

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY  
THE HONOURABLE ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI  
ORGANISED BY THE MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSION, LONDON AND ASIA  
HOUSE AT THE PARK LANE HOTEL, LONDON  
23RD JULY 2004**

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MR. BRYAN SANDERSON  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS  
LADIES DAN GENTLEMEN

1. CONFUCIUS IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE SAID: "PREDICTION IS ALWAYS DIFFICULT ESPECIALLY IF IT CONCERNS THE FUTURE".

2. IF I MAY BE ALLOWED TO VENTURE A FEW THOUGHTS ON MALAYSIA'S FUTURE AND ITS ROLE IN THE WORLD, LET ME SUGGEST THAT IT WILL BE LARGELY DETERMINED BY THREE INESCAPABLE REALITIES :

- FIRST, IT WILL BE DETERMINED BY WHAT WE ARE;
- SECOND, IT WILL BE DETERMINED BY WHAT WE BELIEVE IN;
- THIRD, IT WILL BE DETERMINED BY WHERE OUR CORE VITAL INTERESTS LIE.

3. THROUGHOUT OUR MODERN HISTORY, MALAYSIA HAS BEEN EXTREMELY MULTI-ETHNIC, MULTI-CULTURAL AND MULTI-RELIGIOUS. TODAY, MALAYS AND OTHER INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FORM 61 PERCENT OF MALAYSIA'S POPULATION, CHINESE 24 PERCENT, INDIANS 7 PERCENT AND OTHERS 7 PERCENT. MALAYSIANS GROW UP, LIVE AND WORK IN THIS ENVIRONMENT OF INCREDIBLE DIVERSITY.

4. THE MALAYSIAN ENVIRONMENT OF DIVERSITY DEVELOPS CERTAIN SKILLS OF TOLERANCE, COMPROMISE, PROBLEM-SOLVING AND CO-HABITATION, WHICH COULD BE OF SOME USE IN A WORLD WHICH IS INCREASINGLY HAVING TROUBLE LIVING WITH DIVERSITY.

5. MALAYSIA IS, AND FOR CENTURIES HAS BEEN, GLOBALISED AND PLUGGED INTO THE GLOBAL GRID OF TRADE AND CULTURE. WE ARE LOCATED AROUND WHERE THE STRAITS OF MALACCA IS, HALF WAY BETWEEN INDIA IN THE WEST AND CHINA IN THE EAST.

6. WE COULD NOT HAVE ACHIEVED OUR DRAMATIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAST GENERATION WITHOUT GOING OUT INTO THE WORLD TO COMPETE WITH ONE AND ALL. AND WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT BRINGING THE WORLD TO US, TO GIVE US THE MASSIVE QUANTUM LEAPS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP, TECHNOLOGY, ORGANISATIONAL KNOW-HOW AND MARKETING SAVVY, WITHOUT WHICH WE COULD NOT HAVE DOUBLED OUR NATIONAL INCOME EVERY THE YEARS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

7. WE IN MALAYSIA HAVE SOMETHING OF AN OBSESSION WITH ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. INDEED, EVERY MALAYSIAN IS COMMITTED TO THEIR COUNTRY BECOMING A PROSPEROUS AND DEVELOPED ECONOMY BY THE YEAR 2020.

8. IN THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR, MALAYSIA ACHIEVED TYPICAL THIRD WORLD ECONOMIC GROWTH RATES OF 3.5 PERCENT ANNUALLY ON AVERAGE. LIKE THE TYPICAL THIRD WORLD ECONOMY, WE LIVED OFF AGRICULTURE AND MINING. WHAT WE DID WAS GROW RICE AND RUBBER, EXPORTED TIN AND DREAMT OF "INDUSTRIALISATION".

9. TODAY, AFTER MORE THAN A GENERATION OF 7 PERCENT GROWTH, WE ARE THE FOURTH MOST INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRY IN THE WORLD IN TERMS OF PERCENTAGE OF INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT OVER G.D.P..

