

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

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Mr. President,

It is with special pleasure that I greet you, a distinguished son of Zambia and of Africa, as President of the General Assembly and offer you my warmest felicitations on your unanimous election. Yours is a heavy responsibility Mr. President, as you guide our work during a very difficult period for the United Nations, and I want to begin by assuring you of the fullest co-operation of the Malaysian Delegation in all your efforts because Malaysia's support for the United Nations is unstinting and unabashed.

2. It is this support, Mr. President, which brings me here twice to address this Assembly although I have been Prime Minister of my country for only three years. For far too long the United Nations has been abused, denigrated and ignored. For far too long now we have been hearing about the so-called tyranny and irresponsibility of the majority, about waste and "paper" Resolutions and double standards. We all know that the United Nations is not without fault. But in the face of ignorance and bigotry, of myths and falsehoods, we must continue to proclaim our faith in what the U.N. at its best stands for -- a world which is secure for all, just for all, prosperous for all and humane for all.

3. These were the ideals of international co-operation and justice proclaimed by the Founding Fathers of this institution -- not a world in which only the rich and the powerful make the important decisions; not a world in which small nations fight proxy wars on behalf of big nations, not a world where might is right, not a world half-rich and half-poor, half well-endowed and half-deprived. What has happened now to those ideals? We, who believe in them, want also to believe that the Founder Members of this Organisation meant what they said when they proclaimed the Charter. It is understandable that the excitements and the expectations of the dawn of 1945 will inevitably be tarnished in the cold light of experience over the last 39 years. But the sad truth is more than that.

4. For the first fifteen or twenty years of this Organisation we did not hear anything about the

disproportionate voting strength of small states -- and automatic majority -- and there was often an automatic majority. Instead we heard about the virtues of a more democratic international life as exemplified in the United Nations. What has happened to those sentiments? Were we naive to believe that those countries which loudly proclaimed such ideals in the early decades of this Organisation did indeed believe in them? What then are we to make of the constant barrage of perverse criticism, of threats and denigration which have now become the fashion in certain quarters? Is it because the United Nations cannot any longer be manipulated and manoeuvred?

5. Malaysia, for one, would like to believe otherwise. And yet we see the big powers continuing more and more to ignore and to belittle the United Nations. They have established a network of relationship outside the United Nations system to resolve world problems. They have formed their own economic clubs to which from time to time the developing countries are permitted to make their supplication. But the clubs -- like all exclusive clubs -- essentially look after the interest of its members. In the mean-time, in the economic as in the political field, the United Nations continue to be ignored. Indeed we witness something even more negative: namely the threat to withdraw from certain U.N. agencies. Unhappy about the direction and the leadership of these agencies, these threats are sometimes made under the guise of management or budgetary concerns.

6. To that I wish to respond: we, the small and the poor, also pay. What we contribute may not be much but in terms of our own budgets they are substantial -- indeed sometimes even more substantial than the contributions of the big nations. We do not like to see anyone squandering our money any more than the rich do. But what we would like to see is not savings through the destruction of the agencies but a thorough overhaul of the system to ensure that it is cost-effective and serves the agreed objectives. Undermining the agencies is definitely not the way to tackle the problem. And so, let us all say: enough of this short-sightedness. Enough of cynicism. Enough of distortions and falsehoods. As we stand on the eve of the 40th. Anniversary of the United Nations, let us first of all pledge ourselves once more to the United Nations and, in that spirit, to a practical and realistic appraisal of where we can go on from here.

7. Looking back at the past four decades, I believe that from time to time we have succeeded in acting in the true spirit of the Charter. No one can deny that the United Nations have had its successes, and it still does much valuable work often in unspectacular ways. All these have been due to the consciousness that there exists an international community and that our national interest can in fact be safeguarded in the larger context of

international interest. It is this consciousness that we must constantly cultivate.

8. The fact is that the further development of the United Nations depends, first and foremost on the attitude of the major powers. It is they, more than anyone else, who are in a position to decide the future of this Organisation. This is because the major powers cannot be ignored. The resolutions of the United Nations can be ignored -- as they have been. The weak developing countries can be ignored -- as they have constantly been. The question then is: do the major powers want the United Nations to become what it can become -- a centre for resolving conflicting interests and a catalyst for peaceful change -- or will they abandon it because they can no longer manipulate it?

