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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Zain Azraai, Ambassador of Malaysia
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Amb. Henry Catto, Chief of Protocol
Robert H. Miller, Deputy Assistant Secretary
of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, June 22, 1976
4:20 - 4.27 p.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

SUBJECT: Presentation of Credentials

[The press came in for photos.]

Azraai: I often wonder what they do with these photos.

[They chatted with the press. The press left.]

President: I hope you will extend to the King and the Prime Minister my good wishes.

Azraai: I will. And they reciprocate their very good wishes.

President: This is a very special year for us. We aren't very old but there is much going on.

Azraai: In terms of continuity, you are perhaps the oldest.

President: That is true in our form of government. How are things in your country?

Azraai: We have our problems, but we have learned to live with them. Things are going rather well.



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President: The Vice President enjoyed his visit to your country.

Azraai: I learned I was to be Ambassador when I was introduced to the Vice President as the new Ambassador. [There is further discussion about his family and his career.]

President: I look forward to working with you and I hope you enjoy your stay.

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Name of Ambassador - Zain Azraai (ZANE-Az-rye)

Appointed Ambassador of Malaysia

Addressed as "Ambassador Zain" or "Mr. Ambassador"

Ambassador Zain, age 39, has already had a distinguished public service career. An Oxford graduate, he was first appointed to the Foreign Service in 1958. He was detailed to the Malayan High Commission in London in 1962 in connection with the formation of Malaysia and then served as First Secretary with the Malaysian UN Mission before returning to the Foreign Ministry, where he rose to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs. From 1971 until this appointment, he was Special Principal Private Secretary to the late Prime Minister Tun Razak. He has visited virtually all of Europe and Asia, including the Soviet Union in 1972 and the People's Republic of China in 1974.

Basic Facts About Malaysia

Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy, nominally headed by the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong (YANG Di-Per-TU-an a-GONG) or Paramount Ruler, who is elected for a 5-year term by the Sultans of nine Malaysian states from among their own members. Executive power rests with a Prime Minister and Cabinet, chosen from members of Parliament along the British model. The Federation of Malaya achieved independence from Great Britain in 1957 during the Emergency against the communist insurgents that ended in 1960. The colonies of Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah joined the Federation to form Malaysia in 1963. Singapore withdrew from Malaysia in 1965. Today's Malaysia includes the southern half of the Malay Peninsula and the northern third of the island of Borneo. The total population is 12 million, split into 44% Malay, 36% Chinese, 10% Indian, and the balance various indigenous peoples. The country is prosperous, relatively well governed and advanced by Southeast Asian standards.

Bilateral Relations

Our relations with Malaysia are cordial but not especially close. There are no current points of significant contention between us. Vice President Rockefeller visited Kuala Lumpur in March 1976. At that time Prime Minister Hussein Onn expressed private support for

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continued U. S. presence in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean. There is growing concern in Malaysia about the step-up in the Communist insurgency since the fall of Saigon, although the insurgency poses no current threat to the central government. To assist the government in dealing with the insurgency, we started in late 1975 a modest security assistance program consisting of credits for military equipment purchases. While we have never provided economic aid to Malaysia, we operate a large Peace Corps program there.

Multilateral Issues

Malaysia has adopted a non-aligned posture internationally, while expanding its framework for regional cooperation through ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations comprising Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines and Malaysia). It sees itself as a peace maker in the region, and has attempted to build bridges between ASEAN and the Communist states in Indochina. Due to a number of factors, including its predominant Muslim population, Malaysia does not always support us in international fora. Its opposition is always reasoned, however, and it plays a moderating role among third world countries.

Talking Points

-- I consider our relations with Malaysia to be excellent and I want them to remain so. Vice President Rockefeller's visit to Kuala Lumpur this spring was intended to indicate the importance we attach to the friendship between our two countries.

-- I am aware of the upsurge in terrorist activity over the past year. I hope that the credits for military purchases which we are providing will be helpful to your country in resisting the insurgents.

-- We know that Malaysia is working to further regional cooperation through its participation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. We appreciate the responsible role that you play in both regional and world affairs.

-- Please give my best regards to both the King and the Prime Minister. Malaysia's many American friends, of whom I am one, wish you well here.



P/ Amb Azraai

22 June 76

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A. I often wonder what they do w/ those photos
Pressin

(Chatted w/ Press)

Press out

P. I hope you will extend to King & CPA very good
wishes

A. I will. And they represent their very good wishes

P. This is a very special year for us. We aren't
very old but there is much going on.

A. In terms of constraints, you are perhaps a bit tight.

P. That is true in our few years. How are things
in your country.

A. We have some problems but we have learned to
live w/ them. Things are going rather well.

P. How VP enjoyed his visit to your country

A. I learned I was to be drunk when I was introduced
to VP as your Amb.

(Chatted about family & his career)

P. I look forward to working w/ you & I hope
you enjoy your stay.

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