

SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE KUALA LUMPUR BUSINESS CLUB DINNER, "LOOKING BACK,
FORGING AHEAD: 50 YEARS OF BUSINESS IN MALAYSIA"
AT SHANGRI LA HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR
14 JUNE 2007

TO THE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE KUALA LUMPUR BUSINESS CLUB (AND TO NON-MEMBERS WHO MANAGED TO GET AN INVITATION):

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD EVENING.

1. IT IS ALWAYS A PLEASURE FOR ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE K.L.B.C.'S ANNUAL DINNER AND THUS, A HEARTY THANK YOU TO THE K.L.B.C. COMMITTEE FOR INVITING ME TO SPEAK TO YOU ONCE MORE, TO SOME OF MALAYSIA'S MOST ILLUSTRIOUS BUSINESS FIGURES, ON THE STATE OF OUR NATION.

2. I REALISE THAT THE EVENTUAL SIZE OF MY AUDIENCE EXTENDS FAR BEYOND THIS ROOM TONIGHT. INDEED, GIVEN THE SPEED AND DEPTH OF THE GRAPEVINE THESE DAYS, I THINK THE TERM 'CHATTERING CLASSES' SHOULD BE REPLACED WITH THE TERM 'OPINIONATED CLASSES'. GIVEN THIS, I AM MORE THAN HAPPY TO SEIZE TONIGHT'S OPPORTUNITY, AND SHARE WITH YOU MY THOUGHTS ON THE LAST 50 YEARS FOR MALAYSIAN BUSINESS AND ON THE FUTURE. I HOPE THAT IT WILL NOT ONLY FUEL CONVERSATION BUT ALSO DRIVE ACTION TOWARDS GREATER ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

3. FOR THE LIFE OF A NATION, 50 YEARS IS BOTH A SHORT AND LONG PERIOD OF TIME. IT IS ENOUGH TIME TO GIVE BIRTH TO ONLY TWO GENERATIONS OF WORKING ADULTS, ENTREPRENEURS AND LEADERS; TWO GENERATIONAL SHIFTS OF VALUES AND PRIORITIES. BUT IT IS ALSO ENOUGH TIME TO AFFORD MANY TWISTS AND TURNS, MOMENTOUS EVENTS, FAILURES, SUCCESSES, AND LESSONS.

4. OUR UNIQUE, BELOVED NATION CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE ON 31ST AUGUST THIS YEAR. WE HAVE HAD OUR SHARE OF TWISTS AND TURNS. BUT WHAT COMES THROUGH VERY CLEARLY, AT THE END OF 50 YEARS, IS A SUCCESS STORY. A STORY OF CONTINUOUS GROWTH AND PROGRESS IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF PEACE AND STABILITY. A STORY OF A NATION THAT PROSPERED AGAINST THE ODDS.

5. BACK IN 1957, NOT MANY GAVE US A CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL, LET ALONE SUCCESS. WE WERE AN EXTREMELY DIVIDED COUNTRY, WITH LITTLE SENSE OF A UNITING IDENTITY. WE WERE POOR AND DEPENDED ON THE SIMPLEST GOODS AND THE MOST BASIC MODES OF PRODUCTION. WE WERE FACING A COMMUNIST INSURRECTION. IT WAS, TO SAY THE LEAST, NOT THE MOST FAVOURABLE SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES TO BEGIN WITH.

6. YET WE HAVE COME THROUGH TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY. I DO NOT DENY THE IMPERFECTIONS, THE TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY AS WELL AS THE CHALLENGES WE WILL CONTINUE TO FACE. BUT WE NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DISTANCE THAT WE'VE COVERED, INSTEAD OF BEING UNDULY AND EVEN IRRATIONALLY NEGATIVE ABOUT MALAYSIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS. OUR WISHES AND AMBITION FOR THE

COUNTRY MUST BE INFORMED BY THE RECOGNITION THAT WE HAVE HAD 50 YEARS FOR WHICH WE MUST BE GRATEFUL.

7. POVERTY IS DOWN TO 5.7 PERCENT FROM OVER 50 PERCENT AT INDEPENDENCE. GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (G.D.P.) HAS GROWN AN AVERAGE OF 6.5 PERCENT ANNUALLY. INCOMES HAVE MORE THAN DOUBLED IN 50 YEARS. PEOPLE HAVE REACHED STANDARDS OF EDUCATION AND LIVING FAR ABOVE THEIR FATHERS AND FOREFATHERS.

