

THE DINNER HOSTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN HIS EXCELLENCY DR. ABDUL SALAM MAJA LI AMMAN, JORDAN, 01 OCTOBER 1994

Thank you very much for your kind remarks and the warm welcome which you and the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan have extended to me, my wife and members of my delegation. I am delighted to be in your beautiful country which is well known for its rich Islamic heritage and whose history has a strong link with our Prophet s.a.w. I look forward to enjoying the charm and beauty of your country during the rest of my stay here.

2. My visit though a brief one is to touch base again with Your Excellency following our informal discussions in Kuala Lumpur last December and explore how we can build on the close rapport and brotherly ties which have always existed between our two countries. I am happy to note that our ties have grown over the years. We are appreciative of Jordan in providing places for some 1,200 of our students in its educational institutions. In fact, Jordan has become an increasingly popular centre of learning in Western Asia for Malaysian students. I believe you share with me that more could be done to enhance our bilateral cooperation particularly our trade and economic links. During our discussion last December and in subsequent communications, we agreed that more efforts should be undertaken by both sides to tap the full potentials of trade and other economic opportunities between our two countries.

3. It is with this objective in view that I have included a group of Malaysian corporate and business personalities in my delegation. Their presence today acknowledge the important role the private sector can play in complementing the efforts of the two governments to expand bilateral economic cooperation between Malaysia and Jordan. I am confident that through the programme arranged for them, they would be able to focus on the opportunities for trade, investment and tourism that exist in and between our countries.

4. The Muslim world today suffers from various maladies. They are weak and oppressed and we have the emergence of numerous sects and creeds, some of which plainly deviate from the true teachings of Islam. In Malaysia today, we do not have problems relating to extremism but we do have groups who are deviationist in their approach. One such group which was recently banned by the Malaysian Government is the Al-Arqam. The Government's decision to outlaw the Al-Arqam movement is because of its deviationist teachings which are glaringly against the very fundamentals of Islam. While we encourage missionary work, we cannot allow wrong teachings to be spread

and to confuse Muslims and Non-Muslims alike. Such teachings will lead to schisms among Muslims which will be detrimental to their unity. They are already split enough as it is.

5. Malaysia has been following with keen interest the recent developments in the West Asian region and we are indeed encouraged by the series of historic breakthroughs in the peace process. With the establishment of Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank as well as the Jordan-Israeli declaration on the end of hostilities, I hope the stage will be set for a full reconciliation in West Asia through the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace between the Arab States, the Palestinians and Israel. In this context, I wish to urge Israel to demonstrate its sincerity and goodwill in resolving the remaining outstanding issues, particularly its continued occupation of the Arab territories and the rightful status of Jerusalem. For the momentum of the peace process to be maintained, it is important that Israel matches its words with deeds.

6. The peace accord is a solid step in a region battered by conflicts for more than half a century. The international community has a responsibility to make it succeed. I hope there will be extensive international participation in the social and economic redevelopment of the territories that have languished on account of international neglect. The international community must assist materially and morally in the implementation of the accord. I also wish to appeal to countries in West Asia and others which have supported the Palestinian cause to assist the Palestinian leadership in meeting its new challenges of reconstruction and development.

7. May I take this opportunity to thank you and the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan once again for the kind hospitality and friendliness that have been accorded to me, my wife and my delegation since our arrival. I look forward to continuing our discussions tomorrow on ways by which we can expand our bilateral cooperation.

8. Before concluding, may I offer in return a toast to the continued good health of His Majesty King Hussein and to the strengthening of close ties of friendship and cooperation between our two countries.