

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

EVENT: THE RETURN BANQUET HOSTED IN HONOUR OF H.E. PREMIER ZHAO ZIYANG

VENUE: BEIJING, CHINA

DATE: 22 NOV 1985

TIME:

Your Excellency Zhao Ziyang,
Premier of the State Council of the
People's Republic of China;
Your Excellency Wu Xuegian,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and
State Councillor;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

May I, on behalf of my wife and members of my delegation, bid Your Excellency and other distinguished Chinese guests a very warm welcome. We are delighted and honoured that you could be with us this evening and allow us the opportunity to reciprocate, albeit in a small way, the generous hospitality and care which you have lavished upon us since our arrival in Beijing.

2. My visit to China has provided me with the opportunity to renew my acquaintance with you, Your Excellency, but most of all a timely opportunity to exchange views with you and other leaders of China on a wide range of issues of common concern. The discussions we had were at times exceedingly frank but, as befitting neighbours, were conducted in a friendly and cordial manner.

3. I am sure you will agree that on some of these issues much more needs to be done before common ground is reached. I am happy to say, however, that on most issues we share a common perception and even a common objective. I am particularly pleased that we both agree to give priority to strengthening bilateral trade and economic cooperation and have identified ways by which this objective can be achieved.

4. Tomorrow we will witness the signing of several important agreements and memorandums of understanding. These represent an important basis for the development of our relations. The signing of the agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation in particular is the first agreement ever to be signed between our two countries.

5. I must say that I am encouraged by these achievements and the substantive discussions we have had. Despite

problems, I sense there is a mutual and firm commitment to foster mature and stable relations. We must continue to build on this and press ahead. With mutual commitment and sincere efforts, I am confident that we will be able to overcome our problems and place our relations on a level that is nothing less than excellent.

6. Excellency, I have been in this capital city of Beijing for less than three days and, while it is not humanly possible to grasp and absorb the full impact of the history and beauty, the struggle and sacrifices that make this city unique, I cannot but be impressed by the forceful dynamism which clearly underlines the process of change all around us. It leaves me with the impression that the road towards modernisation will be achieved with rapidity that would impress even the most demanding.

7. Tomorrow, my delegation and I, depart Beijing for visits to other parts of your country. Our journey will provide us the opportunity not only to behold the ancient wonders of China and its beauty but also the industrial metropolises upon which you hope to carry forward your modernisation. I see in these visits the means to both enhance mutual understanding as well as to establish beneficial economic contacts that would add momentum to the development of our bilateral relations.

8. On the eve on my taking leave of you, let me thank you and through you, the Government of China, for the many courtesies and hospitality extended to my wife and I, and members of my delegation. I would like to place on record my appreciation to all those who had contributed towards making this visit as successful as it is enjoyable.

9. Finally, let me invite all those present here this evening to join me in a toast to the good health of:-

- His Excellency President

Li Xiannian

- His Excellency Premier Zhao Ziyang

- and to good relations between Malaysia and China.

Thank you.