

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

EVENT: THE STATE BANQUET HOSTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. V.S. MURAKHOVSKY
THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNCON OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

VENUE: MOSCOW

DATE: 30 JUL 1987

TIME:

His Excellency Mr. Nikolai Ryzhkov;
Madame Ryzhkov;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am happy to be in Moscow the capital city of this great country, Russia -- a city that I have read so much about but have never been to. May I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for the excellent arrangements and generous hospitality accorded to me and my delegation.

2. The program that has been drawn up will enable me and my delegation to see different parts of your country and enable us to meet your people of various nationalities. It will no doubt give us a better perspective and a deeper understanding of your country and your people.

Mr. Prime Minister,

3. I am happy to note that the process of domestic reconstruction has been complemented with new and vigorous foreign policies, especially in the search for peace and finding new solutions in ending regional conflicts.

4. As a non-nuclear nation, firmly committed to peace and disarmament, Malaysia welcomes your initiatives on nuclear disarmament. We agree with you that the world must deal with the threat posed by nuclear confrontation and that new thinking and political courage are required to end the arms race. It is our hope that the Geneva talks will bear some fruit soon for the sake of mankind. Many other pressing issues could be easily resolved if the threat of nuclear war is lifted and goodwill prevails among nations of the world. Just think of the enormous resources that it will free for the constructive development of nations and mankind.

5. Our discussions have revealed that the Soviet Union and Malaysia share many common perceptions on global issues. We share your concerns on disarmament and the need to enhance global security. Both our countries are supportive of the role of the United Nations and its associated agencies. We both implacably support the struggle in South Africa for human dignity and freedom. Our views on the situation in the Middle East coincide. As a non-aligned nation Malaysia

welcomes Soviet understanding of the aspirations of the Non-Aligned Movement.

6. Malaysia recognises that the Soviet Union is an integral part of Asia and the Pacific. In this context we welcome the important statement on Asian-Pacific security made by General Secretary Gorbachev in Vladivostok last year. The statement was a timely reminder that the Soviet Union gave due prominence to its place and role in the Asia-Pacific community. We are encouraged to hear that the Soviet Union is prepared to work with the United States to terminate the arms race, to improve relations with China and Japan, to withdraw its troops from the territories of other countries and to enhance its relations with the other nations in the region, including Malaysia.

Mr. Prime Minister,

7. Malaysia and the other members of ASEAN are very concerned with the prospects for peace, stability, and regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. We are, however, keenly aware that the complexity and diversity of the countries that make up the Pacific Basin defy an institutionalised approach to these issues. We believe that efforts should initially be concentrated on the defusion of regional tensions caused by conflict situations that have led to the escalation of great power rivalry which polarise and divide the region.

8. Our immediate concern are the conflict situations in Afghanistan and Kampuchea the resolution of which are a sine qua non if an atmosphere conducive to peace is to be created.

9. Mr. Gorbachev has called Afghanistan "a bleeding wound". To us Kampuchea has become a festering sore which seriously infects the health of our region. If the ideals of Vladivostok and Delhi are to be substantiated these conflicts must be settled as soon as possible.

10. As a member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, Malaysia is deeply concerned with the situation in Afghanistan. We can never accept what has happened in Afghanistan, an independent and sovereign nation, as a fait accompli. We welcome the Soviet Union's stated policy of withdrawal and we look forward to an early agreement at the Geneva Talks on this subject. We believe that the principle of self-determination must be applied in Afghanistan. Although we are a small developing country, we will, nevertheless, make our stand clear against any instances when fundamental principles of relations between nations are ignored and violated.

11. Kampuchea is at the forefront of our concerns. At the end of the Second Indochina War, Malaysia and other ASEAN nations were among the first to offer friendship and assistance to Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. We were motivated

by ASEAN's doctrine of regional cooperation and our objective was to substantiate the ASEAN proposal for a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia which can only be achieved by the effective cooperation and inter-action of its component nations based on mutual understanding and confidence. The ZOPFAN concept presupposes a policy of equidistance between the regional states and the great powers which will allow the former to control their own destinies and assume responsibility for their own security.

12. Reference is often made to the realities of the situation in Kampuchea. The fundamental reality is that the occupation of Kampuchea by a foreign power has breached an important principle of international relations, creating a dangerous precedent. The ASEAN countries have made reasonable proposals for the resolution of the issue. These proposals have the support of the overwhelming majority of the international community.

Mr. Prime Minister,

13. ASEAN has proposed the withdrawal of foreign forces and their replacement by an international peace-keeping force to ensure that no party can dominate Kampuchea in the interim before internationally-supervised elections are held for a government of a neutral non-aligned Kampuchea. This would allow the long-suffering Kampuchean people to determine their own future. The interests of all external powers will also be safeguarded by this process.

14. ASEAN has worked hard to keep a dialogue open with all interested parties so that such a solution may be negotiated. We believe that the Soviet Union's role in this process is critical. Your leaders have already met and discussed the issue with some ASEAN leaders. I feel our talks have further enhanced these consultations. The ASEAN Summit in Manila at the end of the year will provide an opportunity for my colleagues and I to review the results of our consultations with you and other interested parties.

15. Resolution of the above outstanding conflicts followed by demilitarisation of the region and other "confidence-building measures" will certainly allow the states of the Asia-Pacific region to come together in a cooperative effort to exploit its enormous potentials for the well-being of their peoples. Without progress on the issues I have mentioned, the region will remain divided and potentially unstable.

16. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. During this period a great deal has been achieved. A major purpose of my visit here is to consolidate our links and to discuss our future cooperation. Tomorrow, two new agreements on maritime arrangements and double taxation will be signed providing further incentives for

cooperation. Government-to-government arrangements can, however, only secure the foundations of cooperation. We have an open free-market economy and your organisations must develop effective business links with our private sector. You may be assured that my Government will be supportive of this process.

17. In the short time we have been here we have seen the beautiful cities of Leningrad and Moscow and visited the fascinating Uzbekistan Republic. We have learnt something about your leadership's efforts for a better society in this country. We have seen for ourselves some of its results. It has been, altogether, an unforgettable experience which we shall cherish when we leave the Soviet Union.

Mr. Prime Minister,

18. On behalf of my wife and the Malaysian delegation, may I thank you and the Soviet Government for the very warm welcome and generous hospitality that we have experienced during our stay here.
Thank you.