

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

EVENT: AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR HIS EXCELLENCY
THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, MR. BULLEND ULUSU

VENUE: ANKARA, REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

DATE: 12 MAY 1983

TIME:

Your Excellency Mr. Bulend Ulusu,
Prime Minister of the Republic of
Turkey;
Your Excellencies;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

On behalf of my wife and members of my delegation, I would like to thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for the warm and friendly welcome extended to us since our arrival here. We have looked forward to this visit to your beautiful country -- a country rich in culture and history. I have no doubt that, in the course of our visit here, we will have the opportunity to see aspects of your culture and the contribution of your people to history, in particular Islamic history.

2. The Republic of Turkey was among the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Malaysia. Since the establishment of relations in 1958, the close ties of friendship are reflected in the mutually beneficial cooperation between our two countries in the social, economic, technical and cultural fields. Malaysian leaders and officials are no strangers to Turkey, and their visits to Turkey, and likewise the visits of Turkish leaders and officials to Malaysia, have served to strengthen relations between us.

Your Excellency,

3. The warm and friendly relations between our two countries have been further augmented by our commitment to the ideals and aspirations of the United Nations and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, of which both our countries are members. We share similar views on many regional and international issues, in particular those which face the Islamic countries and peoples.

4. As you know, relations between our two countries have become closer in recent times. Tan Sri Mohd. Ghazali Shafie, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, visited your country at the end of January this year. During his visit he had the opportunity to call on Your Excellency and

also His Excellency President Kenan Evren. Following this visit, the inaugural meeting of the Joint Committee for Economic and Technical Cooperation between our two countries was convened in Ankara. That meeting was an important event in helping to promote further economic cooperation between our two countries, specifically in the spheres of trade, investment and joint ventures, shipping, aviation, health and science, and culture.

5. I am happy to note that both our countries share a common desire to strengthen our relations through increased cooperation. I am confident that such cooperation can only be to the mutual benefit of our two countries and peoples. Your Excellency,

6. Malaysia and Turkey share a common bond in Islam and its culture. I believe that the strengthening of relations between us will positively contribute to greater unity and solidarity among Muslim countries and its Ummah. In doing so, our two countries will also help to strengthen the role of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in attaining its objectives.

7. The question of Palestine is the most urgent and pressing problem facing the Muslim world today. As Muslim countries, we cannot but share the anguish of our brothers in West Asia. The repeated and blatant acts of aggression committed by Isreal against the Palestinian and Arab peoples and their lands threaten regional security and world peace. We 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 people of Palestine, including the right to establish their own independent and sovereign state in their homeland under the leadership of the PLO, the total Isreali withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, and the unconditional return of Holy Jerusalem to Palestinian sovereignty.

8. As an expression of our strong support for the restitution of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, Malaysia has just hosted the United Nations Asian Conference on the Question of Palestine. We greatly appreciated and welcome Turkey's participation and contribution towards the success of the Conference. I am happy to inform you that the Conference reaffirmed the view that there can be no solution to the problem in West Asia for as long as the core issue, which is the question of Palestine, remains unresolved.

9. The situation in Afghanistan, another Muslim country, also remains unchanged. That unfortunate country continues to be a victim of foreign military intervention and occupation. We strongly condemn the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and fully support the resolutions of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations, calling for the complete withdrawal

of foreign troops from Afghanistan, the restoration of the sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan, and of its non-aligned and Islamic character.

10. The continuing war between Iran and Iraq, two Muslim countries, is causing deep concern to Muslims all over the world. The conflict between these two countries with whom Malaysia and Turkey enjoy friendly relations, must be brought to an end quickly, 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. As members of the OIC Peace Committee, both Malaysia and Turkey are committed to work with other members to achieve a peaceful and durable solution to the conflict.

Your Excellency,

11. The international community is also being confronted with yet another problem of grave magnitude arising from the oil slick in the Gulf that threatens the world's environment. Damaged Iranian oil wells continue to spill thousands of barrels of oil a day into the sea. If allowed to go on, the adverse effects of the spillage would soon extend beyond the Gulf area to neighbouring seas, bringing in its wake disasters and damage to marine environment and ecology. Such damage would take generations to recover. The issue of the oil slick therefore transcends the Iraq-Iran war and should become the concern and responsibility of the entire international community. It should be treated as such accordingly. In this regard, Malaysia feels morally obliged to draw attention to this issue and urge the international community to cooperate and assist in averting this grave threat.

12. As you know, Malaysia has proposed that the continent of Antarctica, the last unsettled frontier of mankind, be made a 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 Malaysian proposal has received the endorsement and support of the non-aligned countries at their recent Summit Conference in New Delhi, which urged that the matter be brought before the 38th Session of the U.N. General Assembly this year with the view that a comprehensive study on Antarctica be made by the world body. Malaysia hopes that Turkey will give its full support to the Malaysian proposal.

Your Excellency,

13. Malaysia is deeply committed to regional cooperation embodied in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN. Malaysia, in concert with its partners in ASEAN, has been striving to establish a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia, free from any foreign interference. However, the continued illegal occupation of

Kampuchea by Vietnam is a serious obstacle to the realisation of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia, and a serious threat to peace and stability in the region. The Kampuchean 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.

14. In this connection, Malaysia welcomed the establishment of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea under the Presidency of His Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk as a positive step towards the peaceful resolution of the Kampuchean questions. We are appreciative of the positive Turkish support for ASEAN's initiative at the United Nations and also its participation at the UN International Conference on Kampuchea.

Your Excellency,

15. May I say once again how happy and honoured I am to be in your country and to express my gratitude and appreciation for the warm and friendly reception given to us.

16. May I now invite Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen to join me in a toast to the continued good health and happiness of His Excellency President Kenan Evren, His Excellency Mr. Bulend Ulusu, to the Government and people of the Republic of Turkey, and to the close and enduring friendship between Malaysia and the Republic of Turkey.