9. But, of course, the responsibility is not theirs alone. The smaller nations are disillusioned at the ineffectiveness of the United Nations, which has been paralysed on so many issues because the major powers have prevented effective action. But Malaysia has always believed that just as the major powers must avoid alienating the smaller countries by their obstructive policies, so also the smaller countries must prevent the alienation of the major powers from this Organisation through the wholesale imposition of decisions by majority vote. Speaking as a representative of a small developing country, I am very conscious of the fact that a United Nations resolution which is obtained by majority voting along group, political or ideological lines will not in itself solve any problem. There is often a need for greater realism and restraint. More efforts can be made through the process of negotiation and consultation to arrive at solutions of principle, which are both realistic and practical.

10. But the principles must remain at the core of any solution. The United Nations, if it is to mean anything at all, must stand firm on principles, and there will be need for adjustments and compromise on the means, the processes, and the modalities. But there can be no compromise on principles. We, the smaller nations, cannot be blamed if we insist on that. It is hypocrisy to accuse us of being emotional or unrealistic, irresponsible or irrelevant only because those principles are now inconvenient to the major powers.

Mr. President,

11. May I turn now to another subject of equal importance to contemporary international and human relations. I refer to the misunderstanding which is so prevalent in the Western World, fed by deliberate distortions by interested parties about what is happening in the Islamic World.

12. The fact is that there is a resurgence of faith in the Islamic World as well as among other religions. Do not

allow yourselves to be manipulated to fear this resurgence or, even, by the word "fundamentalist" which has triggered so many ancient suspicions and prejudices. Yes, we are the Islamic "fundamentalists" because we believe in the fundamentals of Islam -- in peace, tolerance and justice -- and, yes, there are extremists just as there are extremists everywhere in every religion and in every phase of history. Surely no one can deny that there have been historically aberrations in all religions and it is plain prejudice or deliberate distortion to allow these aberrations to determine our perception and our judgement. Let us ask ourselves: Would it be fair to judge Christianity by the excesses of the Spanish Inquisition or by the obscenity of apartheid or Nazism? Would it be fair to judge Judaism by the perversities that political Zionism represents?

13. The answer is self-evident. The current revolution in Islam deserves to be judged fairly and objectively. I do not deny that violence and injustice and much which is against universal good values, have been perpetrated in the name of Islam. But the concentration on these aspects which, I repeat, are typical aberrations in any historical movement, to the exclusion of all others which are true and good, does harm to the world. It leads to misunderstanding, fuels suspicions and reinforces prejudices to the detriment of us all.

14. And yet there are some who for their own racist reasons, are only too prone to highlight and gloat over every excess, real or imagined, which they can focus upon. If all the money, time and energy spent on distorting what is going on in the Islamic world is spent instead on a careful and objective understanding of one of the most important developments in the contemporary world, how much better we would all be! The great liberation movements after the Second World War could only be understood when people knew that Gandhi was not 'a half-naked fakir', or Kenyatta a representative of the forces of evil and darkness, or Nasser an upstart, irresponsible trouble-maker. Similarly what is happening in the Islamic world today must be understood as a movement which seeks to consolidate political freedom, economic justice and cultural identity; a catalogue of values which everyone, if he is to be true to any notion of decency and civility, must surely support.

15. It is not my purpose in these remarks to place the current Islamic resurgence in its historical context. There is a long and turbulent history of relations between Islam and the West, during which many prejudices became ingrained. What is more tragic is that these are now being revived and fanned and exploited by the Zionists to serve political ends. The great peoples of the Book -- Jews, Christians and Muslims -- have much in common with each other, have contributed much to human civilisation and have, surely, much more to contribute. Why is it, then, that we should allow one of the most significant movements of our times --

the resurgence of Islam -- to be wilfully misrepresented and misunderstood? Who stands to gain from such misunderstanding? Why cannot we instead turn to each other and learn from one another, from our respective historical experiences, from our dreams and hopes and fears. Let us find charity in our hearts, let Christians and Jews and agnostics alike find charity in their hearts -- to recognise what is going on in the Islamic world for what it really is, a search for spiritual succour in a world that is confused and troubled. Let us be rid of hatred, of the anti-Islam propaganda of bitterness and prejudice that the Zionists continue to spew.