10. AFTER MORE THAN A GENERATION OF MASSIVE ECONOMIC DYNAMISM, SOCIAL ENGINEERING AND SOCIETAL RESTRUCTURING, THE FOUNDATIONS HAVE BEEN BUILT FOR A SOCIETY MOVING FORWARD ON THE BASIS OF FRATERNITY AND EGALITARIANISM. ACCORDING TO THE U.N.D.P., MALAYSIA HAS THE BEST RECORD WITH REGARD TO THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY.

11. WE ARE NOW A NATION AT PEACE WITH IT SELF. DURING THE EAST ASIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS OF 1997/98, NOT A SINGLE ETHNIC INCIDENT WAS REPORTED. WE TODAY HAVE NO WORRIES ABOUT TERRORISM OR TURBULENCE AT HOME. DEMOCRACY IS SOUNDLY IN PLACE, AND I BELIEVE, WORKING WONDERFULLY.

12. THE MALAYSIAN CASE SHOWS THE DEVELOPING WORLD THAT NO NATION IS "LOST" OR "HOPELESS", CONDEMNED TO A FUTURE WITHOUT PROSPECT, CONDEMNED TO STAGNATION AND CONFLICT, CONDEMNED TO A LIFE THAT IS "NASTY, BRUTISH AND SHOTR".

13. THIS IS NOT AN UNIMPORTANT MESSAGE IN THESE TIMES OF DESPERATION AND DESPAIR.

14. LET ME SAY ONE OTHER THING ABOUT MALAYSIA THAT MIGHT BE OF SOME IMPORT TODAY AND IN THE DAYS TO COME. I WOULD SAY THAT MALAYSIA IS INDEED A RARE BREED. IT IS :

- A MODERN MUSLIM COUNTRY;
- A DEMOCRATIC MUSLIM COUNTRY;
- AN ECONOMICALLY DYNAMIC MUSLIM COUNTRY;
- A RESPECTED AND CONFIDENT MUSLIM COUNTRY;

- A MULTI-ETHNIC, MULTICULTURAL, MULTI-RELIGIOUS NATION WITH A MUSLIM MAJORITY AND NON-MUSLIM MINORITY LIVING IN PEACE, HARMONY AND MUTUAL RESPECT, COMFORTABLE AND THRIVING, AMIDST THE GREATEST OF ETHNIC, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY.

15. THE MUSLIMS OF MALAYSIA ARE MODERN, DEMOCRATIC, ECONOMICALLY DYNAMIC, PROUD AND CONFIDENT. LIKE ALL MALAYSIANS, THEY BENEFIT FROM OUR ECONOMIC DYNAMISM – FROM JOBS TO UNIVERSAL EDUCATION AND UNIVERSITY PLACES, TO BETTER HOMES, BETTER ROADS, BETTER HOSPITALS-ALTOGETHER BETTER LIVES.

16. IN MAKING A JUDGMENT ON ISLAM AND ON THE MUSLIMS WHO DECLARE ISLAM AS THEIR FAITH, IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT MISGUIDED ISLAM CAN DO AS MUCH DAMAGE AS MISGUIDED CHRISTIANITY. MISGUIDED ISLAM IS NOT ISLAM, IN VERY MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT MISGUIDED CHRISTIANITY IS NOT CHRISTIANITY. AND THE EVIL DEEDS OF EVIL MUSLIMS ARE NO MORE TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH ISLAM AND MUSLIMS THAN THE EVIL DEEDS OF EVIL CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTIANS.

17. I PERSONALLY BELIEVE THAT TRUE ISLAM IS A GREAT GUIDE, BEACON, CATALYST AND DRIVER OF MODERNITY. A GOOD MUSLIM MUST BE THE EPITOME OF MODERN MAN, OR SHOULD I SAY, "MODERN WOMAN".

