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Questions On Asean Foreign Trade, Industry, Energy, Social Needs & Agriculture
MALAYSIA

Questions on Foreign Trade

1. What are the lessons to be drawn from the external shocks of 1981-82 in relation to economic policies which have a bearing on the current account deficit? What are the changes Malaysian economists would like to see made to these policies to avoid a 1982-like crunch?

2. Please discuss the composition of Malaysian exports to address the following issues:
   a) the wisdom of pumping out more oil;
   b) the rapid increase in palm oil exports at the cost of stagnation in rubber; and
   c) the excessive reliance in the case of manufactured exports on electronic components.

3. What are the new instruments/institutions for promoting exports: how successful have these been?

Questions on Industry

1. Please discuss the implications of the twin concepts of Malaysia Inc. and privatisation for Malaysia's future industrial development. Also review in this context the impact of financial stringency on industrial projects envisaged in the fourth plan.

2. To what extent will future industrial growth depend on the home market? What problems are faced at present in relation to markets for export-oriented industries? What steps are being taken to overcome these problems?

3. What is the role seen for foreign investment in promoting industrial growth and diversification? What measures are being taken to ensure that foreign investment is accompanied by transfer of technology?

4. What are the specific measures being taken to move industry from the favoured locations of today to outlying areas?

Questions on Energy

1. Please review plans for reducing dependence on oil, with particular reference to gas, hydropower and imported coal. Has there been any change in thinking since oil prices started to decline?
2. In relation to oil and gas resources, please review the current official and public thinking on the national depletion policy and proposals for export of gas.

3. Please discuss the energy needs of rural areas. To what extent dependence on traditional sources poses ecological dangers? What is the scope for substitution of traditional sources by non-traditional forms of energy?

4. What is the scope - as seen by officials or academics - for cooperation between your country and energy-deficit ASEAN countries?

Questions on Social Needs

1. Please review the latest available figures for income distribution in urban and rural areas to show how big is the problem of poverty in each sector. What are the major occupational groups which suffer most from poverty, and the reasons for this? What ameliorative measures, including price subsidies for essential consumption, are being taken to address the specific needs of these groups?

2. Please discuss access of children to primary and secondary schooling by references to the percentage of children of relevant age groups now in school, giving some figures to show the costs parents have to bear. It will be useful to discuss to what extent costs bar access of children from poor families to continue education up to the end of the secondary stage. Please examine, if available, drop-out rates at the primary stage and give the contributory reasons.

3. Please review access to health care, particularly for low-income groups. What is being done to reduce the incidence of poverty-related diseases such as those deriving from lack of adequate nutrition or a protected water supply? Please also review access to family planning facilities and the data available on contraceptive use by couples at different income or educational levels.

4. Please note the main environmental hazards, and discuss the extent to which they stem from poverty or from thoughtless commercial exploitation of natural resources.

Questions on Agriculture

1. Please review the growth achieved in food and cash crop in the 1970s to identify the contributory
tactors. Also discuss what lessons should be drawn from the performance to ensure that growth is maintained or improved, keeping in mind the objectives of improving smallholder incomes and reducing imports of food items.

2. Considering the potential for extending cultivation to virgin lands, please describe efforts being made in this direction. Please discuss whether progress could be faster. Please review, if possible, the choice of crops and the effect of this on settlers' income levels to discuss whether the returns offer a sufficient incentive to would-be settlers to move out of their existing homesteads.

3. Please review the role of cash crops in earning foreign exchange. Please link up with future export prospects, taking into account the scope for diversifying into new crops.

4. Please review what has been achieved in improving crop yields through the use of new seeds and modern inputs. Please discuss what can be done to accelerate the change, noting in particular the constraints regarding the availability of inputs, credits and marketing outlets.
INDONESIA

Questions on Foreign Trade

1. Please discuss the drastic measures taken since early 1983 to reduce the current account deficit. What are the results so far in relation to such broad indicators as the trade deficit and international reserves? What has been the impact of these measures on the business community and on society at large?

2. What progress is being made in promoting non-oil exports? To what extent has devaluation facilitated such exports? Please also discuss the impact of devaluation on living costs and wages from the point of view of production costs.

