

THE 37TH. SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
IN NEW YORK

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May I, at the outset, extend to you my sincere felicitations on your unanimous election as President of this General Assembly. Your election bears testimony to the recognition and respect that you enjoy as a diplomat of outstanding ability. Under your wise presidency, I am confident that this Assembly will be able to complete its work successfully and with distinction. Your election is also an added honour to your country with which Malaysia enjoys friendly relations. In welcoming your election, I wish also to pay sincere tribute to Ambassador Ismat Kittani, the outgoing President, for the outstanding manner in which he had conducted the 36th. United Nations General Assembly.

2. Since the General Assembly last met, the international situation has not improved. On the contrary, it has deteriorated even further. The world continues to remain in the grip of crises of various kinds stemming from unresolved political and military conflicts, economic stagnation and recession, widespread poverty and privations, and various inequities, all of which seem to defy solution. Through all these there is continued escalation in armaments, consuming enormous funds and resources and threatening mankind with destruction and possibly extinction. The United Nations General Assembly, meeting against this backdrop, must get the full backing of the members so as to reassert its authority and play its role truly effectively.

3. As we look around us, we have to admit that this time international law and order has truly broken down. Might is now the only thing that is right. Weak countries like Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Lebanon are trodden over by the boots of invading armies as the rest of the world stood by. The economies of the poor nations are wrecked by recession resulting from man-made policies in the powerful commercial and financial centres of the world. The pleas of the poor are but secondary subjects for discussions by the rich as they meet to plan their own world in the Cancuns and Versailles of their world. And in Lebanon thousands of Palestinians are murdered in the name of security for the Israelis and their cohorts.

4. There was a time when the United Nations sent a multi-nation force to stop an invasion and did in fact succeed. But now it is helpless. Resolution after resolution are passed by the various United Nations committees but the invasion, the atrocities, and the economic bullying go on. The credibility of the United

5. The need to restore faith in the United Nations is very pressing. The United Nations must regain its credibility. I would like to say that countries like Malaysia must help restore the trust and confidence of the international community in this Organisation's ability to play a constructive role in resolving problems and crises and in maintaining world peace and stability. But that would be pure rhetoric. What is needed is the full backing of the powerful nations. They must revitalise the Organisation which they created. They must breath life into it by abiding by its decisions and lending it their weight.

6. In Southeast Asia the Kampuchean problem continues to pose a threat to peace and security. Three times the United Nations General Assembly has called for the total withdrawal of foreign forces and the exercise of self-determination by the Kampuchean people. The International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) had laid down the principles for a political settlement of the problem. But again those who are in a position to help achieve political settlement have shown little concern for the accepted norms of international practice.

7. The foreign military invasion and continued occupation of Kampuchea is a crime against the Kampuchean people and a threat to regional peace and security. It has brought in its wake big power rivalry into a region where five peace-loving nations have agreed to a concept of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality. Members of ASEAN find in the Kampuchean problem an insurmountable obstacle to their cherished dream of a conflict-free neutral area.

8. The world must give serious attention to the situation still time for members of the United Nations to act, they must do so. They must give their stamp of approval to the valiant coalition that has been formed.

9. In consonance with the efforts for a peaceful settlement, Malaysia and ASEAN are extremely gratified with the agreement reached among the three resistance groups of Kampuchea to join hands in the coalition in which His Highness Prince Sihanouk has assumed the Presidency of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea. The determination, wisdom and above all the abiding

sense of patriotism of the three leaders to stand together to restore freedom and honour to their country deserve our profound admiration. Malaysia welcomes this development as it is a positive and an important step towards the attainment of a political solution. Malaysia feels honoured for being able to play host during the historic signing of the declaration establishing the coalition by His Highness Prince Sihanouk, His Excellency Son Sann and His Excellency Khieu Samphan on 22nd. June, 1982. I am indeed happy with the presence and participation of His Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk, President of Democratic Kampuchea and the beloved leader of the Kampuchean people, at this session. I hope that this august Assembly would respond appropriately and positively to his noble cause. We await with keen anticipation his triumphant return to Kampuchea to restore the freedom and independence of that country and the honour and dignity of the Kampuchean people. West Asia

10. In West Asia, the situation has also taken a turn for the worse since the General Assembly last met. For the umpteenth time since the Palestinians were evicted from their homeland, they have been forced to move from one refuge to another. Their rights as a people are still being denied. They are not even treated as humans as the brutal massacres in the Lebanon amply demonstrate.

