

SPEECH BY: DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
(PRIME MINISTER)

EVENT: AT A BANQUET HOSTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT CHUN DOO HWAN IN
SEOUL

VENUE: SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

DATE: 09 AUG 1983

TIME:

Your Excellency,
Madam Lee Soon-Ja,
His Excellency the Prime Minister,
Madam Kim Insook,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of my wife and my delegation, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea for the warm and friendly welcome that has been extended to us. I also take this opportunity to convey to you, the warm greetings and best wishes, of Their Majesties the Yang Di Pertuan Agong and the Raja Permaisuri Agong, whom you so graciously received during their state visit to your Republic in March this year.

2. I thank you most sincerely for the kind words you have just expressed about me. I am grateful to have this opportunity to renew my acquaintance with you, Mr. President, and to further acquaint myself with your country, which is one of the most economically successful nations in the world today. I hope, in the course of this visit, I shall be able to learn and profit from the Korean experience which has contributed to the progress and prosperity of the Republic of Korea.

3. The friendly and cordial relations between our two countries are based on shared ideals and aspirations, and common interests. As developing nations, we are preoccupied with development efforts to raise the standard of living and improve the quality of life of our peoples. We have both experienced colonialism, albeit in different forms, and thus highly value freedom and independence. We share similar views on many regional and international issues. While we may not place equal emphasis on each and every one of them, we share the same concern about peace and stability in the world. It is, therefore, very heartening to me that our two countries have cooperated very closely and constructively both at Governmental and non-governmental levels. This will be further enhanced with the growing understanding that we are now promoting.

4. As you know we have introduced the "Look East Policy" for Malaysia, by which we learn from the experiences of the countries in the East that has achieved success such as the Republic of Korea and Japan. I am convinced that, with proper adaptations, taking into account the different circumstances in Malaysia, we could adopt and apply the methods and approaches that you have used so successfully in your economic and industrial development. There is no doubt to my mind that it is the Korean attitude towards work, their loyalty and discipline that have contributed to the economic miracle of the Republic of Korea.

5. It is a great pleasure for me to express our gratitude for the support that your Government and the Korean private sector have given to the training programmes for our workers and students in the Republic of Korea. I understand, Mr. President, that you yourself have taken a deep personal interest in seeing to the successful implementation of these programmes. I would like to clarify however that the "Look East Policy" was not formulated in order that eastern countries like the Republic of Korea should extend aid to Malaysia. It was meant for Malaysians to better themselves through learning from the example of the eastern countries. Nevertheless we are gratified that your country and your industrialists have taken a keen interest in our policy and are helping to ensure our success. Your personal interest in this area is very much appreciated by the Malaysian Government and people.

Mr. President,

6. You will agree with me that international trade today is faced with numerous obstacles. Protectionism is rife, and the cry for more protection by industrialists and politicians from the developed countries can be heard almost daily. The developing countries quite naturally look upon this trend with despair and hopelessness especially when there appears to be a deep-seated reluctance on the part of the industrialised countries to ameliorate the unhealthy situation that the world finds itself in. Leaders of the developed countries piously call for more free trade, but at the same time they devise new restrictions -- including quotas, tariffs, high interest rates and exorbitant freight charges in order to stifle imports into their countries. How can the developing countries import from them if they are not able to earn foreign exchange through exports to developed countries? How can the developing countries earn from their commodities if prices are depressed and manipulated through markets in and under the control of developed countries? The North South dialogue, UNCTAD and other conferences that have been held have been futile, to say the least. The terms of trade have only sparked off acrimonious charges and counter-charges between the two sides. Now the developed countries have blamed the newly industrialising countries for their present economic predicament. It is for this reason that I have called for

more cooperation and expanded trade among the developing may develop and strengthen ourselves. By using each others products and raw materials we can reduce our dependence on the developed economies. In the process we will become more developed and our wealth and strength will ensure a strong bargaining posture vis-a-vis the developed countries.

7. In this regard I have also suggested that the newly industrialised countries, of which the Republic of Korea is among the most prominent, to relocate their labour-intensive and low-technology industries on a joint-venture basis in the less developed countries, and concentrate more on the high value-added and high technology industries. In so doing we should be better able to compete in the world market by utilising the abundant resources, both in terms of raw materials and manpower, of the South. Malaysia is in a most advantageous position to take in such industries and manufacturing concerns from the Republic of Korea. Korean investments in Malaysia must result in increased earning for Korea through the export of expertises and plants.

