

**SPEECH BY
THE HONOURABLE ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE OFFICIAL LUNCHEON HOSTED BY THE RT.HON.JOHN HOWARD
PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA AT THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA,
7 APRIL 2005**

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
JOHN HOWARD,
PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA,

HONOURABLE KIM BEAZLEY,
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION,

HONOURABLE MINISTERS,

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

THANK YOU MR. PRIME MINISTER AND MR. KIM BEAZLEY FOR YOUR WARM WORDS OF WELCOME. ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF MY DELEGATION AND ON MY OWN BEHALF, I WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION TO YOU, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA FOR THE WARM WELCOME AND KIND HOSPITALITY ACCORDED TO US. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO PLACE ON RECORD MY APPRECIATION FOR THE INVITATION EXTENDED TO ME BY PRIME MINISTER JOHN HOWARD TO MAKE THIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO AUSTRALIA.

2. MAY I AT THE OUTSET EXPRESS MY PROFOUND SADNESS AT THE TRAGIC LOSS RECENTLY SUFFERED BY AUSTRALIA WHEN NINE OF ITS VALIENT AIR FORCE PERSONNEL DIED IN AN ACCIDENT IN INDONESIA WHILE PERFORMING DUTIES TO SAVE THE LIVES OF OTHER PEOPLE. MR. PRIME MINISTER, PLEASE CONVEY TO THE BEREAVED FAMILIES THE SINCERE CONDOLENCES OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA. WE SHARE THEIR GRIEF AND MOURN THEIR LOSS.

3. MY DELEGATION AND I ARE INDEED VERY HAPPY TO BE HERE TODAY. I HAVE COME WITH MANY MINISTERS OF THE MALAYSIAN CABINET, MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENTS, STATE ASSEMBLYMEN AND SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. A STRONG PRIVATE SECTOR DELEGATION FROM MALAYSIA IS ALSO WITH US. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THIS VISIT OF OURS WILL OPEN UP NEW AVENUES OF COOPERATION BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA.

4. BEFORE PROCEEDING ANY FURTHER, LET ME AT THIS POINT STATE CLEARLY THAT ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND MUTUAL BENEFIT, MALAYSIA IS

STRONGLY AND FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THE FULLEST PRODUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH AUSTRALIA, TODAY AND IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

5. IT IS VERY PLEASING TO NOTE THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES HAVE IN FACT VERY SUBSTANTIVE AND LONG ESTABLISHED RELATIONS BETWEEN US. WE CAN POINT TO MANY MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL LINKAGES PARTICULARLY IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT, EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, SECURITY AND DEFENSE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AS WELL AS TOURISM.

6. OUR DISCUSSIONS THIS MORNING HAVE BEEN VERY FRUITFUL. WE HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AS WELL AS ON A NUMBER OF REGIONAL AND OTHER ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN. I AM GLAD THAT WE ARE GENERALLY IN AGREEMENT THAT THERE IS STILL MUCH SCOPE FOR US TO ENHANCE THE RELATIONS NOT ONLY IN EXISTING BUT ALSO IN NEW AREAS.

7. WE CAN TAKE COMFORT THAT BILATERAL TRADE BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES IS ALREADY SUBSTANTIAL, SURPASSING 22.6 BILLION MALAYSIAN RINGGIT IN 2004. BILATERAL TRADE INCREASED 56 PERCENT FROM RM 14.4 BILLION 2003. IN 2004, MALAYSIAN EXPORTS TO AUSTRALIA WERE RM 15.8 BILLION WHILE WE IMPORTED RM 6.8 BILLION FROM AUSTRALIA. THE POTENTIAL FOR MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA TO INCREASE TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION IS VERY GREAT INDEED.

8. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE VOLUME AND RANGE OF TRADE WILL FURTHER INCREASE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY BECAUSE BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAVE MADE SIMILAR COMMITMENTS TO URGE THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO FORGE STRONGER LINKAGES AND CLOSER COLLABORATIONS. WE IN THE GOVERNMENT ON BOTH SIDES WILL DO OUR PART. I AM VERY PLEASED TO CONFIRM THAT PRIME MINISTER JOHN HOWARD AND I HAVE, TODAY, AGREED THAT MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA WOULD COMMENCE NEGOTIATIONS TO BRING INTO BEING A FREE TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

9. EDUCATION IS ONE AREA WHERE AUSTRALIA AND MALAYSIA HAS SUCCESSFULLY FORGED A SYNERGISTIC RELATIONSHIP. THIS IS A CASE WHERE AUSTRALIA HAS STRATEGICALLY UTILIZED ITS CAPACITY TO EXPORT EDUCATION SERVICES. MALAYSIA, IN TURN, WELCOMES THE INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS PROVIDED BY AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES BECAUSE MALAYSIA ITSELF IS POSITIONING TO BECOME A REGIONAL EDUCATION HUB. AT THE SAME TIME, AFFORDABLE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION BECOMES AVAILABLE TO MALAYSIANS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY. I WOULD CERTAINLY LIKE TO SEE MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA DEVELOP MORE OF SUCH MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS IN OTHER AREAS.

10. WITH OVER 50 YEARS OF COOPERATION IN DEFENSE, THE BONDS BETWEEN OUR ARMED FORCES HAVE INDEED BEEN WELL ESTABLISHED. WE REMEMBER PARTICULARLY THAT AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS FOUGHT VALIANTLY IN OUR COUNTRY

IN THE 1950S IN THE DAYS OF THE EMERGENCY WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS THEN KNOWN AS MALAYA. I NOTE THAT, PRESENTLY, THE MALAYSIA-AUSTRALIA JOINT DEFENSE PROGRAMME IS BY FAR THE MOST ACTIVE DEFENSE COOPERATION MALAYSIA HAS HAD WITH ANY COUNTRY. WITHIN THE FIVE POWER DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT OR F.P.D.A, OUR JOINT COLLABORATIONS HAVE BEEN OF GREAT VALUE TO BOTH SIDES. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT F.P.D.A MEMBER COUNTRIES, NOTABLY MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA, HAVE AGREED TO EMBARK ON CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT IN NON-TRADITIONAL ASYMMETRICAL THREATS. MALAYSIA VIEWS THIS NEW LEVEL OF COOPERATION AS AN OPERATIONAL NECESSITY GIVEN CURRENT AND FUTURE SECURITY CHALLENGES.

11. COOPERATION BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA IN COMBATING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND TRANS-NATIONAL CRIMES IS VERY STRONG. IN AUGUST 2002, WE SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON COOPERATION TO COMBAT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK AUSTRALIA FOR THE CLOSE SUPPORT TO THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN CENTRE FOR COUNTER TERRORISM IN KUALA LUMPUR. WE HAVE ALSO BENEFITED FROM VARIOUS REGIONAL WORKSHOPS ON COUNTER TERRORISM ORGANIZED BY AUSTRALIA. IN ORDER TO FURTHER INTENSIFY COOPERATION IN THIS FIELD, MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA HAVE ALSO STARTED NEGOTIATIONS ON AN EXTRADITION TREATY AND ON AN AGREEMENT FOR MUTUAL ASSISTANCE IN CRIMINAL MATTERS.

MR. PRIME MINISTER,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

12. IT IS GRATIFYING FOR MALAYSIA AS A MUSLIM COUNTRY TO NOTE THAT THERE IS AN INCREASING INTEREST IN AUSTRALIA TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ISLAM. THE ASIA SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA HAS IN FACT INVITED ME TO SPEAK ABOUT ISLAM HADHARI IN A MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY. I SHALL DO SO IN SYDNEY TOMORROW AND I SHALL TALK ABOUT THE APPROACH WE IN MALAYSIA HAVE TAKEN TO ENSURE ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR OUR POPULATION WHICH IS NOT ONLY MULITI-RACIAL BUT ALSO MULTI-RELIGIOUS.

13. WE WOULD CERTAINLY LIKE TO HAVE AUSTRALIAN SCHOLARS AND RESEARCHERS TAKE PART IN SEMINARS AND FORUMS CONCERNING ISLAM BEING HELD IN MALAYSIA. THEY ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN COURSES AND WORKSHOPS BEING RUN BY MALAYSIAN INSTITUTIONS SPECIALIZING IN ISLAMIC STUDIES AND RESEARCH, SUCH AS THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, THE INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION AND THE INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDING, ALL BASED IN KUALA LUMPUR .