11. We remember vividly the horrors of Belsen, Dachau and other Nazi concentration camps of the second World War. We know of the sufferings of the Jewish people then and the pogroms of centuries past. We were appalled at the atrocities. Nevertheless, nobody, not even a people who had suffered as much as the Jews had, have the right to inflict upon others the horrors of Sabra and Shatila. The Palestinians and the Lebanese were not responsible for Belsen or Dachau. Has the international community lost its conscience that it can stand aloof while such horrors were perpetrated against the helpless and the innocents. In order to assuage the conscience of the anti-Semites the land of the Palestinians have already been taken away from them to create a Jewish homeland. Must the Palestinians now be butchered and driven from refuge to refuge. Must they also be exterminated.

12. We understand the conscience which bothers the people who had once been cruel to the Jews. We understand their need to make amends for their past misdeeds. But are we going to condone massacres because we, or rather the powerful nations of the world, are unwilling to hurt the feelings of the Jews. Some may think that the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila camps will

satiate the Israelis and that they will go back to their Israel. This can only be a wrong assumption. Recent history has shown, and the Israeli going to be under constant threat and off and on they will be invaded and atrocities committed against them. In the interest of Israeli security there will be no security for its neighbours. Can we accept that only the security of Israel is important, that its Arab neighbours have no right to security.

13. Israel is a bully. If it is any bigger or stronger the world will not be safe. I would, therefore, like to call upon the United States, as the main supplier of weapons to Israel, to reconsider its position. Those weapons are for nothing less than murder.

14. Apart from its systematic and premeditated use of lethal and sadistic weapons on occupied Palestine and Arab territories, Israel continues to propagate the myth of the non-existence of the Palestinian people and thereby frustrate all peaceful efforts to find a just and enduring settlement of the West Asian conflict. Indeed, the lesson we have learned from the Israeli invasion of neighbouring Lebanon and the destruction of Beirut is that if Israel is not stopped the West Asia problem will not only continue but it will escalate until we are all swallowed up in the conflagration.

15. At this point, Mr. President, I wish to pay homage to the valiant Palestinian freedom fighters for their outstanding qualities of fortitude, patriotism and courage in the face of overwhelming odds in their just struggle for their inalienable rights. I also take this opportunity to salute Chairman Yasser Arafat for his statesmanship, foresightedness and courage in leaving Beirut in order to spare the civilian population of that city from continued Israeli savagery. Unfortunately, the sacrifice made by the PLO has been in vain.

16. Malaysia would also like to welcome the initiative taken at Fez (Morocco) recently by Arab leaders, one that reflects the reasonableness of their stand as much as their courage, statesmanship and above all their reaffirmation of their commitments to the Charter of the United Nations and to regional and international peace and security. This initiative presents to the international community a formula which will enable the Palestinians to return to their homes and freely exercise their God-given inalienable rights in their own homeland, Palestine. The Israelis have of course rejected the proposal outright. The world and the supporters of Israel must prevail upon that

habitually intransigent country to return to sanity and the ways of civilisation. Afghanistan

17. Mr. President, in Afghanistan too, we continue to witness another example of the blatant use of force. There too, we continue to find the misery and travails of a people locked in an unequal struggle to preserve their faith, national identity and character, sovereignty, dignity and freedom.

18. Indeed, the situation within Afghanistan and the three and half million refugees forced into exile in neighbouring countries have given cause for unprecedented anxiety particularly for weak and small nations of the world. To these nations the continuance of the Afghan nationalist struggle is crucial. It is incumbent on the international community to see that this struggle succeed.

19. We, in Malaysia, are fully committed to the restoration of the lawful rights of the Afghan people, including their right to determine for themselves their future, free from coercion and for the Afghan refugees to return to their homes in safety and honour. We support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General in initiating indirect talks with the parties concerned to find a political solution consistent with the United Nations and Islamic Conference Resolutions on the Afghan problem. Iran-Iraq War

20. Mr. President, it is disconcerting that the war between Iran and Iraq continues to rage. The conflict has gone for far too long. It has taken a heavy toll in lives lost, and properties destroyed, in wounds inflicted and in human misery. We must all, therefore, apply ourselves earnestly to the task of reconciling the two countries in the interest of the peoples of these countries themselves and the world at large. The fact is that there would be no victor, nor vanquished, in this conflict.

21. Malaysia enjoys close and cordial relations with both Iran and Iraq, and we therefore implore them to cease fighting, accept mediation and reconciliation so that an honourable and an enduring solution could be found. Apartheid

22. My Government abhors South Africa's inhuman policy of apartheid. This is a travesty of justice and is an affront to human dignity. Apartheid, coupled with the Pretoria regime's deliberate and provocative armed incursions into neighbouring states, constitute a major cause of tension and instability, not only in Africa, but also the world at large. Malaysia will

continue to fully support the cause of the oppressed people of South Africa in their struggle for equality, justice and dignity against apartheid. Those who champion human rights, or claim to do so, could do better by condemning the Pretoria regime and treating them like the freaks that they are.

