

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

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL BANQUET HOSTED IN HIS HONOUR BY HIS EXCELLENCY
GENERAL MOHAMMAD ZIA-UL-HAQ PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC
OF PAKISTAN

VENUE: PAKISTAN

DATE: 22 MAR 1984

TIME:

Bismillahir rahmanir rahim.

Your Excellency General Mohammad Zia-Ul-Haq,
President of Pakistan;
Begum Zia-Ul-Haq;
Honourable Ministers;
Excellencies;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

I would like, on behalf of my wife and members of the Malaysian delegation as well as on my own behalf, to express my heartfelt gratitude to Your Excellency and Begum Zia-Ul-Haq, the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the warm and friendly welcome and generous hospitality accorded us since our arrival in Pakistan today.

2. I would also like to take this opportunity to convey to Your Excellency and Begum Zia the warm and brotherly greetings and best wishes of their majesties the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong and the Raja Permaisuri Agong.

3. I wish at the same time to deeply thank Your Excellency, the government of Pakistan and people for having kindly conferred on me the high award of Nishan-E-Quaidiazam. This conferment together with Your Excellency's kind invitation to me to attend and participate, as the principal guest, in Pakistan's national day celebrations tomorrow, are indeed a great honour and privilege to me personally, and also to my country. These deeds by Your Excellency and the government of Pakistan symbolise beyond doubt the close and brotherly relations existing between our two countries based on our common faith, Islam, and shared ideals and aspirations. We look forward to tomorrow morning to join and share with the people of Pakistan your joy and happiness in celebrating your auspicious 37th. anniversary.

4. Your Excellency, your visit to Malaysia in 1982 has provided additional impetus to the development of our bilateral relations. Since then we have seen a number of positive developments in our relations. I hope this visit I am making will further contribute to the strengthening of the relations between our two countries.

5. Your Excellency, Malaysia and Pakistan stand on common ground in the conduct of our respective foreign policies. We have been able to cooperate closely and successfully at various international fora, particularly at the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). Both Pakistan and Malaysia are playing active roles in our respective regions to bring about regional peace and stability. As a believer in regional cooperation and proud of the success of ASEAN, Malaysia is delighted that Pakistan, subscribes to the concept as shown by its support of the South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC). Malaysia also holds in high regard Pakistan's active and consistent role in promoting cooperation and solidarity among Islamic countries. We are confident that under Your Excellency's chairmanship, the OIC committee on scientific and technical cooperation will succeed in its endeavours. We are thankful to Pakistan for being one of the first OIC countries to co-sponsor the establishment of the International Islamic University in Malaysia.

6. Your Excellency, Malaysia and Pakistan are both developing countries. As such we must strive to improve the quality of life of our peoples while at the same time developing our national resilience. But, unfortunately, we are being distracted and hampered in our endeavours by the unstable situations in our respective regions. In Kampuchea and Afghanistan, foreign military forces continue to illegally occupy these two countries in gross violation of the basic tenets of international law and openly defying the numerous calls by the international community for their speedy withdrawal. The continued Vietnamese military occupation of Kampuchea threatens the security and stability of Southeast Asia and is a serious obstacle to the early realisation of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia. The same dangerous and explosive situation also persists in Afghanistan as a result of Soviet intervention and continued military occupation of that country. Malaysia and Pakistan hold identical positions on the peaceful settlement of the Kampuchean and Afghanistan problems, namely the withdrawal of all foreign military forces, recognition of the rights of the Kampuchean and Afghan peoples to self-determination and independence free from outside interference, and the return of refugees to their homes in safety and honour. While on this subject Your Excellency, I would like to place on record Malaysia's admiration for the generous help and assistance rendered by the people and government of Pakistan to the Afghan refugees.

7. Malaysia is extremely concerned at the deteriorating situation in the Middle East. We believe that a just and durable peace in the region can only be achieved through the restitution of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which is the crux of the problem.

8. It is Malaysia's conviction that the Middle East

problem has remained unresolved because of the intransigence and continued acts of aggression by Israel. Not only has Israel defied successive United Nations resolutions calling for her withdrawal from occupied Arab territories but it has also aggravated the situation by expropriating Arab land and attempting to change the status of Jerusalem. Any relocation of embassies to Baitul Muqaddis by any nation will be tantamount to support for aggression. Malaysia vehemently condemns such irresponsible action. We also cannot exonerate the major powers from responsibility for the continuing problem. The sophisticated arms used by all the parties in the multiple conflicts in the Middle East are supplied by the big powers. And apparently no party is given sufficient arms to win decisively. Consequently death and destruction escalate without the end being anywhere in sight.

9. A solution to the Middle East conflict is possible through the line of action mapped out by the United Nations Regional Conference On The Question of Palestine in Kuala Lumpur last May and the United Nations International Conference in Geneva in August last year in which both Pakistan and Malaysia played a role. Individual countries should now cease to promote their own pet solutions but instead give their support to the United Nations and the implementation of the line of action referred to.

10. The continuing Iran-Iraq conflict remains a cause for much anguish and sadness for all Muslims and indeed to the international community. In the interest of Islamic solidarity and world peace, this tragic conflict must be brought to an end. Malaysia as a member of the OIC peace committee remains fully committed to seeking an early and peaceful solution to the conflict.

11. If the world political outlook is gloomy, the prospects for improving international economic cooperation is no less so. Developing countries, which are badly affected by the world economic recession and which are frustrated by the lack of response from the developed countries to promote a new international economic order must find new ways and means to overcome their plight without being too heavily dependant on the developed countries. This is why Malaysia is a strong proponent of South-South cooperation and sincerely believes that developing countries, like Malaysia and Pakistan, can increase trade and economic exchanges which will be mutually beneficial. A fair amount of our trade with the North can be redirected to the South without hurting any one of us. It is all really up to us to make the decision and to act.

12. I am very happy that both Malaysia and Pakistan are already engaged in a formal and continuous dialogue through our joint commission on economic and technical cooperation. Undoubtedly, the private sector has an important role to play in the process and this is the reason why I have included in my delegation some important representatives of

the Malaysian private sector, who will meet their Pakistani counterparts and hold discussions on trade and possible joint venture projects.

13. In concluding my remarks, I would like once again to thank Your Excellency and Begum Zia-Ul-Haq for this grand dinner that you have very kindly hosted in our honour tonight.

14. May I now invite all present to join me in wishing for the continued good health and happiness of the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Begum Zia-Ul-Haq, to the continued prosperity and well-being of the government and people of Pakistan, and to the close and brotherly relations between Malaysia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
Thank you.