Mr. President,

8. The world today is not only gripped by economic malaise but is also assailed by continued political tensions which divert and saps our energy. In the Southeast Asian region, Vietnam continues its illegal occupation of Kampuchea, ignoring the numerous calls by the international community for the withdrawal of her troops. The continued Vietnamese military occupation of Kampuchea constitutes a serious threat to the security and stability of Southeast Asia through big power interference in our regional affairs and impeding the early realisation of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality or ZOPFAN in Southeast Asia. We in ASEAN have persisted and will continue to persist in our quest for the total withdrawal of all foreign troops from Kampuchea, and recognition of the rights of the Kampuchean people to self-determination free from outside interference, and in accordance with the Declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea and other relevant UN resolutions.

9. In West Asia, we see more oppression. The Palestinians are as far away from their cherished dream of an independent state of their own due to the arrogant attitude of the Israelis who defy world opinion and continue the occupation of Arab lands which they had seiged by force of arms. It is ironical that the people who should most understand the meaning of human oppression and sufferings should now be so callous and insensitive to the sufferings they themselves inflict on others. The world cannot just stand by and watch. The Palestinians are a people with as much right as other people. We must rally to their aid or tomorrow we will suffer the same fate and no one will care. Malaysia was greatly honoured to host the Asian Regional Conference on Palestine as an expression of our strong support for the restitution of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian

people, including the right to an independent state of their own under the leadership of the PLO. The Kuala Lumpur Conference has succeeded in coming out with a practical plan of action for a fair and just solution to this problem. The Republic of Korea's participation and positive contribution to the Conference deliberations was highly appreciated by Malaysia and all the participants.

10. A similar fate today is being experienced by Afghanistan. It is unthinkable that in Afghanistan we have a situation where the latest and most destructive Soviet weapon technology is pitted against an ill-equipped force that has barely emerged from the conditions of the 19th century. What has sustained the Afghan freedom fighters against the occupying foreign forces is solely their proud tradition and indomitable spirit. The international community's call for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan continues to fall on deaf ears, but efforts must continue to be made to seek a solution that would return the control of the land to the Afghans themselves. We must reflect on the unconscionable manner in which some powerful countries promote their interests at the expense of their weak neighbours.

11. The Republic of Korea had also suffered in the past through occupation and through destruction wrought by war. It is to the credit of the Korean people that you have risen from the ruins to build a better and modern country. Malaysia is cognizant of the existing tensions in the Peninsula in particular, and in the region in general. These tensions should be removed as soon as possible through peaceful negotiations. We have made our position known that efforts should continue to be promoted to reach an amicable settlement that would ensure the stability and security of the Peninsula and peace for the Korean people. The Korean people must decide this for themselves without undue interference from any other quarters. It is our hope that the years ahead would see a lessening of these tensions and eventually their total elimination.

12. Of late, there has been growing international interest in the continent of Antarctica, the last unsettled frontier of mankind. Malaysia firmly believes that Antarctica should be made the heritage of mankind and should continue forever to be used for peaceful purposes and not be made the object of international rivalry and discord. The day will come when modern technology will be able to exploit the abundant natural resources of Antarctica and Malaysia would like to see that these resources are equitably shared and should benefit both rich and poor nations alike.

Mr. President,

13. We have had very fruitful discussions with you, with your Prime Minister and your officials. You have shown complete understanding of Malaysia's desire to move ahead

and to proceed towards a more progressive and secure future for our nation and people. The assistance which the Republic of Korea has given to us in our pursuit of modernisation and development is highly welcomed and appreciated by the Malaysian people. I am looking forward to see for myself the fruits of your endeavours and diligence. I hope to be able to persuade the captains of your industries to start thinking seriously about moving some of their plants to Malaysia where their own and Korea's interests will be served as much as Malaysia's and its people.

Mr. President,

14. I would like to end my remarks by thanking you and Madam Lee Soon-Ja for the great honour you have done us in hosting this exquisite dinner tonight. The care you have shown for our visit to your country attests to the growing bonds of friendship between the Republic of Korea and Malaysia and of our two peoples and augurs well for closer cooperation in the future.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. May I now invite you to join me in a toast to the continued good health of the President of the Republic of Korea and Madam Lee Soon-Ja, to the continued prosperity and well-being of the Government and people of the Republic of Korea and to the everlasting friendship between the Republic of Korea and Malaysia.