3. Please discuss the long-term outlook - as seen by Indonesian economists - for achieving external viability?

Questions on Industry

1. Looking back at the past 15 years, please discuss why Indonesia - despite the size of its market and the financial resources provided by oil price increases - made much less progress than its Asean neighbours in developing industrial production for the home and export markets.

2. Please review the changes in industrial strategy following the cash crisis resulting from the drop in Opec prices. What impact will these changes have on plans for import substitution and export promotion? To what extent can the private sector make up for the reductions in capital investment by state agencies?

3. Large-scale modern plants have a limited employment potential. What steps are being taken to promote employment - intensive small and medium industry?

4. What are the specific measures being taken to move industry from the favoured locations of today to outlying areas?

Questions on Energy

1. Please review trends in consumption of petroleum products in the light of price rises since 1981. Relating this to production trends, please discuss long-term demand-supply balance. It will be useful if you can include an assessment of the impact of the downturn in price on exploration activities, giving perhaps some idea of Pertamina's efforts to counter the situation.
2. Please review efforts to develop non-oil energy sources, particularly coal - indicating what are the current assessments of prospects. Also discuss to what extent natural gas is proposed to be used domestically for energy needs.

3. Please discuss the energy needs of rural areas. To what extent dependence on traditional sources poses ecological dangers? What is the scope for substitution of traditional sources by non-traditional forms of energy?

4. What is the scope - as seen by officials or academics - for cooperation between your country and energy-deficit ASEAN countries?

Questions on Social Needs

1. Please review the latest available figures for income distribution in urban and rural areas to show how big is the problem of poverty in each sector. What are the major occupational groups which suffer most from poverty, and the reasons for this? What ameliorative measures, including price subsidies for essential consumption, are being taken to address the specific needs of these groups?

2. Please discuss access of children to primary and secondary schooling by references to the percentage of children of relevant age groups now in school, giving some figures to show the costs parents have to bear. It will be useful to discuss to what extent costs bar access of children from poor families to continued education up to the end of the secondary stage. Please examine, if available, drop-out rates at the primary stage and give the contributory reasons.

3. Please review access to health care, particularly for low-income groups. What is being done to reduce the incidence of poverty-related diseases such as those deriving from lack of adequate nutrition or a protected water supply? Please also review access to family planning facilities and the data available on contraceptive use by couples at different income or educational levels.

4. Please note the main environmental hazards, and discuss the extent to which they stem from poverty or from thoughtless commercial exploitation of natural resources.
Questions on Agriculture

1. Please review the growth achieved in food and cash crops in the 1970s to identify the contributory factors. Also discuss what lessons should be drawn from the performance to ensure that growth is maintained or improved, keeping in mind the objectives of improving smallholder incomes and reducing imports of food items.

2. Considering the potential for extending cultivation to virgin lands, please describe efforts being made in this direction. Please discuss whether progress could be faster. Please review, if possible, the choice of crops and the effect of this on settlers' income levels to discuss whether the returns offer a sufficient incentive to would-be settlers to move out of their existing homesteads.

3. Please review the role of cash crops in earning foreign exchange. Please link this up with future export prospects, taking into account the scope for diversifying into new crops.

4. Please review what has been achieved in improving crop yields through the use of new seeds and modern inputs. Please discuss what can be done to accelerate the change, noting in particular the constraints regarding the availability of inputs, credits and marketing outlets.
PHILIPPINES

Questions on Foreign Trade

1. Philippines' terms of trade have declined more sharply than in the case of any other ASEAN country. Taking this as the starting point, please discuss the composition of exports and imports and the changes that have taken place over time to show what can be done to make the country less vulnerable to swings in the international economy.

2. Please discuss progress made by non-traditional exports. What are the constraints to future growth?

3. Please discuss the social and political implications of high trade and current account deficits in the light of the two devaluations this year.

Questions on Industry

1. Although the Philippines has a large industrial base by ASEAN standards, its industries suffer from two handicaps: high dependence on imported inputs and a high structure of costs which inhibits exports. Please discuss this situation to identify the contributory factors and to review the steps being taken to deal with both problems. Please link this up with the 11 major industrial projects which the government wanted to undertake, and describe their present status.

2. Large-scale modern plants have a limited employment potential. What steps are being taken to promote employment-intensive small and medium industry?

3. What is the role seen for foreign investment in promoting industrial growth and diversification? What measures are being taken to ensure that foreign investment is accompanied by transfer of technology?

