

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

EVENT: THE DINNER IN HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY NOBORU TAKESHITA  
THE PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

VENUE: SRI PERDANA, KUALA LUMPUR

DATE: 02 MAY 1989

TIME:

His Excellency Mr. Noboru Takeshita;  
Madame Takeshita;  
Distinguished Guests;  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Your Excellency and Madame Takeshita and members of your distinguished delegation to Malaysia.

2. Your visit is most timely as it marks a new mood in Japan with regard to its relations with Malaysia and ASEAN in general. Although Malaysia and Japan enjoy close relations, opportunities to play host to such visits are rare. It is our belief that your visit demonstrates the importance that Japan attaches to Malaysia and to the ASEAN countries and it indicates a desire on Japan's part to hold consultations with us on both bilateral and international issues.

3. Since the last visit by a Japanese Prime Minister to Malaysia in 1983, I am glad that relations between Malaysia and Japan have continued to develop positively. The cordial relations have been enhanced further through the close contacts and consultations between the leaders and officials of our two countries.

4. Malaysia highly values the important contribution which has been made by both the Japanese Government and the private sector towards strengthening our bilateral relations. However, we do think that there is still room for enhancing bilateral co-operation particularly in the field of trade, industry and the transfer of technology. Although this depends to a large extent on the private sector, the role of the government is quite crucial.

Distinguished guests,

5. In our efforts to develop our country Malaysia continues to look to the countries of the East including Japan for improving management techniques, positive work ethics, and the correct approach to economic development. In other words Malaysia still believes in the efficacy of its Look East Policy which has yielded tangible results.

We are gratified that this programme has enjoyed the support and encouragement of the Government and people of Japan. I would like to record here the appreciation of the Government of Malaysia for the support and co-operation that has been provided by the Japanese Government and private sector to our Look East Policy.

6. It has been eight years since the launching of our Look East Policy and we are proud of its success. A number of agencies in the public and private sectors have benefited from the exposure and training provided by Japan under this policy and it is clear that Japan can contribute even more towards upgrading Malaysia's capacity to achieve rapid and systematic economic growth.

7. I am also pleased that all our trainees under the Look East Policy have secured employment and it is our hope that Japanese firms would continue to employ our graduates. It is hoped that such recruitment would not be confined to the Japanese firms operating in Malaysia only.

8. The positive results and success which have been achieved under the Look East Policy will justify an expansion of the programme to include such fields as agriculture and tourism where greater management skills are needed.

9. In this regard we also hope Japan would consider 'Looking to The South' in the context of tourism and investment. We understand the need for Japan to invest in Europe and America and the desire of Japanese tourists to go there. But South East Asia has always played an important part in Japan's economic growth and development and our economies are very closely inter linked. A prosperous South East Asia will always be an asset to Japan.

10. As a major regional and world economic power Japan has an important role not only to provide Overseas Development Assistance and encourage overseas investment but also to assist and promote the overall growth of the Asia-Pacific region. In this context Malaysia welcomes Japan's plans to open its markets to imports from countries in the Asia Pacific region, and to assist in the economic development of the region by providing funds, expertise and other resources. This role that Japan assumes will be of tremendous importance as we approach the 21st Century which has been described as the 'Asia Pacific Century'.

11. We view the agreements recently reached in Geneva as being momentous and full of opportunity. We value the openhandedness of Japan to provide facilities and priority for agricultural and tropical goods. We also hope Japan would consider importing more manufactured goods.

12. Further I wish to state that we welcome Japan's "kokusaika" or internationalisation programme which

represents a new phase in Japan's relations with the outside world. The opening up of the Japanese market to foreign goods has resulted in increased world-wide trade. We believe that Japan's pre-eminent economic and financial status requires a greater role for Japan in the world's economic and political future. There is much that Japan can do to maintain stability in the international economic, financial and political fields.

13. Finally I would like to draw attention to the fortress mentality that seems to be spreading among the rich countries of the world. We have been reassured that economic unions of the rich are not intended to keep out exports from developing countries. But then we remember how tariff barriers were erected when our trading partners joined such economic communities. We notice how Japan is making adjustments in anticipation of protectionist policies by economic blocs. We the developing countries will not be able to make these adjustments. We hope that Japan will use its wise counsel to prevent the world from being broken up into economic blocs ranged against each other. Japan as No. 1 must help ensure a more just and equitable world.

Distinguished guests,

14. May I invite you all to join me in a toast to the good health of His Excellency Noboru Takeshita, the Government and the people of Japan and to Malaysia-Japan relations. Thank you.