14. THERE IS ALSO AN ECONOMIC DIMENSION WHICH AUSTRALIA AND MALAYSIA TOGETHER ARE WELL PLACED TO TAP. WE CAN ENTER INTO JOINT ENTERPRISES IN THE SUPPLY AND MARKETING OF HALAL PRODUCTS, ESPECIALLY FOOD, AS WELL AS HALAL SERVICES. AUSTRALIA IS A MAJOR PRODUCER OF MEAT AND DAIRY PRODUCTS. MALAYSIA HAS STRONG CREDENTIALS IN HALAL CERTIFICATION AND

BRANDING. LIKE IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR, I CAN ENVISAGE MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA FORGING ANOTHER STRATEGIC AND SYNERGISTIC RELATIONSHIP IN THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO MUSLIM CONSUMERS GLOBALLY AS WELL AS THE WORLD MARKET AS A WHOLE.

15. WHILE WE CAN TAKE SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE IN SUCH FIELDS AS TRADE, INVESTMENT, EDUCATION, TOURISM, SECURITY AND DEFENCE, THE AREAS OF POTENTIAL COOPERATION STILL UNEXPLORED REMAIN LARGE AND FULL OF PROSPECTS . WHAT WE ACTUALLY NEED IS A LITTLE BIT MORE OF IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY. I BELIEVE THERE IS AMPLE TALENT ON BOTH SIDES WHO CAN CREATE AND INNOVATE.

16. I REFER IN PARTICULAR TO MALAYSIA'S INTEREST IN DEVELOPING CAPACITY FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY IN AGRICULTURE, BIOTECHNOLOGY, I.C.T, AND OTHER ADVANCED FIELDS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT MALAYSIAN AND AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN COLLABORATING. THEY HAVE HAD SOME BREAKTHROUGHS. THEY SHOULD CONTINUE TO DO MORE.

17. WE SHOULD TAKE NOTE ALSO OF THE BENEFICIAL COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA IN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM, THE ASEAN-AUSTRALIA DIALOGUE PROCESS, APEC AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM.

18. OF COURSE, WE ALSO LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUE WORKING CLOSELY WITH AUSTRALIA TO MAKE SOME REAL PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS IN THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION UNDER THE DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA. WE HAVE COLLABORATED VERY WELL IN THE AGRICULTURE NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH THE COLLECTIVE EFFORTS OF THE CAIRNS GROUP, WHERE AUSTRALIA'S LEADERSHIP ROLE HAS BEEN WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED. WE BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT IT IS IN THE REAL INTEREST OF TRADING NATIONS LIKE AUSTRALIA AND MALAYSIA TO PUSH FOR AN EARLY CONCLUSION OF THE DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA.

MR. PRIME MINISTER,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

19. I MUST NOT MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK AUSTRALIAN LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC WHO SENT MESSAGES OF CONDOLENCES AND SYMPATHIES FOR MALAYSIANS WHO FELL VICTIM TO THE TSUNAMI IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR. WE WERE AWARE OF THE MASSIVE ASSISTANCE EXTENDED BY AUSTRALIA TO TSUNAMI VICTIMS, IN THE FORM OF SEARCH AND RESCUE AS WELL AS IN CASH AND IN KIND, ESPECIALLY TO THE VICTIMS IN INDONESIA. WE WERE HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO FACILITATE YOUR RELIEF EFFORTS BY PERMITTING YOUR AIRCRAFTS TO USE BUTTERWORTH AIRBASE IN CONNECTION WITH THAT OPERATION. I KNOW THAT YOU YOURSELF, MR. PRIME MINISTER, HAD TRANSITED BUTTERWORTH AIRBASE WHEN YOU VISITED ACEH IN INDONESIA. IN THE WAKE

OF THE TRAGIC EXPERIENCE WE HAD WITH THE TSUNAMI, WE WISH TO BE MORE WELL PREPARED FOR SIMILAR NATURAL DISASTERS IN FUTURE. WE HOPE AUSTRALIA WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS AND PARTICIPATE IN THE OPERATION OF SUCH SYSTEMS.

MR. PRIME MINISTER,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

20. LET ME ONCE AGAIN THANK THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA FOR THIS VISIT AND FOR LAYING OUT A VERY GOOD VISIT PROGRAMME. MY DELEGATION AND I DO HOPE TO DERIVE AS MUCH BENEFIT FROM IT, JUST AS WE HOPE THAT OUR VISIT WILL EQUALLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA.

THANK YOU .