

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

EVENT: THE DINNER GIVEN BY HIS EXCELLENCY (HE) OLOF PALME,
PRIME MINISTER (PM) OF SWEDEN

VENUE: STOCKHOLM

DATE: 09 APR 1985

TIME:

Your Excellency Olof Palme,
Prime Minister of Sweden;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to thank you, on behalf of the members of my delegation, for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to us during our visit to your beautiful country. I have looked forward to this visit to Sweden and I believe that this visit will foster better understanding as well as strengthen the existing close relations between our two countries.

2. Earlier we have had the opportunity to have a very useful exchange of views on a wide range of bilateral matters as well as on regional and international issues of mutual concern to us. I am glad to note that we share a common will to expand the scope and substance of our bilateral relations, and we appreciated each other's perceptions and points of view on international issues. I have no doubt that the rapport that exists between our two countries will further contribute to create a mutually beneficial relations between Malaysia and Sweden.

3. It has been quite some time now that Malaysia and Sweden have established relations with each other. The development of these relations has been smooth and steady. This is not surprising, considering the fact that we share many similarities. Malaysia and Sweden are both constitutional monarchies whose major priorities are to strive towards the welfare and continued prosperity of our peoples. Both our countries adhere to the free enterprise system. Within our respective regions we are each committed to policies of close regional cooperation between like-minded neighbours. Moreover, the friendly relations between our two countries are further reinforced by our common commitment to the ideals and aspirations of the United Nations.

4. I am, therefore, optimistic that my visit will provide the opportunity for both countries to build upon this sound basis for further cooperation. In this regard, there exists

considerable scope for us to expand our collaboration, particularly in the economic field. As a country that is still in the process of development, Malaysia is fortunate to possess considerable amounts of natural resources and it is a producer of a variety of raw materials. While these are the necessary elements for economic development, they are incomplete without an able workforce and higher level of expertise to utilise them efficiently. An important aspect of my visit to your country is therefore to witness for myself the advanced level of technology that Sweden has achieved in various sectors. I am certain there is much that we can learn from Sweden, and many areas that we can cooperate with you. In this regard, we are appreciative of the support and willingness on your part to provide opportunities for Malaysians to come here and study specific aspects of Swedish technology and for the assistance that Sweden has extended to us.

5. Genuine friendship, however, cannot be one-sided. While looking towards Sweden for its expertise and advanced technology, Malaysia also has a lot to offer to your country. As a fast developing nation, Malaysia provides many opportunities for those who have the know-how and the means to participate in our economic development. We are also situated in the centre of a region that is consistently achieving a high level of growth and there are many possibilities for joint collaboration for goods and services for the Southeast Asian market. Increased participation in Malaysia will also mean that Swedish products will be more familiar to Malaysians. Several Swedish products are already well-known in Malaysia. Indeed, in our bilateral trade Sweden enjoys consistent trade balance in her favour. I might add here that this is one aspect that both countries must try very hard to rectify.

Your Excellency,

6. In this context, allow me to touch on a persistent problem that Malaysia faces in the effort to improve her trade balance with industrialised countries. I am referring to the problem of trade barriers. Much of our effort to search for new markets are frustrated by tariffs, quotas and other restraints that hamper free trade. In many areas goods from countries like Malaysia do not provide competition for the higher technology goods from industrialised countries. Since free international trade is the vehicle of growth for all countries, Malaysia will always be in favour of dismantling trade barriers on a world-wide scale. Sweden's trade policy as well as its efforts to eliminate trade barriers within the context of GATT and UNCTAD is, therefore, especially welcomed and appreciated by us.

7. Malaysia, like Sweden, plays an active role in the effort to develop close regional cooperation with her

immediate neighbours. Our partners in the Association of South East Asian Nations or ASEAN share a common goal in our efforts to achieve economic development and assure the continued prosperity of our peoples. Similarly, within your own region, Nordic cooperation is an active vehicle for close relations between the governments and private enterprises across national borders. We note the many facets of your cooperation that has evolved over several years. Such cooperation as Sweden and her Nordic partners have achieved, provides a valuable example for other countries and regions to emulate and contributes towards regional stability and resilience.

8. In this regard, Malaysia and her partners in the ASEAN countries are still faced with the unresolved problem of Kampuchea. The Kampuchean issue is a serious obstacle to peace and stability in the Southeast Asian region, as well as to the realisation of what ASEAN is trying to establish in our region, namely, a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality or ZOPFAN free from foreign interference. Malaysia is convinced that the only durable solution to the Kampuchean problem is through a comprehensive political settlement, and we will continue to be resolute in our efforts to search for such a political solution. Your support of Kampuchea is therefore deeply appreciated.

9. Just as the question of peace and stability is important to us in Southeast Asia, we appreciate that it is equally important to Sweden to continue its efforts to promote detente between East and West, which also takes into account the interests of smaller countries. Sweden's policy of neutrality has indeed contributed to the process of detente. This is evident from Sweden's active role in the Conference of Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe which has enabled that forum to achieve considerable progress. This also contributes towards the lessening of tensions not only in Europe but the world at large. In this connection, Malaysia is glad that the strategic arms reductions talks have been resumed in Geneva. Malaysia shared the concern felt by all countries over the suspension of the talks on arms reduction, and hopes that the resumed talks will continue until agreement on a comprehensive disarmament is reached.

Your Excellency,

10. Malaysia has for some time now addressed itself to the problem of drugs, which has become international in character and knows no national boundaries. It is a creeping menace of alarming proportions that permeates every level of society and threatens to destroy the social fabric of that society. The threat of drugs gives rise not just to problems of a criminal nature, but also has security ramifications that can undermine the survival of a nation. For this reason, Malaysia has legislated harsh laws to curb the drug menace. However, no country can hope to tackle this

problem on its own. It requires serious and concerted effort at the international level by all countries and international agencies concerned. Malaysia therefore would like to call on all countries to cooperate in a concerted effort to prevent the production and trafficking of drugs.

11. 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,

12. Allow me to say once again that it is indeed an honour and a pleasure for me to make this visit to your country. I am certain you share my conviction that the future holds many opportunities for deep and lasting cooperation and friendship between our two countries.

13. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I invite you to rise and join me in a toast to the good health of His Excellency Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden, and to the continuing friendship between Malaysia and Sweden.