

Dr Stephen Leong Recollects

Dr *Stephen Leong*, former Deputy Director General and currently Visiting Fellow of ISIS Malaysia and Director, Centre for International Studies, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), recalls Tan Sri Zainal Abidin bin Sulong as a gentleman leader

Malaysia lost one of its beloved sons on Oct 10, 2010. I write as one of numerous people (both from Malaysia and overseas) who had known the late Tan Sri Zainal Abidin bin Sulong for some years. As chairman of ISIS Malaysia, he welcomed me warmly when I joined the organisation in 1992. Long before that I had already heard about Tan Sri's distinguished service in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia before moving on to become the Chairman of MIDA and second Chairman of ISIS Malaysia (succeeding the late Honourable Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Hussein Onn bin Jafaar).

My memory of Tan Sri Zainal is one of a 'gentleman leader.' He always exuded a 'calmplex' that revealed self-confidence and an assuredness

that 'any problem can be resolved with proper care and consideration.' His character traits of humility, friendliness and kindness to fellow human beings have been inspirational hallmarks of his character.

Tan Sri Zainal was also endowed with bountiful energy. I remember when I accompanied him to the Asia Pacific Forum in Seoul in 1992, I asked him how he coped with his frequent travels, as I was aware of his extremely busy work schedule. He commented then that perhaps he could only go on for a few more years. As it has turned out, it was far more than a few more years. It is indeed my honour and privilege to have served under his tutelage at ISIS Malaysia.