16. I appeal therefore for understanding between Jews, Christians and Muslims. Many Muslims today are disillusioned and shocked over what they regard as contemporary aberrations in the Judeo-Christian traditions -- and this has resulted in a resurgence of Islamic orthodoxy and extremism. The Zionist-inspired Western reaction to this Islamic resurgence as well as its aberrations, of intolerance and self-righteousness has further increased the separation and antagonism between the West and the Islamic World.

17. It is time that we -- all of us -- put a stop to this. The contemporary aberrations in the Judeo-Christian tradition and likewise the contemporary aberrations within the Islamic tradition in a few instances must not be allowed to obscure their fundamental virtues. Let us study each other's true teachings. Let us be true to those teachings. God willing, the great understanding that this will generate will help Jews and Christians and Muslims alike to contribute to, first of all, peace in the Middle East, and to greater understanding in the world. It will at the very least stop the machinations of those with selfish and narrow racist ends who are seeking to exploit ignorance and suspicion and prejudice. It will be a development of historic significance.

Mr. President,

18. I would like to turn now to economic issues, and here my theme is consistency and fairness.

19. For a long time, the banner of free trade was held high and the colonies of the metropolitan powers were vigorously taught the virtues of free trade. At that time, and for years after our independence, we could not export anything except primary commodities, and our markets -- true to the lessons we had been taught -- were open to imports of manufactured goods from the industrialised countries. However, now that we ourselves have learned the trick of manufacturing and of exporting an insignificant number of goods, what has happened to that proud banner of free trade? It flies limply or at half-mast in the industrialised countries. We see quotas and other restrictions, so-called voluntary restraints and other threats and pressures. We

even see our industrialisation policies which seek to attract foreign investments by such devices as export incentives, preferential financing and so on being challenged. We also see, to our surprise, labour unions in industrialised countries which in the days of empire had not been in the least concerned about the lot of our workers -- who were then certainly exploited -- have suddenly become champions of our workers, urging them to demand for higher wages and improved working conditions, even though our workers have already gained better treatment since independence. We wonder why this unusual concern? Is it coincidental that the result of the concern is less competitiveness of our products?

20. You will forgive us, therefore, if in the face of all this, we are a little cynical about the principles of free trade which you have been preaching and about the interest of your labour unions in the welfare of our workers. So I say: do not just preach free trade, practise it. Do not be so presumptuous as to think that you know better than our labour leaders on how to look after the interest of our workers. We can compete with you freely and fairly in certain areas. These are usually low technology goods which in any event you, who are much higher up on the industrial scale, can best leave to us so that in turn we can import those higher-technology goods which you produce. In this way we can all mutually fuel international trade which is an essential engine of growth and the only real solution to our poverty problem.
Mr. President,

21. I want to turn to another area in which the comfortable and the rich in the industrialised countries still have the colonial mentality of wanting to lead us by the hand. During colonial times, much of our forests was cleared for timber and for planting rubber, palm-oil, tea, sugar, coffee and so on. Little concern was then expressed about the environment. Now as we seek to open up our lands for modern farming, for the generation of power and for industrialisation, a whole host of environmentalists from the industrialised countries have descended upon us to agitate our people about preserving the natural beauty of our tropical forests and so on. Certainly, we want to preserve our forests. Certainly we want to maintain our clean atmosphere. But make no mistake: it will not be at the expense of the living conditions of our people. We will not accept a situation where our rural people live in poverty and misery so that the rich, when they come by, can say "what unspoilt beauty", then tip the "happy" native children 10 cents for posing in front of a thatched hut, and then go their comfortable way. Preserving the environment requires money which we will not have unless we develop. We fully intend to develop and it is we, and we alone, who will make the judgement about environmental standards and about the preservation of our natural beauty which we, surely, more than anyone else have an interest in preserving. Help

the poor countries to develop economically and the environment will be taken care of. Being poor in a beautiful environment does not mitigate poverty.

22. While on the subject of environment, I want to draw attention to yet another imposition on certain poor countries. I refer to pollution at sea, specifically pollution in the straits which are regarded as international shipping routes.

