

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

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA,  
HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. RAJIV GANDHI

VENUE: NEW DELHI, INDIA

DATE: 30 JAN 1987

TIME:

Your Excellency Rajiv Gandhi,  
Prime Minister of India;  
Excellencies;  
Distinguished Guests;  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is, as always, a great pleasure to be in New Delhi, a city that I have visited on several occasions in the past. Successive Malaysian Prime Ministers have always found a warm and friendly welcome on their visits here, which I think attest to the excellent relations between our two countries. I am especially honoured, Mr. Prime Minister, that despite the tremendous demands upon your time and that of your colleagues and officials as well, the welcome accorded to me and my delegation has been as unstinting and meticulous as they could possibly be. Allow me to thank you on their behalf as well as mine for your very warm welcome and hospitality.

2. We are meeting, Mr. Prime Minister, at a time of extreme confusion in the affairs of the world. Change, a normal enough situation in international relations and dealings has become greatly accelerated. We have not only to adapt to these changes but also to the speed that they take place. Technology has advanced so fast, particularly in the field of communication, that there is literally no more domestic problems. All problems have been internationalised. Since we have never really been able to resolve international issues, our capacity to deal with domestic issues has shrunken with their internationalisation. Indeed, everyone now claims a right to solve our domestic problems even though most have never been able to solve their own domestic problems. The fact that situations and even public mores differ receives no consideration. Still we must soldier for we re indeed living in a global village.

3. It is a matter of deep satisfaction, Mr. Prime Minister, for me to observe that India has equipped itself well for the onslaughts of the future. You and your government have not allowed the complexities of our times to blunt your resolve to find imaginative and workable solutions for the many problems that confront the world. We

note with appreciation the initiatives that India, alone or in concert with like-minded nations, have taken, to ease global tension and distrust, to bring more equitable economic order and to search out and build new linkages among and between nations. These initiatives are by no means easy to sustain but we hope you will persevere for the common good. We in Malaysia extend our full and sincere support to you in these endeavours.

Mr. Prime Minister,

4. India and Malaysia have much in common. Throughout history your country and mine have maintained links of the most pervasive kind. These links have never been broken. Our peoples have freely interacted with one another. Today these links have achieved impressive breadth and depth, reflecting our greater inter-dependency even as we pace each other's growth.

5. It is perhaps natural, Mr. Prime Minister, that such a freely developed bilateral relationship should allow for the development of a political relationship marked by uncommon understanding. We share membership of many overlapping international groupings in which we share common perspectives and basically common approaches. The great moral and ethical problems of our time, -- racial injustice and political repression under the obscenity of apartheid in South Africa, Israel's illegal occupation of Arab lands and continued opposition to the creation of a Palestinian State, occupation of Afghanistan and Kampuchea by foreign forces, ever-widening North-South economic inequities and the ever-escalating arms race require that we work together to strengthen international solidarity to resolve them. The Solidarity Fund for Southern Africa which you are so ably chairing, the International Commission for South-South Economic Cooperation under the Chairmanship of Dr Julius Nyerere and the Five Nation Disarmament Initiative with which you are deeply associated, are the kind of endeavours reflective of the determination of countries such as ours to initiate fresh approaches to seemingly intractable international problems.

6. Closer to home, Mr. Prime Minister, both India and Malaysia, in concert with our regional partners, are pushing the frontiers of mutual goodwill and cooperation as far as they are politically and economically practical and feasible. We in ASEAN will celebrate the completion of our second decade in 1987. Much has been done but even more are required to be done. Our experience teaches us that the conscious effort at consultation and cooperation invariably develops a momentum of its own and after a time becomes irreversible. We have watched with admiration the achievement of South Asian countries in making regional cooperation under SAARC a reality. In just two short years you have, through collective commitment, impressed SAARC on the global consciousness. We in ASEAN look forward to constructive engagement with SAARC in the near future.

Mr. Prime Minister,

7. As India and Malaysia march forward in consonance with the dynamics of change, I wish to record my firm conviction that the ties that bind us throughout history will become ever stronger. My visits to your country -- and this particular visit is no exception -- have been altogether too brief for me to appreciate fully the complexity of the Indian subcontinent and the magnitude of the tasks that you have set for yourself. But from what little I have seen and heard each time, I am acutely aware of the quantitative and qualitative progress that your country, through successive inspired leadership, has achieved. During this visit I shall have the opportunity to acquaint myself with some of the progress that has taken place here. We too have progressed through the years, and I hope it would not be too long before you, Mr. Prime Minister, can venture to "discover" Malaysia. Our mutual progress offers, I believe, excellent opportunities to explore new complementarities even as we seek to entrench previous and present ones. India's relations with Malaysia are very much in the idiom of that great percept of Indian civilization -- the notion of "change within permanence". In that spirit I look forward to expanding, in scope and depth, the several discussions that we have managed to exchange during our past encounters over several international conferences.

Mr. Prime Minister,

8. I have been most touched by your kind words of welcome. It is a welcome all the more appreciated for the constraints of time and duties you have had to overcome. In thanking you once again, I would like to invite this distinguished gathering to join me in a toast to:  
His Excellency President Giani Zail Singh,  
His Excellency Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi  
and the ever-expanding relations between India and Malaysia.