18. THE MALAYSIAN CASE SHOWS THAT ISLAM IS NOT ANTITHETICAL TO DEMOCRACY. ISLAM IS NOT AN ADVERSARY TO DEMOCRACY. THE FAILURE TO ESTABLISH OR SUSTAIN PRODUCTIVE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS IS NOT TO BE LAID AT THE DOOR OF ISLAM BUT AT THE DOOR OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT – POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL, OR INSTITUTIONAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT . FAILURE MUST BE LAID AT THE DOOR OF THE SCARCITY OF THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR SUSTENANCE AND NOURISHMENT OF DEMOCRACY. FAILURE MUST ALSO BE LAID AT THE DOOR OF THE PREVALENCE OF BAD POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, BAD POLITICAL POLICIES, AND BAD AUTHORITARIANISM.

19. IT IS AS SILLY TO BLAME ISLAM FOR THE ABSENCE OF DEMOCRACY TODAY AS IT IS TO BLAME CHRISTIANITY OR HINDUISM OR BUDDHISM FOR THE ABSENCE OF DEMOCRACY TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

20. MALAYSIA HAS SHOWN THE WAY THAT ISLAM IS NOT AN IMPEDIMENT TO MODERNITY AND TO DEMOCRACY. IT IS NOT AN IMPEDIMENT TO RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH, TO SELF-RESPECT AND CONFIDENCE, TO TOLERANCE AND MUTUAL RESPECT ACROSS RELIGIONS, CULTURES AND ETHNIC GROUPS. ISLAM IN MALAYSIA DOES NOT ADVOCATE A CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS BUT A FEAST AND A CELEBRATION OF CIVILISATIONS. THIS IS A MESSAGE THAT DESERVES A WIDER AUDIENCE.

21. IT IS PERHAPS BECAUSE MALAYSIA IS AND WILL CONTINUE TO SPEAK FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD, INCLUDING THE MUSLIM WORLD, THAT WE WERE ELECTED THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, AND THE CHAIRMAN OF SUMMIT OF THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY A ROLE IN BOTH CAPACITIES, AND WE ARE WILLING TO DO MORE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

22. LET ME NOW TURN TO THE SECOND MAJOR DETERMINANT OF OUR FOREIGN AND OTHER POLICIES IN THE DAYS TO COME : THE CAUSES IN WHICH WE BELIEVE AND FOR WHICH WE WILL STRIVE.

23. LIKE BRITAIN, WE BELIEVE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF HONOURING AGE-OLD INSTITUTIONS, CULTURES AND TRADITIONS. HOWEVER, THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE ARE UNCHANGING OR RIGID. FAR FROM IT; INSTEAD WE BELIEVE IN THE NEED FOR CHANGE, WHETHER ECONOMIC, POLITICAL OR SOCIAL TO TAKE PLACE GRADUALLY. THE CHANGES THAT TAKE PLACE IN BOTH MALAYSIA AND BRITAIN ARE EVOLUTIONARY AND NOT REVOLUTIONARY.

24. A STRONG CONNECTION WITH OUR CULTURES, OUR TRADITIONS, OUR FAITHS AND OUR RESPECTIVE LANGUAGES MEANS THAT WE ARE PEOPLES WHO 'KHOW' OURSELVES. THIS SELF-KNOWLEDGE STRENGTHENS US AS WE VENTURE INTO THE WORLD. IT ALSO PREPARES US – AS INDIVIDUALS – AGAINST THE RAVAGES OF GLOBALISATION.

25. LIKE BRITAIN, WE BELIEVE IN AN ACTIVE FOREIGN POLICY. WE TOO ARE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO AN INCREASINGLY STRONG AND DYNAMIC REGIONAL GROUPING. AT THE SAME TIME WE RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF REACHING OUT BEYOND OUR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS, TO THE WIDER WORLD IN ORDER TO ENGAGE WITH AND SPEAK FOR THOSE WHOSE VOICES ARE STILLED OR UNHEARD.