23. More specifically still, I want to refer to Malaysia's experience in the Straits of Malacca. In the days when ships were not so numerous or so huge, their passage through the narrow straits posed little problem to the littoral states. But now hundreds of these behemoths filled with all kinds of goods including dangerous chemicals and petroleum clogged the straits. Every now and then they collide with each other, spilling their contents into the sea. While tankers no longer clean their holds in the narrow waters, other ships still do. There is still a considerable amount of rubbish that is being discarded into the sea. The nett result is a filthy straits with patches of oil, pieces of paper, plastic and other rubbish. Eventually all these land on our shores, making them equally filthy.

24. In the face of these developments, the equipment and boats which Malaysia maintains to clean oil spillage at considerable cost to ourselves are no longer enough. Now we have to actively consider sweeping the sea of the wastes and rubbish thrown or flushed out of ships. I believe that in the circumstances we are right to ask that the maritime nations and the shipping firms, which obviously benefit from using the straits, should help to maintain the facilities for keeping the waters clean. I have no specific formula in mind but I am convinced that the international agencies concerned must examine and make necessary provisions for keeping the waters clean. The developing countries which face these straits should not be further burdened with having to equip and maintain costly facilities for dealing with oil spills and the extensive damage to fishing, sometime for years. Nor should their polluted beach resorts from which they earn a few tourist dollars be cleaned entirely at their own expense. The ships generally belong to the rich and they must defray the cost at least partially.

Mr. President,

25. I have in these remarks focussed on a number of broad issues affecting the United Nations, the Islamic world and the developing countries. However, I shall be failing in my duty in this general statement if I do not also touch upon certain other issues which are pertinent as Malaysia looks at current developments in the world.

26. Before doing so, however, may I take this opportunity, first of all, to express the appreciation of my Delegation to the outgoing President who has carried out his tasks so admirably during the 38th Session of the General Assembly.

27. I would also wish to express from this forum, on behalf of the Government and the people of Malaysia, our warmest welcome and felicitations to the Delegation of Brunei Darussalam as it takes its seat in the United Nations -- an event which has given us very special pleasure. Brunei Darussalam is an adjoining neighbour of Malaysia and a fellow member of ASEAN. Since 7th January this year, when Brunei Darussalam formally joined ASEAN as a full member, we have worked closely and amicably with her and we know that she will have many important and serious contributions to the work of this organisation. Malaysia looks forward to a future of close and fruitful collaboration with Brunei Darussalam.

Mr. President,

28. As we survey developments around the globe, we cannot but be filled by a sense of foreboding at the downward spiral of international understanding, of outrage at so much blatant injustice and even, alas, of cynicism at the wide gap between professions of principles and their practice.

29. Take the case of Palestine, which has been referred to for too long as an Arab-Israeli conflict. This is a deliberate misnomer, because the conflict is in essence and in reality an Israeli-Palestine conflict, the root of which is the adamant denial by Israel of Palestinian nationhood. To all those who insist on direct talks between the parties concerned, I ask: who are the parties but the Israelis and the Palestinians? To all those who talk of democracy, freedom, self-determination and all the other lofty principles of justice and human rights, I ask: in the name of what can the people of Palestine be denied their right to their own independent homeland? Is it in the name of Israel's security, which can be assured, in any event, in many other ways? Can this be seriously argued by countries who at the same time are vociferous in condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea? No. The fact is that the Palestinians are being denied their freedom because Israel wants it so and she has the support of a powerful ally to enforce her will. Let us avoid debating-points. Let us avoid dredging minutiae of history. This is the basic issue. Despite the clear will of the international community and the undeniable rights of the Palestinians, Israel adamantly and violently opposes Palestinian freedom. If another state had done this, it would be rightly condemned -- as Israel is by some -- and rightly repudiated -- as Israel is not -- because of her powerful ally. And yet Israel and her friends attempt to portray her as the victim, the injured innocent!.