23. Another area of great concern to us is the problem of drug abuse. The world community has for a long time treated the drug problem as a social problem akin to poverty, slavery, abuse of children and other social ills. In fact drug addiction is all these social ills rolled into one. The youths afflicted with this problem are mental slaves with deviant tendencies who are permanently impoverished. The problem must be tackled at source and this can only be done if the United Nations will act positively. Failure to arrest this spreading scourge will destroy whole generations to come. Economic Issues

24. The age of empires and imperial powers is practically over. But the world has not as yet become a better place for the previously colonised. There are many reasons for this and among them is the banding together of the rich nations in order to maintain economic dominance, which some say is actually a form of imperialism.

25. We, in Malaysia, are very much affected by this. As a nation we have tried to live within the rules, formal and informal, which govern the economic relations between nations. We have even refrained from nationalising industries set up during colonial days, which were engaged in literally extracting wealth from our country for foreigners who frequently do not even know where Malaysia is, much less care for the well-being of its people.

26. But our patience and sense of fair-play is being taxed to the limit with the market manipulations abroad which in effect reduce our people to underpaid labourers. As a producer of primary commodities like tin, rubber and palm oil we are as much entitled to a fair return on our outlay as any producer of manufactured goods in the developed countries. Producing these primary products is no longer merely a question of having enough land or minerals and cheap labour. In these days expensive capital outlay is needed to explore, extract and develop, and also to do the required research and development. The indications are that these costs and the technology required will be increasing steadily in the years to come. Thus money is needed not only as profits but for future development for our own income and for the needs of the world.

27. While the manufactured goods that we buy are priced according to the cost of production and marketing and of course a hefty profit, the prices of primary products seem to bear no relation to any of these costs. They are priced according to the whims and fancies of a host of people who have nothing to do with their production. The various exchanges located in the developed countries literally manipulate prices in order to make a profit for the brokers, the dealers, the speculators and others. These people make money when the prices go up. They also make money when the prices go down. As such it suits them to cause a yo-yo effect on commodity prices.

28. In addition, these exchanges are exclusive clubs where the producers are unable to get membership. The same brokers and others who trade on the exchanges are also the people who make the rules, apply the rules and arbitrate. Is it any wonder that whenever their profits are threatened they change the rules so that they will not only be saved but make a handsome profit as well.

29. This is the situation in the tin and rubber markets today. It has played havoc with my country's economy. We have tried to reduce price fluctuations by having Producer-Consumer Agreements. But this is an arrangement that taxes the producers when prices are down but benefits the consumers when price trends are upwards. It is a case of heads you win tails I lose.

30. As if all these are not enough, the United States maintains a stockpile ostensibly for strategic (meaning security) reasons. We fully support the needs of the United States for strategic reserves but the administration of this reserve is clearly not influenced by problems of strategy. The stockpile is merely a rich nation's monopolistic weapon used to depress prices of commodities for the benefit of the consumers.

31. Such is the fate of the producers of primary commodities that they now have to sell three to five times more of their produce in order to buy the same amount of manufactured goods from the developed countries as they did 20 years ago. In other words the gap between rich and poor has widened by 300 to 500 percent in the last 20 years or so.

32. Malaysia is trying to break the vicious circle of the old commodity market system. We are trying to set up a more equitable system which will maintain reasonable prices while ensuring adequate supply of tin and rubber to the world. Towards this end we have tried to form a viable and effective producers association. There is no intention to create a monopolistic situation. We know fully well that unreasonableness on our part will result in reduced consumption and a switch to substitutes. We hope that producer countries everywhere will appreciate the need for this strategy and participate in it.

33. Commodity prices today are at their lowest. We can blame the recession for this. But what we regret is that this recession is man-made. There is no shortage of supply, nor is there a shortage of demand. Energy is plentiful and the level of technology is unprecedented. Yet suddenly no one wants to buy what only yesterday they could not have enough. And those who want to buy are without the necessary foreign exchange. Indeed many poor countries have literally to sell their soul in order merely to survive.

34. As I have said this world-wide depression is man-made. It is made in the powerful countries by short-sighted people. Foremost among the decisions that led to the diminution of world-trade is the increase of interest rates. The high cost of money has reduced investments, shrunk inventories and stifled new business initiatives. Thus a lot of commodities are floating around unsold and unbought, further depressing prices.

