

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

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL DINNER IN HONOUR OF HER EXCELLENCY MILKA PLANINC,
PRIME MINISTER OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

VENUE: SRI PERDANA

DATE: 11 MAR 1985

TIME:

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

I am pleased to have this opportunity to extend to Your Excellency, Mr. Planinc, and members of your delegation our warmest welcome to Malaysia. It is my sincere hope that you will have a pleasant and enjoyable stay in Malaysia. I am reminded of the kind hospitality accorded to me and my wife by the Government and people of Yugoslavia during our visit to your country in May, 1983. It was a most interesting and memorable visit.

2. My visit to your country gave me the opportunity to have an extensive exchange of views on both bilateral and international issues. Your Excellency's presence in Kuala Lumpur provides us with yet another opportunity to continue the meeting we have had in Belgrade in May 1983.

3. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and Yugoslavia in 1967, our relations have over the years progressed smoothly and satisfactorily. Economic cooperation and trade ties between our two countries have been intensified after my visit to Belgrade. The Joint Commission set up under the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement between Malaysia and Yugoslavia has had its second session at Kuala Lumpur in November last year where our two countries had identified new projects for cooperation.

While there is already meaningful cooperation between our two governments, firms in Yugoslavia and Malaysia too should seize the opportunities offered in the fields of trade, joint ventures, and investment. I am happy to note that an Exhibition and Seminar on Yugoslav Technology and Industry is to be organised by Your Excellency's government in Kuala Lumpur in April this year. I am confident this would create a greater awareness of Yugoslav products and technology among our people, especially the business community.

Your Excellency,

4. Our relations have always been based on the strict

adherence to the principles of respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs and the rejection of the use of force in the settlement of disputes. Our policy of non-alignment has reinforced the foundation of our relations.

5. Malaysia and Yugoslavia are both members of the Non-Aligned Movement. We share similar hopes and aspirations for a free, peaceful and progressive world society that is not allied to any power blocs. We are both committed to the upholding of world peace, justice and cooperation, the elimination of apartheid, and all forms of foreign domination. In the past two decades, the Non-Aligned Movement has played an influential role in international affairs and has taken a number of important initiatives in the economic field with the ultimate objective of bringing about a more just and equitable New International Economic Order. Malaysia is, however, concerned that lately the Movement has shown a tendency to move towards radicalism and covert alignment. This has been one of our main concerns at the last Non-Aligned Summit in New Delhi. I am glad that our two countries share the same concern and have voiced our strong desire to see the Movement brought back on to its original objectives and principles.

6. Malaysia is confident that Yugoslavia, as one of the most respected founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement, will do her utmost to ensure that the original guiding principles of the Movement shall remain. It is only by pursuing a truly non-aligned course can the credibility of the Movement be maintained. The positive role played by Yugoslavia, especially by the late President Tito, towards the progress, development, and unity of the Movement will always be acknowledged and cherished by all member countries.

Your Excellency,

7. The situation in Kampuchea, where foreign troops continue to occupy the country, remains a matter of great concern to Malaysia and her ASEAN partners. In this regard we are mindful of the enduring support of Your Excellency's Government in our quest to achieve a political settlement to the problem. We are appreciative of the endorsement of the Yugoslav Government of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea under the Presidency of His Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk. The need for a secure and guaranteed peace in Southeast Asia becomes all the more imperative because of the intensification of military action lately. The national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kampuchea has been violated with impunity resulting in a threat to peace and stability of our region.

8. As Your Excellency is aware Malaysia has given priority to regional cooperation as manifested by our membership in ASEAN. Within the ambit of Asean cooperation, Malaysia has proposed the establishment of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and

Neutrality or ZOPFAN in Southeast Asia, free from any form or manner of external interference. Malaysia's proposal of ZOPFAN, is similar to your Government's role in urging the implementation of the conclusions in the Final Document of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and lasting peace and security in the world.

9. Malaysia shares Yugoslavia's concern over the question of increased armaments in Europe that not only poses a danger to peace and security to the continent but also to the world. While enormous amounts of money and resources are channelled towards the development and production of both conventional and nuclear weapons, poverty and hunger still afflict hundreds of millions of the world's population. All states should renew their commitment towards a comprehensive programme of general disarmament.

10. Concerned as we are with issues directly affecting our regions, Malaysia has not and will not remain apathetic to threats to world peace emanating from other parts of the world. The plight of the Palestinian people comes immediately to mind. Long since uprooted from their own homeland, the Palestinian people have experienced untold sufferings and incalculable hardships for some 40 years. But that has not deterred them from pursuing their struggle to recover their just and legitimate rights so that they may have a home they can call their own. Malaysia will continue to support the Palestinian people for we believe no people must allow their sovereignty, their honour and their basic rights to be trampled upon.

11. The situation in Afghanistan too remains unchanged. Afghanistan, a small non-aligned Islamic country, is being continuously subjected to foreign military occupation and aggression, in flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and Resolutions as well as those of the Non-Aligned Movement. We condemn the occupation of Afghanistan and call upon the international community and the UN to continue to exert serious efforts to obtain the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and for the Afghan people to regain their independence and sovereignty free from foreign interference and coercion. In this regard we support all efforts, especially that of the United Nations Secretary-General, to achieve a political solution based on the principles contained in the United Nations Resolution on Afghanistan.

12. The continuing war between Iran and Iraq, two members of the Non-Aligned Movement, causes profound anguish to the Movement. The conflict has serious and wider implications including that of foreign intervention. Malaysia will continue to support efforts to bring peace to that region and will play an active role in this regard.

13. Another area of concern to my Government is Antarctica. It is my Government's view that the whole world has a legitimate right to that continent. Its location, vastness,

fragile eco-system, rich marine and possibly mineral resources have a direct significance for international peace and security, economy, environment, scientific research and so on. These are matters of global interest. In this regard we are appreciative of Yugoslavia's support on the issue of Antarctica at the Non-Aligned Summit and at the UN. I wish to express the hope that as a leader in the non-aligned group of nations, Yugoslavia will play a positive role in promoting greater international cooperation in ensuring that Antarctica is governed and managed in the interest of all Mankind.

14. The economic recession that is besetting the world shows no sign of an early recovery. The high interest rates, the high level of foreign debt coupled with the difficulty in market access, have all made it more difficult for the developing countries to cope with the crisis. Despite the adverse situation affecting the developing countries and the monumental tasks ahead, the developed countries continue to adopt economic and trade policies that seriously disrupt world economic relations. Malaysia feels that the various trade barriers are not only restricting the flow of trade but are deliberately erected to protect their own inefficient industries in face of the healthy competition from the products of developing countries. These steps are contrary to their pronouncements on free trade. Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. May I now invite you all to join me in a toast to Her Excellency Milka Planinc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to the Government and people of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to the close and friendly relations between our two countries. Thank you.