

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OPENING OF THE INAUGURAL CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC NEWS
AGENCY (IINA) AT DEWAN TUNKU ABDUL
RAHMAN, KUALA LUMPUR ON 16TH AUGUST,
1972**

Assalam mualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,

Mr Chairman, Secretary General of Islamic Secretariat,¹
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed a privilege and an honour for me to be here at this auspicious occasion—the inauguration of the International Islamic News Agency.

On behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, I wish to extend a warm welcome to all Distinguished Delegates to Kuala Lumpur. Your presence at this August gathering is indeed a source of pride and inspiration to our people.

We in Malaysia are proud for being given this singular honour to play host to this historic Conference but the fact that impresses me most is that many of you have come from far and near to uphold the torch of enlightenment for the sake of Islam. May I, therefore take this opportunity to convey through you, to your respective governments that the Government and people of Malaysia are overwhelmed by the trust and confidence which you have placed upon us.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Islamic Secretariat has made significant progress since its inception nearly three years ago. Today's event is another milestone in its onward progress to promote the interests of Islam. We all realize that the successful pursuit of our ultimate objectives can only stem from our realization and awareness of the constraints and impediments that confront us, as well as the hopes and ideals for which we aspire. It is imperative that we should foster close

¹ Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Alhaj.

co-operation among the constituent member nations which ultimately constitute the sum and substance of the objectives as enshrined in the charter of the Islamic Secretariat.

In this context, I believe IINA can play a positive role in helping to realize the said objectives which would bind not only the leaders and Governments of fraternal Muslim nations but more so the respective peoples of all walks of life.

I am sure you will all agree with me that in this present world of ours, there is an urgent need to strengthen the role of news media in our respective countries. The direct interlink between socio-economic progress and the growth of news media has been recognised. Thus, the setting up of IINA is a clear recognition of this need which, besides enhancing the common bonds of religion, would help speed up changes consistent with the process of modernization in Islamic Society.

Distinguished Delegates,

IINA has a heavy and difficult task ahead. We would only indulge in self-delusion if we think that it can achieve its objectives within a span of a few years, for a cohesive and progressive IINA can only be built on a solid and durable foundation. In our case, we are a young nation and so is our national news organisation BERNAMA. In view of this, there should be close and sustained collaboration and co-ordination between member states to ensure that the policies and objectives would be aligned towards achieving the common goal.

Having expressed our resolve and determination with the establishment of IINA, it is important to see that this resolve of ours should not fail owing to lack of support. Unless we add meaning and substance to our determination, I am afraid the future of the Islamic Secretariat and for that matter the Islamic world, would remain in a state of indifference of each other's problems and aspirations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not only the sentiment of religion and the socio-cultural heritage that have bound us but more so is our realization of the common objectives and goals founded on common interests and

aspirations. The best and enduring manner in which we can symbolise our solidarity is by fostering greater understanding both among ourselves as well as the world at large.

Since we achieved independence in Malaysia, we feel humbly proud to have made our little contribution to the cause of Islam. Islam is our national religion and in our National Ideology—the Rukunegara—Belief in God is our first principle. This principle has guided the actions of our Government, both in domestic and in international affairs.

It is this concern that has underlined our policy for the Middle-East, or to us here, West Asia. We support fully the cause of the Arab countries, most especially, the cause of the Palestinians, who have been driven out of their homes to exist on the goodwill of their brothers in the Arabic and other Muslim nations. We support all efforts to bring peace to this region, but not peace without justice. Justice calls for the return of the people of Palestine to their homeland. We pledge our full support to the peoples of Palestine and to the Arab nations in their efforts to achieve this end.

Distinguished Delegates,

I full share the view expressed by the Tunku on the negative attitude of some Western News Agencies in respect of reporting events in Muslim nations. It is therefore the duty of IINA to make up for these inadequacies and counter the prevaricious propaganda of our common enemy whose sole aim is to disrupt the Muslim unity. At the same time, I feel IINA has a prime duty not only to galvanise public opinion in Muslim countries but also to bridge the communication gap between Muslim countries which would ultimately reduce the area of differences and create an atmosphere of better understanding and co-operation among Muslim and Non-Muslim nations.

I am convinced that with the guidance of Almighty Allah, the task before you would be successfully discharged. The success of this Conference will be a significant contribution to the realization of the noble objectives of IINA and the Islamic Secretariat.

