

THE DINNER GIVEN BY HIS EXCELLENCY KALEVI SORSA PRIME MINISTER OF
FINLAND IN HELSINKI
HELSINKI, FINLAND

15 APRIL 1985

Your Excellency Kalevi Sorsa, Prime Minister of Finland; Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is indeed an honour and a pleasure for the members of my delegation and I to be present here tonight at this dinner. I wish to thank you for the warm welcome accorded to us during our visit to your country. I have heard how beautiful this country of yours is, of its many lakes and forests and of its friendly people and I am delighted to be here in Finland to see all these things for myself.

2. Malaysia and Finland established diplomatic relations only since 1973 and therefore we can be considered as relatively new friends. Part of the reason for this is that we are separated by geographical distance, and we have had different historical background and experiences. Notwithstanding this, we share a common desire to establish and maintain friendly relations with all countries, irrespective of their governmental systems and based on the principles of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations. At the same time, we both pursue a peace-oriented policy of neutrality and non-alignment to promote international cooperation. It was on this basis that we took the step to establish bilateral relations with each other.

3. Since the establishment of relations between our two countries, our bilateral cooperation, particularly in the economic field, has increased significantly in scope. In the last few years, we have witnessed the rapid growth of cooperation in the economic and technical fields, in investment and in joint-ventures. Our ties have been further consolidated by the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement concluded in 1981, which provided for the establishment of a Joint Commission between both countries. The Joint Commission has achieved considerable success in identifying various areas of cooperation relating to trade, investments and joint-ventures, and economic and technical matters. With this Joint Commission to monitor the progress of our economic cooperation, I am certain that bilateral relations between our two countries will continue to be strengthened for our mutual benefit.

4. The most noticeable growth in our bilateral relations has been in the field of trade, which has increased significantly in quantum and value. However, a substantial part of this increase has been due to the bigger volume of imports of Finnish products into Malaysia. On the other hand, the Malaysian share of the

Finnish market has not improved to any significant degree. While this is perhaps a tribute to the success of your entrepreneurs in penetrating the Malaysian market, I would urge that we both face the matter squarely and work together to achieve a more equitable balance of trade. In this regard, I welcome the formation of the Finnish-Malaysia Trade Association here in Helsinki. The Association will be of valuable assistance to entrepreneurs from both countries to improve our links in commerce.

5. It is also for reason of trade that I have brought with me prominent members of the Malaysian private sector, among whom are representatives of leading business houses in Malaysia. I am certain that they will not miss this opportunity to establish commercial links with Finnish firms and industries. The establishment of such links should also result in the expansion of direct bilateral trade between our two countries, for our mutual benefit.

Your Excellency,

6. Malaysia, like most nations in the world, is striving to achieve economic development and progress so that its people can enjoy an even higher standard of living. However, progress and development can only be achieved in a climate of peace and stability. Malaysia and Finland, and indeed all responsible nations, share the view that military conflict is the greatest threat to peace and stability. Within our own region of Southeast Asia, Malaysia, together with her partners in ASEAN, is trying to establish a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, free from any foreign interference. However, the Kampuchean problem remains the single most serious obstacle to peace and stability in the region. Despite efforts by ASEAN and the international community, the situation in Kampuchea remains unchanged. The Kampuchean Issue must be resolved peacefully and speedily in accordance with the declaration of the International Conference of Kampuchea and other relevant United Nations resolutions that have been endorsed and supported by the international community.

7. The crux of Malaysia's foreign policy remains the development of friendly relations with all countries based on the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in each other's affairs. In this respect, we in Malaysia are aware of Finland's active role and unceasing efforts to promote the cause of detente, disarmament and peace not just in Europe, but also its endeavours in striving towards the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It was Finland's initiative and contribution towards the efforts to promote the cause of detente that led to the commencement of the historically significant Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in this city in 1973. It was fitting that the signing of the Final Act of the Conference was also done in Helsinki. The existence of this document and the fact that the process that was begun in 1973 is still ongoing and is now

in fact a larger process is testimony to your country's commitment to the ideals of peace and cooperative endeavours in Europe.

8. Another area of concern to Malaysia is the question of Antarctica. It is the last unsettled frontier in the world and it remains our view that all Mankind has a legitimate interest in the continent. Antarctica should not be the exclusive preserve of only a few nations. Malaysia is ready to cooperate with the member states of the Antarctica Treaty with a view to finding an acceptable system wherein all nations may cooperate to preserve that vast cold continent and sustain its environment until such time when exploitation of its resources can be done without pollution and damaging the ecological system.

Your Excellency,

9. I am confident that in the future the bilateral relations between our two countries will continue to expand for our mutual benefit. The fact that we have reached across continents to bind this friendship further is indeed an example of how mutual cooperation between nations can and should be fostered.

10. Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlement, may I now invite you to join me in a toast to the good health of His Excellency Kalevi Sorsa, Prime Minister of Finland, and to the close relations between Malaysia and Finland.