

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

EVENT: AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER GIVEN BY HIS EXCELLENCY,  
KAARE WILLOCH PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY

VENUE: OSLO, NORWAY

DATE: 22 APR 1985

TIME:

Your Excellency Kaare Willoch,  
Prime Minister of Norway;  
Distinguished Guests;  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the members of my delegation, I would like first of all to thank you, the Government and the people of Norway for the warm and friendly welcome and generous hospitality accorded to us since our arrival here. I have looked forward to this visit to your beautiful country. I would also like to thank you for the kind remarks which you have just made.

2. The active bilateral relations between Malaysia and Norway is a fairly recent development. In the past, we have not had much contact with each other, except in the United Nations and other international fora, when we have cooperated over issues of common concern to us, and in the field of trade. Nevertheless, most of us in Malaysia do know about Norway and its fjords, its famous seafarers, the Vikings, and its "midnight sun", a phenomenon that is inconceivable to us since we come from the tropics. Your myths and legends, coupled with tales of the exploits of the Vikings, bring forth to mind images of a romantic land of sea, snow and mountains.

3. Thus you can see that while for many of us this would be our first visit to Norway, it is not a country that is completely unfamiliar to us. We therefore feel that we are among friends here. To my mind, it is a good way and a good reason to strengthen our bilateral relations. I observe also that there are many similarities between Malaysia and Norway. Both are parliamentary democracies. Both countries are about the same in area and with relatively small populations. Our two countries are also fortunate to have considerable natural resources, the most important of which is petroleum. In the political field, we each place major importance to developing close regional cooperation with our immediate neighbours. I am certain you will agree with me that such similarities form the firm basis for good bilateral relations between our two countries.

4. The cooperation between Malaysia and Norway is most

active in commerce and in the economic field. The volume of our bilateral trade, while still small, is steadily increasing. It is my belief, however, that the best potential for cooperation between our two countries lie in the fields where Norwegian technology can usefully combine with Malaysian resources to establish joint projects for our mutual benefit. Malaysia is now entering a stage in her industrial growth where emphasis is being placed on the development of heavy industries as well as high precision engineering, electronic and electrical industries. We, therefore, welcome Norwegian interest to participate in the areas that would be most beneficial for both countries. As you are aware, I have brought with me the representatives of Malaysia's leading industries and business houses. I am certain that they will take this opportunity to establish contacts with their Norwegian colleagues.

5. On global affairs, both Malaysia and Norway share basically similar perceptions on many international issues, with strong adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We in Malaysia are aware of Norway's active role in establishing the United Nations Organisation. Your country's participation and contributions to that world body goes further than most countries. Norway's firm belief in the United Nations as a guarantor for peace and security of all states is evidenced by the material and financial support for the peace-keeping operations of the world organisation. Such unselfish contributions towards the United Nations as Norway has given, strengthens the organisation and provides an example which other nations can emulate.

Your Excellency,

6. One of the central tenets of Malaysia's foreign policy is her commitment to regional cooperation with her neighbours, as manifested in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN. Since its inception in 1967, ASEAN has successfully developed close regional cooperation among the members. I am glad to say that our Association has been growing from strength to strength with close cooperation in many different fields.

7. In this connection, Norway being a member of the Nordic Group of States also developed close regional cooperation and integration in many fields. The coordination of policies between the Nordic States through this Nordic Cooperation is indeed advanced. You have utilised your common background of language and culture to your best advantage and have managed to form a closely-knit group in such diverse fields as parliamentary and legislative cooperation, labour market, travel across Nordic frontiers, custom regulations, trade cooperation and regional developments. The scope of Nordic Cooperation is too numerous that it suffices for me to remark that these collaborations among the Nordic countries are an achievement and an outstanding example of the extent to which regional

cooperation can be fostered.

8. As for Malaysia and her ASEAN partners, our cherished goal in regional cooperation is to establish a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in our region of Southeast Asia, free from any foreign interference. It is important for us to achieve peace and stability in our region so that our efforts can be directed towards achieving rapid growth and development for our respective countries and our peoples. However, the conflict in Kampuchea and the continued presence of foreign military forces in that unfortunate country form the biggest threat to regional peace and stability. It threatens all of us in the region with the unwanted possibility of big power interference in our affairs. Malaysia therefore looks to her friends for their continued support to resolve the Kampuchean issue speedily in accordance with the declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea and other relevant United Nations resolutions that have been endorsed by the international community. We are appreciative of Norway's support for our endeavour to find a political solution to the Kampuchean problem. We are gratified that Norway has also given considerable aid to the Kampuchean refugees to alleviate their plight.

9. Just as the question of peace and security is important to us in Southeast Asia, we appreciate that it is equally important to Norway to work for detente and stability in Europe. Malaysia has followed closely the various talks and negotiations on questions of security and arms reductions that are ongoing in Europe. We are aware that Norway plays an active role in the question of arms reduction. This issue is of concern not just to the superpowers and the countries in Europe, but to the whole world as well, because they have such far-reaching consequences. Although realism dictates that the decision to disarm resides mainly in the hands of big powers, Malaysia does not believe that the rest of the world should resign their respective roles in the matter of disarmament. In Malaysia's view all countries should join together in the creation of conditions in which disarmament would be in the natural order of things.

Your Excellency,

10. Another area of concern to Malaysia is the question of Antarctica. It is the last unsettled frontier in the world and it remains our view that all Mankind has a legitimate interest in the continent. Antarctica should not be the exclusive preserve of only a few nations. Malaysia is ready to cooperate with the member states of the Antarctica Treaty with a view to finding an acceptable system wherein all nations may cooperate to preserve that vast cold continent and sustain its environment until such time when exploitation of its resources can be done without pollution and damaging the ecological system.

Your Excellency,

11. Allow me once again to say how appreciative my delegation and I are for this opportunity to visit your country and for the hospitality extended to us.

12. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I now propose a toast to the good health of our host His Excellency Kaare Willoch, the Prime Minister of Norway, and to the continuing and everlasting friendship between Malaysia and Norway.