26. LIKE BRITAIN, WE BELIEVE IN A FAIRER WORLD IN WHICH THERE IS MORE JUSTICE AND MORE CARING FOR THE POOR, THE HANDICAPPED AND THOSE IN NEED OF A HELPING HAND. DESPITE OUR SMALL SIZE YOU WILL FIND THAT MALAYSIANS AND ESPECIALLY OUR FORMER PRIME MINISTER, TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, HAVE VENTURED FAR AND WIDE – INCLUDING TO AFRICA AND CENTRAL ASIA – AND OFTEN TO COUNTRIES IN DESPERATE NEED OF GLOBAL ATTENTION.

27. LIKE BRITAIN, WE BELIEVE IN A WORLD IN WHICH MORE HEED IS GIVEN TO THE POWER OF PERSUASION THAN TO THE PERSUASION OF POWER.

28. BECAUSE OF OUR SHARED HISTORY WE ALSO SHARE A COMMON LANGUAGE. THIS LANGUAGE HAS BECOME A VITAL COMMERCIAL RESOURCE FOR BOTH OUR

NATIONS. MALAYSIA IS FAST DEVELOPING A REPUTATION AS A PLACE OF LEARNING AND SCHOLARSHIP.

29. AT THE SAME TIME THE SHARED EXPERIENCE AT BRITISH SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES HAS CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE OF GREAT FONDNESS AND WARMTH BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. OF COURSE SUCH PROXIMITY AND CLOSE FRIENDSHIP MEANS THAT WE ARE OFTEN FRANK AND STRAIGHT-FORWARD WHEN WE MEET AND DISCUSS ISSUES OF MUTUAL IMPORTANCE.

30. BEYOND OUR SHORES, WE HAVE A POLICY OF FRIENDSHIP, WHICH WE WILL PURSUE, WITH RESOLUTION IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

31. LET ME END WITH ONE BASIC TENET OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. ALL NATIONS MUST PURSUE THEIR VITAL INTERESTS. SO WILL MALAYSIA.

32. WHAT, YOU MAY ASK, ARE MALAYSIA'S CORE INTERESTS?. THEY ARE AN OPEN SECRET. THEY HAVE BEEN SET OUT IN MALAYSIA'S "VISION 2020", THE MANIFESTO NOT OF THE POLITICAL PARTY I LEAD, NOT OF ANY SINGLE PERSON OR OF ANY SINGLE FORCE, BUT OF THE MALAYSIAN PEOPLE.

33. FIRST, WE ARE PLEDGED TO CREATING A UNITED MALAYSIAN NATION, CONTINUING TO BE AT PEACE WITH ITSELF, LIVING IN HARMONY AND IN FULL AND FAIR PARTNERSHIP.

34. SECOND, WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE CREATION AND SUSTENANCE OF A PSYCHOLOGICALLY LIBERATED PEOPLE WITH FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN ITSELF, DISTINGUISHED BY THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE, PSYCHOLOGICALLY SUBSERVIENT TO NONE AND RESPECTED BY THE PEOPLE OF OTHER NATIONS.

35. THIRD, WE MUST ENSURE THE SECURE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MATURE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.

36. FOURTH, WE MUST WITH DETERMINATION PURSUE THE OBJECTIVE OF A FULLY MORAL SOCIETY, WHOSE CITIZENS ARE STRONG IN RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL VALUES AND IMBUED WITH THE HIGHEST ETHICAL STANDARDS.

37. FIFTH, WE MUST ENSURE THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF A MATURE, LIBERAL AND TOLERANT SOCIETY IN WHICH MALAYSIANS OF ALL COLOURS AND CREEDS ARE FREE TO PRACTICE AND PROFESS THEIR CUSTOMS, CULTURES AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

38. SIXTH, WE MUST FOSTER AND BUILD A SCIENTIFIC AND PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY, A SOCIETY THAT IS INNOVATIVE AND FORWARD LOOKING, ONE THAT IS A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CIVILISATIONS OF THE FUTURE.

39. SEVENTH, WE MUST ENSURE A FULLY CARING SOCIETY AND A CARING CULTURE, A SOCIAL SYSTEM IN WHICH SOCIETY WILL COME BEFORE SELF.

