

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

EVENT: AT THE BANQUET GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR BY H.E. PRESIDENT
J.R. JAYEWARDENE OF SRI LANKA

VENUE: SRI LANKA

DATE: 21 APR 1983

TIME:

Your Excellency President J.R. Jayewardene
and Madame Jayewardene;
Hon'ble Ministers;
Excellencies;
Ladies & Gentlemen.

My wife and I are happy and privileged to be in Sri Lanka at Your Excellency's kind invitation. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank Your Excellency, the government and people of Sri Lanka for the warm and friendly welcome and the generous hospitality extended to us and members of my delegation since our arrival earlier today. I would also like to thank you for this most delightful dinner and for your kind remarks.

2. I have looked forward very much to a visit to this beautiful country. Although I have been here before, they were fleeting visits during which I was able to see only a little of this beautiful and historic Island. But this visit has afforded me the opportunity to see much more and I am gratified and happy to find here so many things that are common to Malaysia as well. I feel very much at home here.

3. Exchanges of visits from time to time have served to strengthen relations between us and reflect the goodwill and close ties of friendship which have existed over the centuries between our two countries. I am deeply conscious that the longstanding ties between Malaysia and Sri Lanka have been sustained by the close interaction of our peoples and the existence of cooperation in the social, cultural, economic and technical fields between our two governments since independence.

4. On the occasion of this visit, it is my pleasant duty to reiterate the importance we attach to our relations with Sri Lanka and underline our desire to further strengthen Malaysia-Sri Lanka bilateral relations. We ought to explore areas in our bilateral relations where we could expand our cooperation for the mutual good of our two countries.

Your Excellency,

5. The present difficulties suffered by the developing

countries because of depressed prices for their primary products have made more urgent the need for a New International Economic Order. But while striving for its realisation, developing countries should participate actively in a meaningful South-South interaction. As a strong believer in the idea of South-South relations, Malaysia is prepared to cooperate with our developing friends. In this regard, we have launched our own Technical Cooperation Programme in 1980 in areas where we have the know-how and experience that may benefit other developing countries. We have recently updated this programme and if there is anything in the programme that is of interest to Sri Lanka you are most welcome. Of course, we on our part would welcome any expertise which Sri Lanka could make available to us.

6. In the multilateral context, I am happy that Sri Lanka and Malaysia have cooperated well particularly in regard to the vital issue of commodities. As producers of a number of similar primary commodities our two countries face the same problem of getting fair and remunerative prices, as well as access to markets for these produce. Consequently, our export earnings are affected and this in turn have serious bearings on our development efforts and social programmes. It is for this reason that we have called for greater producers' cooperation to increase the negotiating power of developing countries and protect their legitimate rights. We have in this regard spearheaded the recently established Tin Producers' Association, and I am happy that the recent Non-aligned Summit has recognised the importance of Producers' Association. I would like to stress here that we are not in favour of cartels. To us the manipulation of prices by consumer countries constitute a part of a cartel operation. The Tin Producers Association is therefore an anti-cartel organisation that is dedicated to free and fair trading in the commodity. We will never try to use the Association to hold the world to ransom. Rather we would work within the Association in order that the interest of the producers are as well protected as is that of the consumers.

Your Excellency,

7. In the present difficult world economic situation, it is encouraging to see that your government has undertaken vast development projects in the Mahaweli region to meet the energy needs, and increase agricultural productivity of your country. I congratulate you Mr. President and members of your government for the farsightedness in embarking on a scheme that will no doubt bring enormous benefits to the people of your country. On this, I am happy to note that both our governments pursue similar policies to accelerate the economic development of our countries. Like you, we also want to improve the quality of life of our peoples, strengthen the social and moral fabric of our multiracial society and lay a firm foundation for continued stability and economic progress for future generations to come.

8. Our political outlook too is not dissimilar. In the international arena both our countries are committed to the principles of non-alignment, believing that the Non-Aligned Movement has an important role to play today, in the face of increasing big power competition and the arms race, to create a climate conducive for the return of a more stable and peaceful world order. The recent New Delhi Non-Aligned Summit has seen renewed awareness of the need for members to remain dedicated to the original aims and principles of non-alignment. However, we cannot hope to achieve our objectives if Third World countries and members of the Non-Aligned Movement become involved in big power conflict or by themselves commit acts of aggression with support from the big powers.

9. We hold in high regard your active support and involvement in promoting a regional framework for cooperation in South Asia. We understand that substantial progress has been achieved towards this end and we wish you and the other nations of South Asia every success in this worthy endeavour.

10. We support all efforts that would contribute to bring about world peace. In this regard, we support your earnest effort to convene the UN Conference on the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. In Southeast Asia, we have been striving for the early realisation of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration for a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality. Unfortunately, the continued illegal occupation of Kampuchea by the Vietnamese poses a serious obstacle to the realisation of the concept and a dangerous threat to peace and stability of the region. It remains our paramount goal that all Vietnamese forces must withdraw from Kampuchea and that the Kampuchean people be allowed to determine their future without external coercion or interference through free elections in accordance with the Declaration of the ICK and other relevant resolutions of the United Nations. It is our belief that the formation of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea under the Presidency of Prince Norodom Sihanouk offers a viable alternative to continued confrontation and constitutes a positive step towards the peaceful solution of the problem. Your government's support of our efforts in this regard is highly valued and appreciated.

Your Excellency,

11. Malaysia deplores strongly the current Vietnamese offensive in Kampuchea against forces of the U.N. recognised government of Democratic Kampuchea and helpless civilian Khmer population. We strongly condemn Vietnamese transgression of Thai territory and casualties inflicted on Thai forces and civilians. This has happened in the past and I am afraid it will happen in the future as long as the Vietnamese continue with their illegal occupation of Kampuchea and resist the United Nations calls for a peaceful

resolution of the Kampuchean conflict. As we have underlined in various international fora, Vietnamese operations along the Kampuchean-Thai border threaten to spill over into Thailand and raise a spectre of war in the region and invite big power involvement. We would like the international community to join us in a call for immediate cessation of Vietnamese military actions along the border and reiterate our demand for total Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea.

12. As in the case of Kampuchea, Afghanistan too is the victim of foreign intervention and occupation. We strongly condemn the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and fully support the resolutions of the OIC, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations, calling for the restoration of the independence and sovereignty of Afghanistan and of its Islamic and non-aligned character.

13. With regard to West Asia, Malaysia strongly deplores repeated and blatant acts of aggression committed by the Israelis against the Arab people and their lands. We believe that a just and durable peace in the region can only be achieved on the basis of the restitution of the rights of the Palestinian people to an independent state of their own under the leadership of their sole and legitimate representative, the PLO; the total Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories; and the unconditional return of Holy Jerusalem to Arab and Islamic sovereignty. We welcome the Fez Declaration of September 1982 as a positive contribution to the search for peace in West Asia.

Your Excellency,

14. May I say once again that it is a pleasure to visit your many-splendoured country. The excellent arrangements that have been laid down for us are greatly appreciated. We look forward to an enjoyable and memorable stay.

15. I am confident that the goodwill and strong ties of friendship that have been nurtured over the years will facilitate our common desire to forge greater cooperation for the mutual good of our two countries.

16. May I now invite Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen to join me in a toast to the continued good health and success of His Excellency President J.R. Jayewardene and Madame Jayewardene, for the continued progress and prosperity of Sri Lanka and the friendship and cooperation between our two governments and peoples.