

**SPEECH BY  
THE HONOURABLE ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE OFFICIAL LUNCHEON BY THE RT.HON.HELEN CLARK, PRIME  
MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND, AT THE PARLIAMENT  
HOUSE, WELLINGTON  
31 MARCH 2005**

-----

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HELEN CLARK  
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND,

DR. DON BRASH, MP  
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION,

HONOURABLE MINISTERS OF THE CROWN, MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,  
EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

I AM VERY DELIGHTED TO BE HERE THIS AFTERNOON AND I THANK PRIME MINISTER HELEN CLARK FOR HER KIND INVITATION FOR ME TO MAKE THIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND. ON BEHALF OF THE MALAYSIAN DELEGATION AND ON MY OWN BEHALF, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE WARM RECEPTION AND GENEROUS HOSPITALITY THAT HAVE BEEN EXTENDED TO US.

2. I AM PLEASED TO BE VISITING THIS VIBRANT COUNTRY. I HAVE COME WITH AN OFFICIAL DELEGATION OF MINISTERS, SENATORS, STATE ASSEMBLYMEN AND SENIOR OFFICIALS. I HAVE ESPECIALLY BROUGHT ALONG A PRIVATE SECTOR DELEGATION TO DEMONSTRATE TO YOU OUR DESIRE TO INCREASE TRADE, INVESTMENT AND OTHER BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

3. I HAVE COME TO DISCUSS WAYS TO FURTHER ENHANCE COOPERATION BETWEEN US. I AM VERY SATISFIED WITH THE DISCUSSIONS THAT WE HAD THIS MORNING WHICH I CONSIDER VERY FRUITFUL.

4. IN FACT, RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND NEW ZEALAND HAVE ALWAYS BEEN EXCELLENT. THIS HAS BEEN REFLECTED BY OUR TIES IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT, EDUCATION, SECURITY AND DEFENSE AS WELL AS COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. THESE DO PROVIDE STRONG FOUNDATIONS FOR US TO ADD FURTHER SUBSTANCE TO THE RELATIONS.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

5. WE HAVE DEVELOPED VERY FIRM COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION. THIS HAS BEEN SO SINCE THE DAYS OF THE COLOMBO PLAN WHEN STUDENTS FROM MALAYSIA WERE GIVEN SCHOLARSHIPS TO PURSUE HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND. MALAYSIAN STUDENTS HAVE CONTINUED TO COME TO NEW ZEALAND EITHER ON THEIR OWN OR UNDER VARIOUS MALAYSIAN SPONSORSHIPS. CURRENTLY, WE HAVE MORE THAN 1000 MALAYSIANS PURSUING THEIR EDUCATION HERE.

6. IT IS ALSO NOTEWORTHY THAT A NUMBER OF NEW ZEALAND UNIVERSITIES HAVE ESTABLISHED TWINNING PROGRAMMES WITH MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES. OUR EDUCATION AUTHORITIES HAVE REGULAR JOINT WORKING GROUP MEETINGS. THESE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS MUST CONTINUE. WE DO WISH TO SEE MORE NEW ZEALAND STUDENTS COME TO STUDY IN MALAYSIA BECAUSE FOR A LONG TIME, THE FLOW HAS BEEN IN ONE DIRECTION ONLY. WE CAN PROMISE NEW ZEALAND STUDENTS A VERY PLEASANT AND REWARDING STAY IN MALAYSIA WHILE ATTENDING WORLD CLASS UNIVERSITIES WITH UP-TO-DATE FACILITIES. IN FACT, OUT OF A LISTING OF 200 TOP UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD, 2 ARE MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES.

7. IN MALAYSIA, WE GIVE MUCH EMPHASIS TO HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AS WE ARE CONVINCED ABOUT THE LONG TERM BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM INVESTMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN CAPITAL.

8. IN THE AREA OF DEFENCE COOPERATION, WITH 50 YEARS OF WORKING TOGETHER, THE BONDS BETWEEN OUR ARMED SERVICES HAVE GROWN REMARKABLY WELL. OUR COMMON MEMBERSHIP IN THE FIVE POWER DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT HAVE BEEN OF GREAT VALUE. WE SHARE COMMON PERCEPTIONS ON REGIONAL SECURITY MATTERS. IN PARTICULAR, BOTH MALAYSIA AND NEW ZEALAND ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO MULTI-LATERAL DIPLOMACY IN DEALING WITH ALL FORMS OF THREATS TO REGIONAL OR GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

9. I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE INFORMED THAT MANY NEW ZEALANDERS ARE KEEN TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ISLAM. WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO RECEIVE SCHOLARS FROM NEW ZEALAND TO STUDY ISLAM, ESPECIALLY THE WAY WE PRACTISE IT IN MALAYSIA. THEY CAN PARTICIPATE IN SEMINARS AND COURSES BEING CONDUCTED BY SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION AND THE INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDING ALL OF WHICH ARE BASED IN KUALA LUMPUR.

10. LATER THIS AFTERNOON, I WILL BE SPEAKING, AT THE VICTORIA UNIVERSITY, ABOUT ISLAM HADHARI AS THE APPROACH WE HAVE ADOPTED IN MALAYSIA FOR ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN A MULTI-RELIGIOUS AND MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH.