40. EIGHTH, WE MUST NOT RELENT ON THE MISSION OF CREATING AN ECONOMICALLY JUST SOCIETY IN WHICH THERE IS A FAIR AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND FULL PARTNERSHIP IN ECONOMIC PROGRESS.

41. NINTH, WE MUST GO FULL STEAM AHEAD TO CREATE A PROSPEROUS SOCIETY, WITH AN ECONOMY THAT IS FULLY COMPETITIVE, DYNAMIC, ROBUST AND RESILIENT.

42. IF WE ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES, MALAYSIA'S G.D.P. WOULD GROW FROM 115 BILLION RINGGIT IN 1990, TO ABOUT 920 BILLION RINGGIN IN 2020 ( IN 1990 PRICES). OUR D.D.P. PER CAPITA WOULD APPROXIMATELY QUADRUPLE FROM 6,352 RINGGIT IN 1990, TO 24,229 RINGGIT IN 2020 (ALSO IN 1990 PRICES). BEYOND PER CAPITA WEALTH, WE WOULD WANT TO ENSURE A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL MALAYSIANS IN DIFFERENT AREAS. ABSOLUTE POVERTY, WHICH STOOD AT 16.5 PERCENT IN 1990, SHOULD BE ERADICATED BY 2020. IN ADDITION, INCOME DISTRIBUTION (IRRESPECTIVE OF RACE) SHOULD BE MORE BALANCED AND FAIRER IN 2020.

43. IN THE DAYS AHEAD, SOME PRIORITIES MAY CHANGE. BUT IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS – AS A ROBUST DEMOCRACY – THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA WILL HAVE THEIR FINAL SAY. THEY WILL TELL THEIR LEADERS WHAT THEY WANT DONE. THEY WILL DISPLAY WISDOM AND THAT IN TURN WILL SHAPE THE NATION'S DOMESTIC POLICIES.

44. THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA WILL ALSO HELP SHAPE, MOULD AND DETERMINE OUR FOREIGN POLICY AND THE MANY ROLES THAT WE WILL PLAY IN THE WORLD IN THE DAYS TO COME.

45. FINALLY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MALAYSIA IS A COUNTRY WHERE YOU CAN FIND CONTINUITY AND CONSISTENCY IN GOVERNANCE. AS THE COUNTRY'S FIFTH PERIME MINISTER IN FORTY-SEVEN YEARS, I AM MERELY THE TRUSTEE OF MY PEOPLE'S HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS. I AM HERE TO BUILD ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND SUCCESS OF MY PREDECESSORS –SUCH AS TUN DR. MAHAHTHIR.

46. I INVITE YOU TO COME AND PARTICIPATE IN MALAYSIA'S JOURNEY INTO THE FUTURE. WE WILL BUILD AN ECONOMY THAT FOCUSES MORE ON THE VALUE ADDED AND HIGH TECHNOLOGY. WE WILL EMBRACE A CULTURE OF HIGH PERFORMANCE, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY. ERADICATING CORRUPTION AND ENHANCING INTEGRITY WILL BE A MAJOR TARGET. IT WILL TAKE TIME AND NOTHING WILL BE EASY. HOWEVER, I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL SUCCEED BECAUSE WE ARE DETERMINED AND WE ARE SINCERE. WE WILL MOVE TO ENHANCE THE PUBLIC SECTOR'S DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ENSURE PRUDENT MANAGEMENT OF OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES, AS WELL AS UPGRADE THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S EFFICIENCY, QUALITY AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS.

47. THIS WILL BE AN EXCITING JOURNEY AND WE SEEK FRIENDSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP FROM ACROSS THE WORLD. WE SEEK INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. WE HAVE NO HIDDEN AGENDAS. WE WANT PEACE AND PROSPERITY – A DEEPENING OF FRIENDSHIPS AND MUTUALITY OF BENEFIT. COME AND VISIT. COME AND SEE FOR YOURSELF. MALAYSIA AND BRITAIN HAVE DEVELOPED A CLOSE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP – LET US CONTINUE TO BROADEN AND DEEPEN THIS RELATIONSHIP INTO THE FUTURE.