8. TRADE HAS SURPASSED THE 1 TRILLION RINGGIT MARK AND THE STOCK MARKET HAS REACHED HISTORIC ALL-TIME HIGHS RECENTLY. OUR FOREIGN RESERVES ARE WELL OVER 95 BILLION U.S. DOLLARS. WE HAVE MOVED FORWARD IN WORLD RANKINGS OF COMPETITIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM RANKS MALAYSIA 4TH IN ASIA, AFTER JAPAN, HONG KONG AND SINGAPORE IN ITS BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS INDEX. OF 125 ECONOMIES RANKED, MALAYSIA WAS 20TH OVERALL.

9. WE KNOW THAT THIS ACHIEVEMENT IS TESTIMONY TO THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE, NAMELY, THE STRENGTH OF THE POWER-SHARING SYSTEM, THE WISDOM OF OUR LEADERS, THE RESILIENCE OF MALAYSIANS AND THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF BUSINESS PEOPLE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE'RE ALSO FULLY AWARE OF BEING CONSTANTLY TESTED BY CHALLENGES. HOW WE PERFORM UNDER THESE TESTS AND THE DECISIONS WE MAKE WILL DECIDE OUR NEXT 50 YEARS.

10. POLITICALLY, I BELIEVE THAT THE POWER-SHARING SYSTEM WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS, GIVEN OUR HISTORICAL LEGACY. HOWEVER, THE EMPHASIS MUST SHIFT FROM CO-EXISTENCE TO GENUINE COHESION. THERE MUST BE MORE MULTI-ETHNIC MALAYSIAN COMMUNITIES, MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES, MALAYSIAN SCHOOLS, MALAYSIAN ORGANISATIONS. THERE MUST BE A MORE MULTI-ETHNIC MALAYSIAN OUTLOOK. THIS CAN ONLY HAPPEN WITH GREATER UNDERSTANDING AND GREATER EFFORT TOWARDS INCREASING DIVERSITY.

11. FOR BUSINESS AND THE ECONOMY, I BELIEVE THAT THE WORK MUST CONTINUE TO HAVE THE PRIVATE SECTOR SPEARHEAD INVESTMENT DECISIONS AND TO LESSEN THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THIS REGARD.

12. THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC STRUCTURE HAS CHANGED GREATLY. WE HAVE DIVERSIFIED OUT OF RUBBER AND TIN TOWARDS MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES. WE MOVED INTO IMPORT-SUBSTITUTION AND SUBSEQUENTLY BEGAN MANUFACTURING FOR EXPORT. WE TOOK DELIBERATE MEASURES TOWARDS INDUSTRIALISATION AND HEAVY INDUSTRIES. IN SUM, WE HAD RELIED ON NATURAL RESOURCES, THEN ON TO LOW-COST LABOUR AND CAPITAL-LED GROWTH. NOW, WE ARE AT THE THRESHOLD OF ANOTHER GREAT LEAP TOWARDS ACTIVITIES DRIVEN BY HUMAN CAPITAL, TOTAL FACTOR PRODUCTIVITY AND KNOWLEDGE.

13. THE GOVERNMENT HAS PLAYED A LEADING ROLE IN THESE SHIFTS, NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF POLICY BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF INVESTMENT. OFTEN, THE GOVERNMENT VIA GOVERNMENT-LINKED COMPANIES (G.L.C.'S) WOULD BE THE PIONEER BUSINESS ENTITY. WHILE THIS WILL MOST LIKELY CONTINUE TO BE THE CASE, PARTICULARLY FOR SECTORS WHICH REQUIRE A CATALYST, THE PRIVATE SECTOR MUST CLAIM ITS RIGHTFUL POSITION AS THE MAIN ACTOR OF THE

ECONOMY. HAVING A THRIVING PRIVATE SECTOR, DRIVEN BY COMMERCIAL PRINCIPLES, WILL ENSURE THAT OUR ECONOMY CREATES VALUE AND REMAINS COMPETITIVE.