11. IN FACT, NEW ZEALAND AND MALAYSIA ARE ALREADY COLLABORATING IN MANY THINGS ISLAMIC. FOR INSTANCE, THE MALAYSIAN PILGRIMAGE MANAGEMENT AND FUND BOARD HAS EXTENDED ITS SERVICES TO NEW ZEALAND PILGRIMS TO PERFORM THE HAJJ IN MECCA. NEW ZEALAND HAS ALSO EMERGED AS A MAJOR PRODUCER OF HALAL FOOD. WITH MALAYSIA AS THE HUB FOR THE HALAL INDUSTRY, OUR JOINT EFFORTS IN THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF HALAL PRODUCTS IN THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES AND WORLD MARKET GENERALLY WOULD DEFINITELY BE MUTUALLY REWARDING FOR BOTH OF US.

12. BILATERAL TRADE BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND NEW ZEALAND WHICH STOOD AT OVER 2.98 BILLION RINGGIT (OR USD 785 MILLION) PER YEAR IS SMALL BUT IT IS GROWING. I SHALL BE SPEAKING IN SOME DETAIL ON THE SUBJECT OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT WHEN I ADDRESS A MALAYSIA-NEW ZEALAND BUSINESS FORUM IN AUCKLAND TOMORROW. BOTH SIDES SHOULD TAKE NOTE THAT THERE IS CLEARLY A NEED TO DIVERSIFY THE RANGE OF OUR BILATERAL EXPORTS AND IMPORTS AND INCREASE THE VOLUME OF BILATERAL INVESTMENTS IN BOTH OUR COUNTRIES.

13. IN THE CONTEXT OF TAKING STEPS TO BROADEN AND DEEPEN OUR ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP, I AM PLEASED TO CONFIRM THAT PRIME MINISTER HELEN CLARK AND I HAVE AGREED, TODAY, THAT MALAYSIA AND NEW ZEALAND WOULD COMMENCE NEGOTIATIONS TO ESTABLISH A FREE TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

14. MALAYSIA IS AWARE OF THE MANY TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES ACHIEVED BY THE MORE THAN 7,700 NEW ZEALAND ICT COMPANIES IN SUCH FIELDS AS SECURITY SOFTWARE, DIGITAL MEDIA, HEALTH AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS. CREATIVE AND TALENTED NEW ZEALANDERS ARE KNOWN LEADERS IN SCREEN PRODUCTION AND MULTIMEDIA INDUSTRIES AS SHOWCASED BY THE WORLD'S MOST AMBITIOUS AND HIGHLY-ACCLAIMED FILM TRILOGY, "THE LORD OF THE RINGS".

15. I WOULD LIKE YOU TO KNOW THAT MALAYSIA'S OWN MULTIMEDIA SUPER CORRIDOR (MSC) IS ALSO INCUBATING CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES. I WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE NEW ZEALAND I.C T COMPANIES TO COME TO THE M.S.C TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES THE PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE THERE. I WOULD LIKE THEM TO ESTABLISH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH MALAYSIAN COUNTERPARTS AND ENHANCE CREATIVITY AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS IN THAT SECTOR.

16. MALAYSIA IS ALSO KEEN TO DEVELOP RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN BIOTECHNOLOGY, ESPECIALLY PERTAINING TO INNOVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY IN AGRICULTURE. I AM AWARE THAT NEW ZEALAND HAS MADE SEVERAL TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGHS IN AGRICULTURE. WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO SHARE SOME OF YOUR EXPERIENCES AND KNOWLEDGE. WE HAVE IN FACT BEEN COOPERATING IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN SUCH UNIQUE AREAS AS SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN THE ANTARCTICA. THE MALAYSIAN ANTARCTICA PROGRAMME HAS RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM ANTARCTICA NEW ZEALAND, WHICH HAS ENABLED MALAYSIAN SCIENTISTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECTS AT NEW ZEALAND'S SCOTT BASE.

17. MALAYSIA PLACES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF OUR VALUABLE FOREST RESOURCES. WE HAVE INITIATED OUR OWN PROGRAMMES OF FOREST-PLANTATION AND SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS. WE ARE AWARE THAT THIS IS ANOTHER FIELD WHERE NEW ZEALAND HAS MADE TREMENDOUS PROGRESS. WE WISH TO ACQUIRE NEW EXPERTISE AND MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FROM NEW ZEALAND.

18. THERE ARE INDEED MANY AREAS WHERE OUR TWO COUNTRIES CAN BENEFIT FROM MUTUAL SHARING AND COLLABORATION. I HOPE THIS VISIT OF MINE WILL PROVIDE IMPETUS FOR NEW AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO BE EXCHANGED BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES ON BOTH SIDES.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

19. I LOOK FORWARD TO BENEFITING FROM THE REST OF MY VISIT PROGRAMME TO NEW ZEALAND BUT NOW, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN, YOUR EXCELLENCY, FOR YOUR GRACIOUS HOSPITALITY AND FOR YOUR WARM WELCOME TO ME AND MEMBERS OF THE MALAYSIAN DELEGATION. FOR US, THIS IS TRULY A MEMORABLE VISIT TO YOUR BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY.

THANK YOU.