeast Asia. Towards this same objective, Japan will also seek to place its relations with the nations of Indochina on a solid foundation of mutual understanding.

I have expressed all of these ideas, in my very productive meetings with leaders of the ASEAN nations and Burma during the last fortnight, and have

outlined Japan's position with regard to Southeast Asia. I consider it a great fruit of my journey this time that such a position of Japan as I have explained has been met by full appreciation and concurrence by all the leaders of the nations that I visited. I may summarize this position as follows:

First, Japan, a nation committed to peace, rejects the role of a military power, and on that basis is resolved to contribute to the peace and prosperity of Southeast Asia, and of the world community.

Second, Japan, as a true friend of the countries of Southeast Asia will do its best for consolidating the relationship of mutual confidence and trust based on "heart-to-heart" understanding with these countries, in wide-ranging fields covering not only political and economic areas but also social and cultural areas.

Third, Japan will be an equal partner of ASEAN and its member countries, and cooperate positively with them in their own efforts to strengthen their solidarity and resilience, together with other nations of like mind outside the region, while aiming at fostering a relationship based on mutual understanding with the nations of Indochina, and will thus contribute to the building of peace and prosperity throughout Southeast Asia.

I intend to implement vigorously these three pillars of Japan's policy with regard to Southeast Asia. It is my hope that we may build on such foundations a strong framework of cooperation, animated by mutual understanding, confidence, and trust, throughout Southeast Asia. By joining together in this shared endeavour, we will be making the greatest contribution in our power to peace and prosperity in Asia and to the well-being of all the peoples of the world.

Source: *Japan Times*, 19 Aug. 1977.