

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

EVENT: THE DINNER GIVEN BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. FRED SINOWATZ,
FEDERAL CHANCELLOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA, IN VIENNA

VENUE: VIENNA, AUSTRIA

DATE: 12 APR 1985

TIME:

Your Excellency Dr. Fred Sinowatz,
Federal Chancellor of the
Republic of Austria;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the members of my Delegation, I would like to thank you for the warm and friendly welcome extended to us since our arrival in Austria. We are happy and honoured to be here in your beautiful country, which is so rich in history and culture. I would also like to thank you for the kind words you have expressed just now.

2. I am gratified that relations between Malaysia and Austria have been characterised by much warmth and understanding. The fruitful discussions we both had, points to our commitment to further enhance bilateral relations between Malaysia and Austria for our mutual benefit. The fact that we are able to reach an understanding so readily on all the issues we discussed, indicates the goodwill and the desire between our two countries to cooperate further for the common good of our peoples.

3. There are tremendous opportunities and potentials for greater cooperation between Malaysia and Austria in a variety of fields, particularly in trade and investment. During the course of my programme today, I had the opportunity to address the Austrian business community. I am pleased to observe the great interest on the Austrian side as well as from the Malaysian private sector delegation to explore the possibilities for mutual cooperation. I am sure that both sides will take full advantage of the occasion of our visit to establish contacts and contribute towards strengthening our bilateral relations.

4. In our efforts to attain greater economic development and industrial progress, we in Malaysia attach great importance to trade and investment. Like Austria, Malaysia places emphasis on an export-oriented economy. Malaysia has so far been fairly successful in the effort to modernise, but we are ever aware that we need to diversify our markets and to acquire specialised knowledge and expertise in many

fields. We, therefore, encourage foreign participation in our development efforts through liberal terms for investment and attractive business opportunities. The signing of the Investment Guarantee Agreement is a further demonstration of the mutual readiness of both countries to promote and facilitate further our economic cooperation.

Your Excellency,

5. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe as well as the 30th. anniversary of the signing of the State Treaty between Austria and the four Allied Powers by which Austria regained her independence and sovereignty. Within this period of time, Austria has emerged as a leading industrialised country in Europe. In fact, far from being a hindrance, your strategic situation on the East-West Divide -- has through your prudent and pragmatic policies -- been instrumental in promoting peaceful co-existence and cooperation between European countries with different social and political systems. This is a tribute to your country's wise leadership and to the hard work, industry and determination of the Austrian people. As your nation commemorates these important landmarks of your history, the Malaysian Government and people join me in extending our warmest felicitations and best wishes for the continued peace and prosperity of the Government and people of Austria.

6. In our part of the world too, we view with importance the coming 30th anniversary of the Afro-Asian Bandung Conference which brought together like-minded countries concerned over the plight of the third world, a large part of which was then still under colonial bondage, domination and exploitation. The 10 principles of Bandung governing the code of conduct between nations are as valid today as they were then.

7. I believe that the cooperation and interaction among the neutral and non-aligned countries of Europe of which Austria is a very keen and active member, is based on similar principles. There is, therefore, much in common between countries like Austria and Malaysia. Our common concern for peace and security, of staying clear of big power politics and rivalry, and in working for complete and general disarmament provide us with a ready-made agenda for more active cooperation and more effective coordination of our efforts. Indeed, our positions on these vital questions of peace, security and disarmament are similar.

8. The need for more active cooperation and coordination of our efforts is all the more necessary as the international situation is fraught with growing dangers of the unrestrained use of force by the strong against the weak and in total defiance of the principles and objectives of the UN Charter which all of us are committed to uphold. We see it happening in Kampuchea where the Vietnamese forces

continue to illegally occupy that unfortunate country. Their actions pose the biggest threat to peace and stability in our region. I have stressed repeatedly that there can be no military solution to the problem in Kampuchea and that the only recourse is to a negotiated political settlement. Your country, through its chairmanship of the International Conference on Kampuchea, is playing a constructive role in helping to solve the problem. I sincerely look forward to the day when peace can prevail and all the countries in the region can see to the realisation of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia.

9. The Palestinian problem continue to be the most important issue facing the international community today and yet has defied solution for a long time. A number of bloody wars have been fought there and we have witnessed the uprooting of the Palestinian people from their homeland by the aggression committed by the Israelis. We note that Austria has been and is still actively engaged in the search of a solution and supports fully the UN position that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and that the restoration of their legitimate national rights, including their right to establish their own state is a prerequisite to a just and comprehensive settlement of the conflict. The untiring efforts that Austrian leaders, including you yourself, Excellency, have made is evidence of Austria's constructive role in the search for a lasting solution to the problem. Indeed, Austria's contribution has not been restricted to the political aspect of the problem, but has extended to humanitarian assistance to the unfortunate victims of the conflict.

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. In the field of international trade, which is so crucial for all countries for growth and development, the record is not one we can be proud of as the gap between the industrialised countries and the developing countries continue to widen. The position of the least developed countries is deteriorating rapidly. Others have had to contend with declining prices for their commodities, protectionist measures and barriers to the free flow of trade so essential to us all. The recession, the inflated dollar and high interest rates have made matters worse.

12. Here again Austria has set a good example by having a liberal import policy for goods from countries like Malaysia with no imposition of quotas or other restrictions. I sincerely hope that other and richer industrialised countries will also follow the lead taken by Austria.

13. I would like to conclude my remarks by thanking Your Excellency, the Government and people of Austria for the honour you do us in hosting this dinner.

14. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, may I invite you to join me in a toast to the continued good health and happiness of His Excellency, Dr. Fred Sinowatz, Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria, and to the everlasting friendship between Malaysia and Austria.