14. THE GOVERNMENT, FOR ITS PART, MUST BECOME A BETTER FACILITATOR OF THIS ECONOMIC STRUCTURE. THE PURSUIT OF GROWTH CORRIDORS – THE ISKANDAR DEVELOPMENT REGION (I.D.R.), THE NORTH CORRIDOR ECONOMIC REGION, THE EASTERN ECONOMIC REGION, AS WELL AS CORRIDORS IN SABAH AND SARAWAK – ARE STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION, WITH GOVERNMENT FOCUSING ON PROVIDING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR BUSINESS OPERATION. THE INVESTMENTS IN HARD AND SOFT INFRASTRUCTURE IN I.D.R., FOR EXAMPLE, ARE DESIGNED TO ATTRACT, RATHER THAN SUPPLANT THE PRIVATE SECTOR. IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME OF COURSE, BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE DEMONSTRATION EFFECT OF I.D.R.'S SUCCESS WOULD BRING ABOUT A MINDSET CHANGE ON THE ROLES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND GOVERNMENT VIS-À-VIS BUSINESS.

15. THE GOVERNMENT MUST ALSO FACILITATE IN LOWERING THE MOST COMMON OBSTACLES TO GOOD BUSINESS. A RECENT SURVEY OF GLOBAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (C.E.O.'S) BY PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS FOUND THAT THE TOP TWO CONCERNS OF C.E.O.'S WERE THE SEARCH FOR HUMAN TALENT AND OVER-REGULATION.

16. AS I SPOKE ABOUT IN LAST YEAR'S K.L.B.C. DINNER, I HAVE LONG RECOGNISED THE COMPETITIVE DIFFERENCE AFFORDED BY HUMAN CAPITAL, AND THUS PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS ON HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NINTH MALAYSIA PLAN. WE KNOW THAT WE MUST MAKE THE REQUIRED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE VOCATIONAL AND SKILLS TRAINING STREAMS. MORE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING COLLABORATIONS MUST BE STRUCK BETWEEN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND ACADEMIA TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT QUALIFICATIONS ARE PRODUCED. WE HAVE TO ENGINEER HUMAN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, FROM WORKPLACES, TO UNIVERSITIES, RESEARCH INSTITUTES, TECHNICAL COLLEGES, TO THE SCHOOLS. THE COMPETITION FOR TALENT IS ONE OF THE GREATEST ECONOMIC BATTLES OF THE DAY, NOT ONLY FOR COMPANIES BUT ALSO FOR NATIONS MOVING UP THE VALUE CHAIN.

17. APART FROM INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY, PART OF THE RATIONALE FOR RAISING CIVIL SERVICE PAY IS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE. I THINK THAT THIS IS AN UNDER-APPRECIATED POINT, WHICH HOLDS LESSONS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS WELL. IT IS NOT ONLY FAIR, BUT ALSO LOGICAL THAT CIVIL SERVICE PAY IS COMMENSURATE WITH THE NATION'S ECONOMIC GROWTH, A GROWTH WHICH THEY HAVE HELPED FACILITATE, AND WHICH HAS ENHANCED OUR BUDGET AND AFFORDABILITY. SIMILARLY FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE PAY SHOULD BE IN RELATION TO PRIVATE SECTOR PROFITS.

18. SPEAKING OF HUMAN CAPITAL, I THINK THAT WE SHOULD ALSO REFINE OUR STANCE ON FOREIGN TALENT. I BELIEVE THAT MALAYSIAN PROFESSIONALS CAN HOLD THEIR OWN AMONGST THE GLOBAL TALENT POOL, AND THAT THEY REMAIN THE EMPLOYEES OF CHOICE BY BUSINESSES IN MALAYSIA. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY CONFLICT WITH A POLICY OF DRAWING MORE FOREIGN KNOWLEDGE WORKERS TO OUR SHORES. IN FACT, I BELIEVE THAT THE MALAYSIAN WORKING POPULATION WOULD BENEFIT FROM HAVING GREATER INTERACTION WITH FOREIGN TALENT. INDEED, WE CAN ONLY IMPROVE OURSELVES IF WE WORK AND LEARN WITH TALENTED OTHERS. THEREFORE, WE SHOULD NOT OVERLY RESTRICT

THE ENTRY OF SKILLED WORKERS, PARTICULARLY IN STRATEGIC SECTORS, AND WE SHOULD FACILITATE SKILLED FOREIGN STUDENTS TO STAY ON AFTER GRADUATING. IN SHORT, WE MUST BENEFIT FROM THE GLOBALISED FLOW OF HUMAN CAPITAL.