30. Sometimes it is also said that the Palestinians or more specifically the P.L.O., must first of all recognise Israel before -- and let us bear this in mind -- not before

Palestinian independence can be accepted, but before the P.L.O. can be allowed to take part in any discussion on Palestine's future: an explicit recognition of Israel by the P.L.O in return for which the P.L.O. will be allowed an undefined seat in undefined negotiations about an undefined future for Palestine. This is insisted upon: never mind about the Fez Resolution of the Arab Heads of State, never mind about the Resolution of the U.N. Conference on Palestine, whose provisions about the security of all States in the Middle East are clear for all who wish to see. And yet, by the same token, have these supporters of Israel asked Israel for an explicit recognition of the P.L.O and for Palestinian freedom? The answer is -- no. Or even for an implicit recognition? Again, no. And, what is more, Israel has not only neither explicitly nor even implicitly recognised the P.L.O and Palestinian independence, she has quite explicitly and categorically rejected any possibility of dealing with the P.L.O. or of any prospect of Palestinian independence. In these circumstances, those who still point the finger of responsibility at the P.L.O. cannot expect us to take them seriously. They have no doubt their own reasons for what they do but they cannot expect us to believe that it is remotely connected with any principle of democracy, justice or human right.

31. As to Southern Africa, Mr. President, how can we adequately express our outrage at the manner in which the treated? At the risk of being misunderstood I venture to suggest that if white people are treated by a black Government or any Government for that matter, in the way that the black people in South Africa are being treated the entire world would rise up and take decisive action. And yet what do we see? Certain countries press into service all manner of arguments under sophisticated labels such as constructive engagement. They appeal for patience, they draw attention to practical realities, and, in the case of Namibia, they even advance the almost incredible and totally irrelevant concept of "linkage" -- arguments which they themselves would not tolerate for one moment if the victims of this monstrosity that apartheid and the racist regime represents were whites. I urge these Governments to leap beyond oblique intellectualizing, beyond calculations of economics or power politics to understand that what is at stake is a moral issue: how can you support a Government whose philosophy is immoral and whose methods are brutal and cruel? How can you justify denying to the black people of South Africa a life of freedom and decency in their own land? History will judge you, and do not be outraged, that in the mean-time, we are judging you too.

32. Looking elsewhere in the world, Mr. President, it is ironic to see in Afghanistan the contrast between

professions of lofty principles and actual practice. In the name of good-neighbourliness and fraternal relations, a vicious and bloody war is being inflicted on the people of Afghanistan. This violation, like any other violation of the independence and territorial integrity of a sovereign nation, must be resisted. Malaysia has therefore supported and will continue to support, in whatever practical way we can, the struggle of the valiant Afghan people for their freedom and honour. That is why we have given facilities in Kuala Lumpur for the Mujahedeen freedom fighters to have an office. That is why we continue to support the diplomatic efforts of the Secretary-General to seek a political solution to this problem. Faced with the might of stronger neighbours, small weak states need to know that the United Nations will not allow them to be trodden over by the boots of invading armies. Everything else must depend on this fundamental right to freedom and sovereignty.

33. Nearer to us in Malaysia, we see the same cynical manipulation of words such as self-determination and fraternal assistance and human rights in order to justify what cannot be justified, namely the Vietnamese invasion and continuing occupation of Kampuchea. The ASEAN countries which had offered a hand of friendship and cooperation to Vietnam at the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, have opposed and will continue to oppose this blatant violation of Kampuchea's independence and territorial integrity. The situation is ironic because Vietnam which once earned the high admiration of many for standing up in defiance and, finally, in triumph against overwhelming odds to uphold the right of the Vietnamese people to their freedom in their own homeland is committing now exactly what it had accused its adversaries of attempting to do: namely the imposition of its will by armed might against a smaller and weaker country. This tragic irony is compounded by the fact that Vietnam's ASEAN neighbours have categorically shown that they are fully ready to meet Vietnam's legitimate security interest. A further irony is that the ASEAN countries in 1971 had agreed to the concept of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia and it is Vietnam's continued occupation of Kampuchea which is the obstacle to the realisation of a conflict-free neutral area untroubled by the rivalries of the major powers, which Vietnam also claims to be its objectives.

34. The choice between conflict and co-operation is Vietnam's. From the contacts and meetings, both public and private, that she has had with individual ASEAN countries, Vietnam knows that ASEAN is flexible and sincere in our wish to bring the present conflict to an end, but we cannot and will not compromise on the right of the Kampuchean people to choose their own form of Government free from any external coercion. We will stay the course. The position we have taken is not only in conformity with United Nations principles and relevant resolutions but it offers a fair and honourable exit for Vietnam. It is now up to Vietnam to

decide.

Mr. President,

35. I would like to turn now to the subject of Antarctica, to which, I feel compelled to refer as Malaysia was one of the co-sponsors of this item at the last General Assembly.

36. As we await the Secretary-General's study and the subsequent debate on this subject later during this session, I want to emphasise most of all that Malaysia approaches the forthcoming discussions with an open mind and with the hope that, by listening carefully to each other's concerns and views, we shall all be able to move forward together on this issue.

37. I also want to stress that Malaysia had raised this subject in a constructive spirit -- to build not to destroy. We do not dispute the good that the present Antarctica Treaty System has done. But what we are seeking to build is a broader basis and a firmer foundation for international co-operation in Antarctica which would be acceptable to, and in the interest of, the international community as a whole and which would thus ensure the long-term stability and effectiveness of the system. We have an open mind as to how that can best be brought about. Of course we have some ideas of our own: in the particular circumstances of Antarctica -- a large land-mass occupying some 1/10th of the globe's land surface, situated in a strategic part of the world, with a fragile eco-system and possessing rich marine and, possibly, mineral resources, a part of the world, moreover, with no settled inhabitants and where, indisputably, there is no recognition of the claims to sovereignty except between the seven claimants -- we believe that there is at least a strong case for Antarctica to be in one way or another the common heritage of Mankind.

38. But we are aware that there are practical and legal realities -- as well as a great deal of national sensitivities -- which cannot simply be swept aside. The United Nations has only begun to consider this question of Antarctica and all of us will therefore need to proceed cautiously and carefully. Hence, whatever Malaysia's views may be, we will approach the forthcoming discussions with an open mind and a sensitivity to the concerns, views and interests of other Member-States. We earnestly urge a similar approach by all concerned. It is in that spirit that we have proposed the establishment of a Special Committee on Antarctica. It can be expected that the discussions on Antarctica which will take place later during this session will not be conclusive. Such a Committee should build upon the discussion at the General Assembly and examine the subject in greater depth so as to arrive at a consensus on the objectives of a regime in Antarctica and the machinery to achieve such an objective.

Mr. President,

39. One matter that needs constant serious attention is the drug problem. As we are aware the drug problem is international or global in character and knows no national boundaries. Thus no country can handle this problem single-handed. It requires a serious and concerted effort at the international level by all countries and international agencies concerned.

40. The present cooperation at the international level has not achieved much. There are many reasons for this, of which the lack of commitment and coordination among the various countries is a major factor. This lack of cooperation is due in part to the conflict of interest which may be commercial and economic in nature. It is also observed that some countries are reluctant to implement the UN decisions relating to the prevention and control of narcotic drugs due to various factors including the lack of political will. This could also be because many countries do not consider their drug problems as serious, partly because of their outlook and partly because their problems are small.

41. It should be noted that the drug problem not only brings with it criminal implications, but if left unchecked can weaken and eventually destroy the social and cultural fabrics of our societies. It also has security ramifications that can threaten the very survival of a nation. It is for this reason that Malaysia has legislated harsh laws to curb the drug menace. Other countries may take exceptions to these laws but the best way they can help stop the harsh sentences on drug traffickers is by cooperating in the prevention of drug production and trafficking. We appeal to the world community to truly internationalise the prevention of drug trafficking.

Mr. President,

42. I have in these remarks expressed my views openly and frankly. I do so because I take the United Nations seriously and I do not believe that these general debates at each Assembly should be an exercise in platitude or politeness. We must mean what we say, and say what we mean. I have tried to do that, although in doing so I may have raised some uncomfortable feelings. Only frankness, an open mind, a willingness to work hard on the details of issues and to accommodate other views and, above all, a firm commitment to the vision of the Charter -- a world of peace, freedom, justice and human dignity -- will see us through the critical days that are upon us now. It is in that spirit that the Malaysian Government approaches its duties at, and to, the United Nations.