4. What are the specific measures being taken to move industry from the favoured locations of today to outlying areas?

Questions on Energy

1. Please discuss plans for reducing dependence on oil with particular reference to geothermal power, nuclear energy and imported coal. Please set these plans in perspective by discussing how much of a drain oil imports are to the economy. Please review official and public thinking on the pros and cons of nuclear power.
2. Taking a look at patterns of oil consumption, please review the policy governing product prices to show whether they are effective in promoting conservation.

3. Please discuss the energy needs of rural areas. To what extent dependence on traditional sources poses ecological dangers? What is the scope for substitution of traditional sources by non-traditional forms of energy?

Questions on Social Needs

1. Please review the latest available figures for income distribution in urban and rural areas to show how big is the problem of poverty in each sector. What are the major occupational groups which suffer most from poverty, and the reasons for this? What ameliorative measures, including price subsidies for essential consumption, are being taken to address the specific needs of these groups?

2. Please discuss access of children to primary and secondary schooling by references to the percentage of children of relevant age groups now in school, giving some figures to show the costs parents have to bear. It will be useful to discuss to what extent costs bar access of children from poor families to continue education up to the end of the secondary stage. Please examine, if available, drop-out rates at the primary stage and give the contributory reasons.

3. Please review access to health care, particularly for low-income groups. What is being done to reduce the incidence of poverty-related diseases such as deriving from lack of adequate nutrition or a protected water supply? Please also review access to family planning facilities and the data available on contraceptive use by couples at income or educational levels.

4. Please note the main environmental hazards, and discuss the extent to which they stem from poverty or from thoughtless commercial exploitation of natural resources.

Questions on Agriculture

1. Please discuss the factors which have transformed the Philippines from a rice-deficit to a surplus country, with particular reference to land reforms, supply of modern inputs, credit and price policies.

2. Given the vicissitudes of the world market for sugar and edible oils, please review the policies being pursued to mitigate the impact on smallholders.
Please discuss in particular scope for improving Philippines' competitiveness through better yields and hence lower costs, or for reducing vulnerability through crop diversification.

3. Please discuss what is being done to improve agricultural incomes in outlying areas with little access to modern inputs. What is the scope for introducing supplementary activities to add to the incomes now obtained from subsistence agriculture? How well geared are government institutions to undertake this task?

4. What role is seen for foreign investment in developing export crops? Is such a role acceptable to public opinion?
Questions on Foreign Trade

1. Please review the changing character and importance of re-exports. What should be the future role of Singapore as an entrepot in view of the advances being made in neighbouring countries to do more for themselves?

2. Please discuss trends in domestic exports in terms of commodity composition and markets. What will be the impact of the slowdown in oil demand and the emergence of new refineries in the region? What can Singapore do to maintain growth of domestic exports?

3. Please review progress made by Singapore in exporting services. What are the prospects for the future?

Questions on Industry

1. Please review the government's plans for technological upgrading of industry, and link this to policy on wages, manpower development, immigration, and relocation of some industries outside Singapore.

2. Please discuss the role of domestic entrepreneurs in industry. What are the measures being taken to encourage them to play a larger part?

3. Singapore has been phenomenally successful in drawing foreign investment into manufacturing. Please discuss the factors underlying this success, in particular the role of the Economic Development Board in promoting Singapore, to draw lessons which fellow members of Asean should keep in mind.

Questions on Energy

1. Please review plans for reducing dependence on oil with particular reference to imported coal now or imported gas from Malaysia or Indonesia in the long term. What are the views of officials and the public on pollution problems coal may pose?

2. Please discuss measures - including pricing policy - to promote conservation. Please discuss in this context the energy implication of Singapore's shift to high technology industries.

3. Please discuss whether Singapore's role as a regional refiner offsets the burden of high-priced oil used within the economy.
Questions on Social Needs

1. Despite Singapore's remarkably high per capita incomes, a large number of people remain trapped in low-income occupations to whom national wage guidelines do not apply. Please discuss the reason why incomes in such occupations have improved much less than in others. What is being done to upgrade incomes in such occupations? Please link this up with plans for reducing the use of immigrant labour.