19. WITH REGARDS TO REGULATION, A CLEAR DIRECTION HAS BEEN CHOSEN. I BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S MAIN ROLE IS TO FACILITATE BUSINESS AS LONG AS THE PUBLIC INTEREST IS PRESERVED, SUCH AS ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION, CONSUMER PROTECTION, FAIR TRADE, AMONGST OTHERS. A STEP BY STEP APPROACH IN REDUCING REGULATION IS THE RIGHT WAY TO GO, SO THAT WE MAY LEARN ITS EFFECTS AND ADAPT IF NECESSARY. THIS IS TRUE IN THE CASE OF DOING AWAY WITH FOREIGN INVESTMENT COMMITTEE (F.I.C.) REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPERTIES ABOVE 250,000 RINGGIT; IN CHANGING FROM THE CERTIFICATE OF FITNESS FOR OCCUPATION (C.F.O.) SYSTEM TO THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION AND COMPLIANCE (C.C.C.); IN LIBERALISING OWNERSHIP REQUIREMENTS IN THE I.D.R.. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE "TASKFORCE TO FACILITATE BUSINESS" (PEMUDAH) IS TAKING INVENTORY OF ALL LICENCES AND PERMITS FOR PURPOSES OF REVIEW AND REDUCTION. MEANWHILE, THE CABINET IS REVIEWING PRICE CONTROLS AS WELL AS ENTRY CONDITIONS FOR THE STEEL INDUSTRY.

20. THESE MEASURES COME WITH THE CONSCIOUS RESOLUTION TO DO AWAY WITH PROCEDURES AND MINDSETS THAT NOT ONLY HINDER GROWTH, BUT THAT DO NOT ACHIEVE THE VERY OBJECTIVES BY WHICH THEY WERE ESTABLISHED. LET ME EMPHASISE HERE, THAT MY ADMINISTRATION STILL STANDS FIRM BY THE NATION'S DISTRIBUTIONAL OBJECTIVES, AS ENSHRINED IN OUR 'GROWTH WITH EQUITY' POLICIES. BUT THE CHALLENGE FOR US, PARTICULARLY IN THE TIMES THAT WE LIVE IN, IS TO ACHIEVE THOSE OBJECTIVES IN THE MOST SUSTAINABLE, COMPETITIVE AND MEANINGFUL WAY POSSIBLE.

21. THESE ARE THE FORMIDABLE TASKS OF THE GOVERNMENT GOING FORWARD, WITH REGARDS TO BUSINESS. BUT WHAT OF THE PART OF MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES, OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR?.

22. IF I MAY OFFER MY PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS – I THINK THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR NEEDS TO BE UNAFRAID, TO BREAK OUT OF OLD HABITS, TO BLOSSOM. IT WILL TAKE TIME, BUT I BELIEVE THIS GENERATIONAL SHIFT IS BEGINNING TO OCCUR IN MALAYSIAN BUSINESS, AND I SEE THE SIGNS IN THREE WAYS. I LIKEN THE CHANGES TO THOSE YOU SEE IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, NAMELY IN THE MIND, THE HEART AND THE SOUL.

23. FIRSTLY, THE MIND OF MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES. I THINK INCREASINGLY, MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES ARE MOVING AWAY FROM DOING THINGS CHEAPLY TO DOING THEM WELL. MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES ARE BEGINNING TO SPECIALISE, TO FOCUS ON THE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN WHICH THEY EXCEL, AND IN DOING SO, TO SEEK INNOVATION. THIS IS VERY MUCH IN LINE WITH THE SHIFT TOWARDS BECOMING A FIRST-WORLD ECONOMY. GROWTH IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IS BASED ON GREATER VARIETIES OF TOP-NOTCH PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, RATHER THAN GREATER VOLUMES OF THE SAME BASIC GOODS.

24. NATURALLY, TOP-NOTCH OFFERINGS REQUIRE TOP-NOTCH PEOPLE. THIS IS WHY THE SEARCH FOR TALENT HAS BECOME SO IMPORTANT TO MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES. SOON, THE RETENTION OF TALENT WILL BECOME A TOP PRIORITY. INVESTMENT IN ON-THE-JOB TRAINING, IMPROVEMENT OF WORKING CONDITIONS,

CAREER AND SUCCESSION PLANNING, PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, AND SO ON; THESE HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES WILL INCREASINGLY DETERMINE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF A MALAYSIAN COMPANY.