35. True some people have waxed rich in this depression but the price is high in terms of unemployment, bankruptcies and misery for the poor. The world's economy cannot go on like this for long. There will be violence, riots and revolutions. Governments will fall and anarchy will prevail. The longer the depression lasts the longer will it take to recover.

36. As this depression is man-made, it must be unmade by man as well. The first need is to lower interest rates even if it causes slightly higher inflation. Secondly, the protectionism of the rich nations must be reduced, if not done away with. If this cannot be done, at least the protectionist policy should be made more discriminating. The developing nations should not be subjected to any protectionist measures. This should at least soften the impact of the recession on them. The rich countries too would benefit as the improved income of the poor will enable them to buy more manufactured goods.

37. The world has suffered enough from this depression. We need action now. We need the reversal of policies that are so obviously wrong. We would like to appeal to those people who wield so much power to heed the needs of the world. Reverse the policies you have made and the world will remember you as saviours. United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and Antarctica.

38. The participating members of the United Nations must congratulate themselves on the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. The days when the rich nations of the world can take for themselves whatever territory and resources that they have access to are over. Henceforth all the unclaimed wealth of this earth must be regarded as the common heritage of all the nations of this planet.

39. The seas and the sea-beds are undoubtedly going to be the source of wealth for the future. There is no reason why the minerals and other resources presently found on the exposed surfaces of the planet will not be found in the sea-beds. The problem is, of course, one of exploration and extraction. The high cost and the sophisticated technology required will be well beyond the capacity of the poor nations. Unless they can have a share as of right whenever this wealth is extracted the gap between them and the rich nations is going to widen even more. When finally they do have the capacity much of the readily accessible wealth would have been exhausted. It is hoped that with the agreement on the Law of the Sea the poor nations will get their fair share.

40. But there remains certain areas in the world which are not covered by any international agreement. According to present norms, territories colonised by the old colonial powers must be decolonised i.e. returned to the natives or the original inhabitants. The United Nations concern with this issue is reflected in the Permanent Committee on Decolonisation. However, there are still land areas which have neither natives nor settlers. There is, therefore, no one to inherit the land and to set up viable governments should the claims of the metropolitan powers be given up. Because of this, little attention has been paid to these areas.

41. It is now time that the United Nations focus its attention on these areas, the largest of which is the continent of Antarctica. A number of countries have in the past sent expeditions which have not limited themselves to mere scientific exploration but have gone on to claim huge wedges of Antarctica for their countries. These countries are not depriving any natives of their lands. They are therefore not required to decolonise. But the fact still remains that these uninhabited lands do not legally belong to the discoverers as much as the colonial territories do not belong to the colonial powers.

42. Like the seas and the sea-beds these uninhabited lands belong to the international community. The countries presently claiming them must give them up so that either the United Nations administer these lands or the present occupants act as trustees for the nations of the world.

43. Presently exploitation of the resources in the Antarctica is too costly and the technology is not yet available. But no doubt the day will come when Antarctica can provide the world with food and other resources for its development. It is only right that such exploitation should benefit the poor nations as much as the rich.

44. Now that we have reached agreement on the Law of the Sea, the United Nations must convene a meeting in order to define the problem of uninhabited lands, whether claimed or unclaimed, and to determine the rights of all nations to these lands. We are aware of the Treaty of Antarctica concluded by a few nations which provides for their cooperation for scientific research and prohibits non-peaceful activities. While there is some merit in this treaty, it is nevertheless an agreement between a select group of countries and does not reflect the true feelings of members of the United Nations or their just claims. A new international agreement is required so that historical episodes are not made into facts to substantiate claims. Conclusion

45. As I have said at the beginning, the world today is beset by crises of various kinds. To believe otherwise would be to ignore the realities before us. It is imperative that we take cognizance of this fact and mobilise all our efforts to overcome these crises. We can do this if we choose to, or we can let the opportunity slip by. Never before has human ingenuity in science and technology reached such a level of development as today. But we must use it wisely, not in pursuit of sophisticated weaponry for purposes of war but instead to harness it towards peaceful and beneficial uses for the common good.

46. It is an imperilled world in which we are living and we must put it right at all cost. This could come about if nations would be willing to effectively implement past and future resolutions of this Organisation and its related agencies. For this would not only help restore the international community's confidence in the United Nations but also contribute to the resolution of the current conflicts and crises. I urge all members of this Organisation to give their fullest cooperation and every support towards this end so that international peace, stability and security would be achieved. Thank you.