

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

EVENT: AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR BY HER
EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF YUGOSLAVIA, MADAME MILKA PLANINC

VENUE: BELGRADE

DATE: 11 MAY 1983

TIME:

Your Excellency Madame Milka Planinc,
Prime Minister of the Socialist Federal
Republic of Yugoslavia;
Your Excellencies;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of my wife and members of my delegation, I would like first of all to thank your Excellency, the Government and people of Yugoslavia for the warm and friendly welcome and generous hospitality extended to us since our arrival yesterday. I would like to thank you also for the kind remarks which you have just made. Allow me to say how very happy we are to be here and how much I have looked forward to this visit to your beautiful country. I hope that my visit will contribute to the strengthening of the existing close ties of friendship and cooperation between our two countries.

Your Excellency,

2. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Yugoslavia in 1967, we have had meaningful cooperation particularly in the context of the non-aligned countries. Our common interest and shared commitments to the ideals and aspirations of the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations of which both our countries are members have consolidated our ties. Malaysia, like Yugoslavia, has always followed a consistent policy of establishing friendly relations with all countries, irrespective of their governmental systems, based on the principles of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, non-interference in the internal affairs of others and peaceful settlement of disputes.

Your Excellency,

3. As one of the founder members and champions of the Non-Aligned Movement, Yugoslavia and its distinguished leaders have always been greatly admired for constantly striving for world peace and security. The growth in size and influence of the Non-Aligned Movement to what it is today is a tribute to the untiring efforts and contributions

by your late leader, President Tito. Malaysia, as an active member of the Movement is happy, and feels reassured that Yugoslavia's leaders are continuing the efforts of President Tito to consolidate and strengthen the Movement and ensure that it remains uncommitted to the East or West.

4. We are glad that the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit Conference in New Delhi has reaffirmed the non-aligned character of the Movement. The admission of new members clearly indicate that the Movement is gaining respect and influence. It is our hope that the Movement will continue to grow and play its role in the interest of world peace and the freedom of the small nations of the world.

Your Excellency,

5. While the Non-Aligned Movement is a good forum for getting to know each other and putting our views across in a general way, bilateral contacts are still essential in order to concretise some of the ideas expounded by the Movement. It is because of this, that visit and bilateral talks have to be held.

6. We have already had the opportunity this morning to share some of our thoughts on a number of subjects pertaining to our bilateral relations and future cooperation. I am happy to note that we both share a common exists considerable opportunities for expanding our cooperation, particularly with regard to trade.

7. Malaysia is fully committed to regional cooperation as manifested in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN. With its ASEAN partners, Malaysia has been striving to establish a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia, free from any form or manner of foreign interference. However, the on-going conflict in Kampuchea and the presence of foreign military forces is preventing the achievement of ZOPFAN in Southeast Asia. The Kampuchean issue must be resolved peacefully and speedily in accordance with the declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea and other relevant United Nations resolutions that have been endorsed and supported by the international community.

8. In this connection, Malaysia welcome and supported 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 question. We are appreciative of the Yugoslav Government's support for Prince Sihanouk, as well as its position in favour of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea at the Non-Aligned Conferences and in the United Nations.

Your Excellency,

9. Malaysia has just hosted the United Nations Asian

Conference on the Question of Palestine. This is 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 sole and legitimate leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), total Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, and the unconditional return of Jerusalem to Palestinian rule. Malaysia remains convinced that there can be no solution to the problem in West Asia for as long as the core of the crisis, which is the Palestinian question, remains unresolved.

10. The situation in Afghanistan too remains unchanged and, as a result, Afghanistan, which is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, continues to be a victim of foreign military intervention and occupation. We strongly condemn the occupation of Afghanistan and fully support the resolutions of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the United Nations calling for the restoration of the sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan and of its non-aligned character.

11. The continuing war between Iran and Iraq, two members of the Non-Aligned Movement, is causing deep anguish to all members of the Movement. The conflict between these two countries, with whom Malaysia and Yugoslavia enjoy very close relations, must come to an end quickly, not only for the sake of the peoples of both countries, but also for the sake of peace in the region and the world. Efforts by the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as by friendly countries concerned with the continuing conflict to seek a mutually acceptable solution have to-date been unsuccessful. Malaysia would like to urge that mediation efforts by the Non-Aligned Movement, be reactivated and a strong push made for peace.

Your Excellency,

12. 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 devastating effects would take generations to eliminate. The issue of the oil slick has therefore transcended the Iraq-Iran war and should become the concern and responsibility of the entire international community. 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.

13. Malaysia supports Yugoslavia's concern over the question of increased armaments in Europe and the efforts by the group of non-aligned and neutral countries of Europe

towards bringing the meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to a successful conclusion. This would contribute substantially towards the lessening of tensions not only in Europe but the world at large, and would also facilitate the launching of substantive negotiations on general and complete disarmament in the United Nations.

14. Just as the question of peace and security is important to us in Southeast Asia, we appreciate it is equally important to Yugoslavia that the Mediterranean region be therefore, share your conviction that the establishment of zones of peace in all parts of the world will contribute to lessening of international tensions and threats of war.

15. 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 not become the exclusive preserve of only a few nations that have access to it, but rather it should be the heritage of mankind as a whole. The day will come when modern technology will be able to exploit the abundant natural resources that Antarctica has to offer, and Malaysia would like to see that these resources are equitably shared and benefit both rich as well as poor nations.

16. I am very much heartened by the full backing for the issue given by the Non-Aligned Movement, including Yugoslavia, which at its recent Summit urged that the matter be considered by the 38th Session of the UN General Assembly. In this, I hope that Malaysia can count on the continued support of Yugoslavia in its endeavours to make Antarctica a common heritage of mankind.

Your Excellency,

17. Yugoslavia will shortly be hosting the Sixth Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The Conference will be held at a time when the international community continues to suffer from economic recession. For the developing countries the situation is made worse by a series of protectionist measures adopted by the developed countries which continues to seriously disrupt world economic relations. The recent Non-Aligned Summit Conference in New Delhi had called on the developed countries to eliminate protectionist, restrictive and discriminatory measures against the export products of the developing countries. The Summit also recommended the adoption of measures to bring about a more equitable and adequate system of international trade for the developing countries. We hope that UNCTAD SIX in Belgrade will note and support the stands of the Non-Aligned Summit. We also hope that the plight of the commodity exporters will receive the attention of UNCTAD and support be given for the move to establish producers association in order to obtain fair prices for export commodities. The old practice of trading through exclusive consumer controlled commodity exchanges should be replaced by new marketing mechanisms which are

more fair to producers while

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

18. May I now ask you all to join me in a toast to the health and happiness of His Excellency President of the Presidency Petar Stambolic, Her Excellency Prime Minister Milka Planinc, to the Government and people of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and to the continuing close friendship between Malaysia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.