25. SECONDLY, I SEE CHANGES IN THE HEART OF MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES. WITH 'MALAYSIA BOLEH', WE STARTED THE LONG PROCESS OF SELF-DISCOVERY. WE BEGAN TO FEEL CONFIDENT IN OUR ABILITIES. WE OPENED OUR MINDS TOWARDS BIGGER THINGS. AND NOW, FROM DARING TO DREAM AND ASPIRE, MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES ARE DARING TO ACT AND TO DO. MALAYSIAN-BORN COMPANIES ARE GOING ABROAD, COMPETING WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD, PROVING THAT THEY ARE WORTHY CONTENDERS. NAMES LIKE PETRONAS, SIME DARBY, C.I.M.B., AIRASIA, Y.T.L. AND MANY OTHERS, INCLUDING SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (S.M.E.'S) – THEY SERVE TO REINFORCE OUR SELF-BELIEF, THAT WE CAN BE GLOBAL PLAYERS IF WE SET OUR HEARTS TO IT. WITH SUCH EVIDENCE, WE INCREASINGLY KNOW THAT 'MALAYSIA BUKAN SAHAJA BOLEH, MALAYSIA CEMERLANG, GEMILANG DAN TERBILANG'.

26. THIRDLY AND LASTLY, I SEE CHANGES IN THE SOUL OF MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES. AS MORE AND MORE MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES ENTER THE GLOBAL STAGE, THE SENSE OF A UNIQUE MALAYSIAN PERSONALITY WILL INCREASINGLY EMERGE. AMERICAN COMPANIES ARE SEEN AS BOLD, GERMAN COMPANIES ARE SEEN AS PRECISE, JAPANESE COMPANIES ARE PERCEIVED TO BE CUTTING-EDGE. HOW WILL MALAYSIAN COMPANIES BE SEEN BY THE WORLD?.

27. THESE ARE EARLY DAYS YET, BUT WE MUST SERIOUSLY CONSIDER THIS ISSUE OF CORPORATE CULTURE BECAUSE IT WILL HAVE A STRONG BEARING ON OUR NATIONAL CULTURE. THE EMERGING TRAITS ARE THERE: MALAYSIAN BUSINESSES ARE INCREASINGLY KNOWN FOR BEING FAIR PARTNERS, FOR ADAPTING WELL TO OTHER CULTURES, FOR GIVING BACK TO SOCIETY. HOW THIS MALAYSIAN 'WAY' DEVELOPS IN FUTURE WILL TELL US NOT ONLY ABOUT HOW WE DO BUSINESS, BUT HOW WE ARE AS A SOCIETY.

28. AS BUSINESS LEADERS, YOU ARE ALL A BIG PART OF HOW THIS MALAYSIAN 'WAY' EVOLVES. I THINK WE CAN AGREE THAT IT IS AN HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO PLAY THIS PART, IN WHAT IS AN EXTREMELY EXCITING TIME FOR OUR COUNTRY.

29. BEFORE I END MY SPEECH, I WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO STRESS TEST WITH THIS VERY CRITICAL AND OPINIONATED FOCUS GROUP, SOMETHING THAT I HAVE BEEN MULLING OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS. CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF MERDEKA MAKES US NOSTALGIC. BUT IT HAS ALSO MADE ME OPTIMISTIC. WHEN I CAME IN TO OFFICE I COMMITTED MYSELF TO VISION 2020 AND I STILL HOLD MYSELF TO THAT PLEDGE.

30. BUT THE MORE I THINK ABOUT 50 YEARS OF MERDEKA, THE MORE I START DREAMING ABOUT WHAT MIGHT BE IN ANOTHER 50 YEARS. WHAT WOULD THIS BLESSED NATION OF OURS LOOK LIKE ONE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER MERDEKA?. WHAT WOULD WE HAVE LEFT OUR CENTENNIAL GENERATION – MANY WHO ARE NOT BORN YET?