2. Singapore's education is criticised as having an elitist bias, putting less gifted children or late developers at a particular disadvantage. Is this correct? Why is enrolment at the secondary level in Singapore much lower than in comparable countries? What is being done to remedy this in line with Singapore's plan for moving into high technology?

3. Singapore is in the process of reducing the subsidies it provides for health care by levying or raising charges for use of public facilities. What will be the impact of this on lower income brackets? Please review also population growth rates by income and educational levels to discuss the economic and social factors which may explain the higher birth rate among low-income or low-education families?

4. Please note the main environmental hazards and review the steps being taken to overcome them.

Questions on Agriculture

1. Will market gardening and livestock rearing survive? In 1982, Singapore had 15,400 people listed as agricultural workers and fishermen. The biggest chunk of these - some 30 per cent - is 50 or more in age but the balance is evenly distributed over the ages 20-49. Please discuss this with reference to Singapore's progress in mechanising poultry and pig farming, and its success in exports of cut flowers grown domestically or brought in from neighbouring countries.

2. Singapore is, to a small extent, a centre for processing food products for exports, using raw materials from neighbouring countries. Can this role be sustained? Is there scope for moving further downstream from, say, refined palm oil to final products?

3. What role does Singapore play in the regional fishery industry as a warehousing and processing centre? Will this role change in the future?
THAILAND

Questions on Foreign Trade

1. Please review recent export/import trends to show changes in composition and markets. What are the prospects for further diversification? What are the policies for encouraging such shifts?

2. Thailand says its future effort will be to combine import substitution with export promotion. How will this be achieved? Please discuss this in the light of the government's commitments to the World Bank to liberalise imports.

3. Please review the build-up of external debt in the last five years, particularly the portion owed to commercial banks. How do economists and policy-makers view the rapid rise in debt service obligations? What long-term policies are proposed to hold down a further rise?

Questions on Industry

1. Thailand's industrial growth seems to be slowing down with import substituting industries faced with the problem of market saturation. Please review recent figures of industrial production to discuss the nature of the problem and what is proposed to be done about it. Please link this up with plans for gas-based industrial development on the eastern seaboard to discuss whether this can be expected to restore the momentum of growth in industry.

2. Large-scale modern plants have a limited employment potential. What steps are being taken to promote employment-intensive small and medium industry?

3. What is the role seen for foreign investment in promoting industrial growth and diversification? What measures are being taken to ensure that foreign investment is accompanied by transfer of technology?

4. What are the specific measures being taken to move industry from the favoured locations of today to outlying areas?

Questions on Energy

1. Please review plans for reducing dependence on oil with particular reference to natural gas, hydropower and lignite. Please describe the recommendations made in the 1981-86 five year plan, and subsequently in the
energy master plan drawn up under the auspices of the Asian Development Bank. What has been done so far to implement the master plan? Please discuss in particular how plans for use of natural gas have been affected or modified by setbacks in production from the Erawan field?

2. Taking a look at patterns of oil consumption, please review the policy governing product prices to show whether they are effective in promoting conservation.

3. Please discuss the energy needs of rural areas. To what extent dependence on traditional sources poses ecological dangers? What is the scope for substitution of traditional sources by non-traditional forms of energy?

Questions on Social Needs

1. Please review the latest available figures for income distribution in urban and rural areas to show how big is the problem of poverty in each sector. What are the major occupational groups which suffer most from poverty, and the reasons for this? What ameliorative measures, including price subsidies for essential consumption, are being taken to address the specific needs of these groups?

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4. Please note the main environmental hazards, and discuss the extent to which they stem from poverty or from thoughtless commercial exploitation of natural resources.
Questions on Agriculture

1. Thailand has relied, to a much greater extent than other Asean countries, on extending the output of cereals by bringing new land under cultivation. Since the scope for this is now limited, what is being done to safeguard future growth in output by raising yields? Please discuss this with reference to measures for ensuring the access of smallholders to modern inputs and credit. Also review in this context the reasons why Thai yields of paddy are the lowest in Asean.

2. Please discuss what is being done to improve agricultural incomes in outlying areas with little access to modern inputs. What is the scope for introducing supplementary activities to add to the incomes now obtained from subsistence agriculture? How well geared are government institutions to undertake this task?

3. Please review the role of cash crops in earning foreign exchange. Please link this up with future export prospects, taking into account the scope for diversifying into new crops.

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