But, your task does not end with the establishment of a strong, viable and competitive news agency. The news agency that you will inaugurate and establish will have the task of correcting the

centuries of misinformation and distortion that have been the burden of Islam and Islamic Nations. IINA will have to be historians dedicated to the task of telling the true story of Islam and its nations to the rest of the world. You have to establish a crop of newsmen dedicated to telling the truth about the progress and the development of the Muslim peoples. IINA will have to be more than just another news agency. It will have to be the voice of the nations of Islam, in the full sense of the word, speaking out to all nations from the heart and soul of Islam.

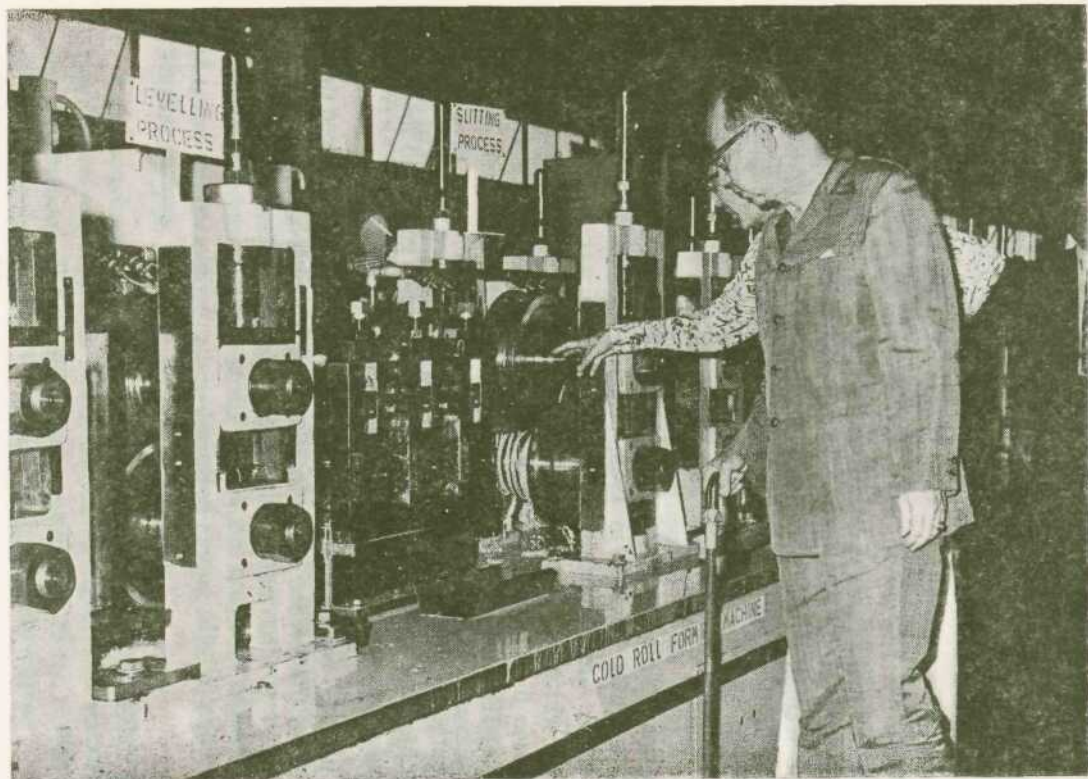
Distinguished Delegates,

On this memorable occasion, I would like to invite you to join me and the people of Malaysia in paying tribute and appreciation to the Secretary General of the Islamic Secretariat, Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman. In spite of the onerous task before him, and his advanced age he discharged his duties with zeal and devotion, with humility and modesty, and above all, with sagacity and love.

It was at his initiative that the first Islamic Conference was held in Kuala Lumpur in 1968, bringing together the nations of Islam. We are happy that this first meeting was an unqualified success which led to the establishment of the Islamic Secretariat. It is also his idea which today brought this Conference and the birth of IINA.

I earnestly pray that Allah bestows His grace and blessings upon him and upon you all at this Conference to guide and inspire us and to crown our efforts with success.

With these words, I now have much pleasure to declare open this Inaugural Conference of the International Islamic News Agency.



Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein kelihatan sedang memerhati salah satu bahagian Jentera Kilang di Syarikat Mega Chemicals Berhad di Shah Alam, Selangor pada 19hb Ogos, 1972.

(Gambar Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia)