

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

EVENT: A DINNER IN HONOUR OF H.E. MR. JAVIER PEREZ DE CUELLAR,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

VENUE: SRI PERDANA, KUALA LUMPUR

DATE: 02 FEB 1985

TIME:

Your Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar,
Secretary General of the United Nations;
Madam de Cuellar;
Honourable Ministers;
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Your Excellency, and to Madam de Cuellar, on the occasion of Your Excellency's official visit to Malaysia. I have already had the pleasure of meeting Your Excellency in New York when I addressed the United Nations General Assembly in 1982 and recently in October 1984. It is, therefore, an honour and pleasure for me to be able to play host to Your Excellency during your three-day visit to Malaysia. As this is Your Excellency's first official visit to Malaysia, we sincerely hope that your stay here, albeit a very brief one, will leave a pleasant imprint on your mind that will constantly urge you to make more visits to Malaysia.

2. The dinner that I host tonight in Your Excellency's honour is the expression and appreciation of Your Excellency's untiring efforts to promote peace and stability in the world in line with the principles of the UN Charter. We are indeed honoured to be graced tonight by the presence of an illustrious son of Peru, whose wide experience as a diplomat and an international civil servant has served him well in his present office and whose dedication to the cause of world peace, international understanding and cooperation and the promotion of harmonious relations between nations is deservedly acknowledged and esteemed by all member states of the United Nations. As Head of the Community of Nations, Your Excellency's task is by no means an easy one, faced as you are by a deterioration in the world situation and an array of international problems whose early solution through peaceful negotiations remain Your Excellency's main preoccupation. That Your Excellency has been able to find the time to extricate yourself from your many responsibilities in New York to acquaint yourself at first hand with the problems of our region and to personally meet and discuss with leaders of the region is a matter of much

gratification to us and, I am sure, to the peoples of Southeast Asia.

3. Mr. Secretary General, your visit to Southeast Asia is both timely and significant from the point of view of regional peace and stability. Your Excellency's special interest in seeking an early political solution to the Kampuchean problem brings fresh hope to ASEAN's own efforts to solve a problem which has troubled us for six years now. Vietnam has time and again demonstrated its lack of commitment to the principles of the Charter by its stubborn refusal to heed the call by the international community for the total withdrawal of its forces from Kampuchea. Its current dry-season offensive along the Thai-Kampuchean border which have resulted in untold misery and sufferings to the tens of thousands of Kampuchean refugees, once again underlined that country's single-minded pursuit of a military solution and belie its protestations of peaceful intentions and desire to seek a negotiated settlement of the problem.

4. Mr. Secretary General, we have had this morning a useful and stimulating exchange of views on the outcome of your recent round of discussions with Thai and Vietnamese leaders on the Kampuchean problem prior to your visit to Malaysia. I am convinced that these negotiations will give impetus to current efforts to seek a comprehensive political solution to Kampuchea and that ASEAN can look to some forward movement. It is imperative that the United Nations continue to be seized with this problem in order to prevent a further escalation of the conflict and the involvement of super powers, and to eventually restore peace and stability in the region so that ASEAN can set about realising its long cherished dream of establishing a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia.

5. Moving nearer home, I would like to draw Your Excellency's attention to another security problem which we are facing in Malaysia. I am referring to the problem of drug abuse which is currently plaguing the youth of our country. In Malaysia the drug problem manifests itself as a political and security problem as we recognise that drugs, by enslaving our youth, can undermine the social fabric and productive capability of the nation and thus weaken our economic well-being and national resilience. In view of this grave danger, the Government has not hesitated to impose very severe penalties on drug traffickers and offenders. We make no apologies to anyone for this.

6. Owing to your very tight schedule in Malaysia, it will not be possible for Your Excellency to take a closer look at the work of some of our agencies in combatting drug abuse. This notwithstanding, we hope that Your Excellency will understand the seriousness with which we in Malaysia view the drug problem. We hope Your Excellency will support and promote our efforts at the UN to obtain wider acceptance by

the international community of our views on drug abuse and the need for worldwide cooperation in the eradication of this menace. It is well to remember that much of today's violence as well as petty crimes are linked to the abuse of drugs.

7. Mr. Secretary General, I have no intention of turning my dinner speech into another General Assembly plenary statement by bringing up substantive issues. My intention is merely to draw Your Excellency's attention to some of our security problems as I am aware that Your Excellency too is deeply committed to solving another security issue which affects the world in general - that of nuclear-weapon proliferation and the possible outbreak of a nuclear war. We cannot but identify ourselves with the contents of Your Excellency's statement at the General Assembly last year that a nuclear war is not winnable but would "fall equally with grim justice on the initiator and the victim alike."

8. This year, the United Nations will celebrate its 40th Anniversary. It will commemorate a historic event four decades ago when the United Nations was born. Ironically, this occasion also celebrates the 40th Anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Relations between nations have evolved by leaps and bounds since then, but so has the danger of nuclear war that now threatens us. The 40th Anniversary of the UN is, therefore, a sobering opportunity for all nations alike to reflect on security, past and present, and to reiterate our commitment to supporting the United Nations and its responsibility as the custodian of world peace and stability.

9. I would like to take this opportunity to pledge Malaysia's unwavering support for the UN and our continuing commitment to contribute to the achievement of its goals and objectives. I would also like to express Malaysia's deep appreciation for the contribution made by the UN agencies in Malaysia in assisting the development and social programmes of the country.

10. Your Excellency, it remains for me to express once again our deep appreciation that you are able to visit Malaysia in spite of your preoccupation with so many other pressing problems. We would like to wish you a pleasant and successful tour of the Asia-Pacific region and that your endeavours for the sake of peace will be rewarded by success.

11. May I now invite those present here tonight to join my wife and I in a toast to the good health and well-being of His Excellency and Madam de Cuellar.

