

THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY
MAJOR ABDUL SALAM JALLOUD
TRIPOLI, LIBYA

8 DECEMBER 1984

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim, Your Excellency; Excellencies; Ladies and Gentlemen. Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

May I begin by saying how delighted I am to be here tonight at this dinner reception so graciously hosted by Brother Jalloud in honour of my visit to the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. This sumptuous dinner reception underscores the warm and brotherly hospitality that has been accorded to us since our arrival in your country. On behalf of my delegation I would like to take this opportunity to thank you Brother Jalloud and the people and Government of your country for the excellent arrangements that have been made for our visit.

2. Libya is an ancient and respected nation with a rich and varied historical tradition infused with Islamic, Arabic and Mediterranean cultures. Libya is also a modern country whose people enjoy a high standard of living. I have heard much about the new development strategies that have been introduced in Libya and I am delighted to have this opportunity to study it first hand.

3. With regard to our bilateral relations, I am pleased to note the close and cordial relationship that exists between our two countries. Over the years we have set up the necessary framework for on-going cooperation and the exchange of visits. My current visit and the useful and informative discussions we have had on a wide range of issues will, I am sure, contribute to better understanding and even closer relations.

4. Excellency, it is very heartening to note the very real progress that Libya has achieved in the field of socio-economic development. In the next few days I hope to learn more about these strategies and to view its relevance to our own developmental model. We in Malaysia wish you well in your endeavours and we pray you will achieve even greater success in the years to come.

5. Socio-economic development is also my Government's priority. To this end we too have had to take bold initiatives to change our outlook and aggressively seek out new methods and techniques. Though we have achieved much success, more needs to be done and we look towards

our brothers of the Islamic Ummah to give us their support. Malaysia is considered an attractive and profitable investment centre in the heart of one of the world's fastest growing regions. We hope our brothers would give careful and favourable consideration to this.

6. At the same time, my Government is mindful of the fact that material well-being alone cannot bring peace and happiness. Therefore we have sought to emphasise spiritual upliftment through active support of Islam. In this connection I wish to record my appreciation for the assistance provided by Libya in various religious projects. Our goal must also be to foster greater unity not only amongst Islamic governments but among all Muslims everywhere.

7. Excellency, Malaysia and Libya are brother Muslim countries and active members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. We therefore share a common commitment and obligation to ensure that the Islamic Ummah becomes a dynamic force for peace and spiritual and material well-being that our Prophet meant it to be. If we are to achieve this sacred task, we must move decisively to meet the many challenges that confront us.

8. In this connection, Excellency, I believe that our most important challenge is to strive for Islamic solidarity. Without solidarity and unity all our tasks become doubly difficult. There are no quick solutions to this problem but I would like to add my voice to the growing chorus of appeal from our brothers all over to seriously begin the search for ways to strengthen our solidarity. We must all search our own hearts and find it within us to strengthen the sometimes frail bonds of friendship and unity. The interests of the Ummah must prevail. We have within the Ummah a most useful and effective organisation, the Organisation of Islamic Conference. Perhaps we should exploit fully the many opportunities for cooperative and unified action which this Organisation affords.

9. Another issue of grave concern to us in the Ummah is the still unresolved issue of Palestine. As Muslims we cannot but share the anguish of our brothers in West Asia. The repeated and blatant acts of aggression committed by Israel against the Palestinian people and the Arab countries threatens not only to destroy a brave and a valiant people but to plunge the world into a wider conflict. We therefore believe that a just and durable peace in the region can only be established on the basis of the restitution of the rights of the Palestinian people including the right to establish their own independent and sovereign state under the leadership of the PLO, the total Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and the unconditional return of Jerusalem to Palestinian sovereignty. Your

Excellency is no doubt aware of Malaysia's role in the Geneva Conference on Palestine. We are proud to have been given the honour to contribute in a small but tangible way to the search for a solution to this long-standing problem.

10. The continuing war between Iran and Iraq is also a cause of deep concern to us. It is vital that this conflict be brought to an end, not only for the sake of the people of both countries but also for the sake of peace in the region and the world. The continuation of the war undermines the solidarity and unity of Islamic countries. Malaysia is deeply concerned over this tragic situation and as a member of the OIC Peace Committee, is committed to work with other members towards achieving a peaceful and durable solution to the conflict which have caused so much suffering, hardship and destruction.

11. Another issue of great concern to Islamic countries is Afghanistan which was a member of the OIC and has become the victim of foreign intervention. We deplore this situation and fully support the resolutions of the OIC, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations for the restoration of the independence and sovereignty of Afghanistan and of its Islamic and non-aligned character.

Brother Jalloud,

12. In our part of the world, Malaysia and its partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN are committed to regional cooperation not only to uplift economic and social standards but also to ensure peace and stability in the region. It is for this reason that Malaysia in concert with its partners, has been striving to establish the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia, free from any foreign interference. However, the Kampuchean problem is a serious threat to peace and stability in the region and the continued illegal occupation of the country is a serious obstacle to the realisation of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia. We cannot accept foreign military intervention in Kampuchea or anywhere else in the world as a means of settling problems. The issue must be resolved quickly in accordance with the Declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea and other relevant UN resolutions that have been endorsed and supported by the international community.

13. Finally I take this opportunity to wish you Brother Jalloud and the people of the Jamahiriya continued good health, happiness and prosperity.

Thank you.