31. WE WILL MARCH PAST VISION 2020 IN LESS THAN 13 YEARS. WHERE WILL WE GO AFTER THAT? WHAT WILL OUR NEXT MILESTONE BE?. I THINK IT IS TIME FOR US TO GAZE FURTHER INTO OUR FUTURE TO SET DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS THAT MAY SEEM UNATTAINABLE TODAY BUT WILL BE WITHIN THE GRASP OF OUR

CENTENNIAL GENERATION.

32. IF VISION 2020 IDENTIFIED NINE CHALLENGES THAT WERE ABOUT CREATING A UNITED, DEMOCRATIC, ETHICAL, TOLERANT, SCIENTIFIC AND PROSPEROUS SOCIETY, 2057 MUST BE ABOUT THE ROAD TO EXCELLENCE. IF 2020 IS ABOUT THE FOUNDATION OF A DEVELOPED NATION, 2057 IS ABOUT WHAT IT TAKES TO DISTINGUISH OURSELVES IN ALL FIELDS. IF 2020 IS ABOUT THE KIND OF PEOPLE WE WILL BE, 2057 IS ABOUT THE HEIGHTS TO WHICH OUR PEOPLE WILL SCALE.

33. I HAVE ALWAYS SAID "CEMERLANG, GEMILANG, TERBILANG". I HAVE SAID IT SO OFTEN TO THE POINT WHERE MAYBE PEOPLE ARE BORED OF IT. BUT TO ME IT BRINGS A LOT OF MEANING FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY. IT REPRESENTS A PHILOSOPHY WHERE THE PRESENT IS NOT ENOUGH. IT IS AN APPROACH THAT CAN PROPEL US FORWARD, AGAIN AND AGAIN, GENERATION AFTER GENERATION AS WE CREATE ADDED VALUE, FOSTER INNOVATION, GENERATE KNOWLEDGE, NEVER ONCE LOOKING BEHIND OR STEPPING BACK. THIS IS THE SPIRIT THAT INFORMS THE FIVE THRUSTS OF THE NATIONAL MISSION. AND THE SAME SPIRIT GUIDES MY DREAMS FOR 2057.

34. A HUNDRED YEARS OF MERDEKA WILL SEE THIS SOCIETY, THIS NATION, ACHIEVE THE UNIMAGINABLE. WE WILL HAVE NOBEL LAUREATES, TRULY GLOBAL CORPORATIONS, RESPECTED AND MARKET LEADING BRANDS, INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED POETS AND ARTISTS, AMONG THE LARGEST NUMBER OF SCIENTIFIC PATENTS IN THE WORLD, SOME OF THE BEST SPORTSPERSONS ON THE PLANET – DARE I EVEN SAY THE BEST FOOTBALL TEAM IN ASIA. OUR STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS WILL DOMINATE IVY LEAGUE UNIVERSITIES AND OUR OWN UNIVERSITIES WILL BE CITADELS OF EXCELLENCE FOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS.

35. WE WILL BE PIONEERS IN ALTERNATIVE ENERGY, DRAWING ON OUR STRENGTH IN BIOFUELS. OUR CITIES WILL BE THE MOST LIVABLE IN THE GLOBE BLENDING COSMOPOLITAN FACILITIES THAT ARE ROOTED IN OUR TOLERANT AND JUST SOCIETAL ETHOS. WE WILL HAVE MANAGED TO SUCCESSFULLY FIND OUR PLACE IN THIS WORLD. THE RISE OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC POWERS WILL NOT HAVE LEFT US IN OBLIVION, BUT MOTIVATED US TO FIND OUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND LEAD IN MANY STRATEGIC INDUSTRIES. WE WILL BECOME A TRUE LOGISTICS HUB, THE UNDISPUTED ISLAMIC FINANCIAL CENTRE, AND THE GLOBAL REFERENCE POINT FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY AND MODERN AGRICULTURE.

36. THIS IS THE MALAYSIA IN MY DREAMS FOR 2057. THIS IS WHAT I MEAN BY TERBILANG. ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE, ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF ADVANCEMENT.

37. I LEAVE YOU WITH THAT THOUGHT, FOR YOU TO THINK, FOR YOU TO DEBATE, AND FOR YOU TO DECIDE. I HAVE MADE UP MY MIND THAT WHATEVER I DO TODAY, IT MUST BE FOR A CENTENNIAL GENERATION THAT IS RICH IN MIND AS WELL AS IN SPIRIT.

THANK YOU.