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EMBARGO: 10.00 p.m., Thursday, 27.5.1993

Please check against delivery

(P) Mahathir

SPEECH BY  
THE PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA  
THE HONOURABLE DATO SERI DR MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD  
AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER  
IN HONOUR OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF IRELAND  
H.E. MR ALBERT REYNOLDS  
AT SRI PERDANA, KUALA LUMPUR  
ON THURSDAY, 27 MAY 1993  
AT 8.30 PM  
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My wife and I are very happy to welcome you and your distinguished delegation to Malaysia. I remember fondly our visit to your beautiful country last September and the warm and generous hospitality that you accorded us when we were in Ireland. I am glad we are able to reciprocate this hospitality and I hope you are able to see a bit of our country during your visit here.

Mr Prime Minister,

2. I am encouraged that since my visit to Ireland, contacts between our two countries have noticeably increased, especially between the private sectors. This augurs well for the further development of our relations. As both our countries have open economies, the growing interaction between our entrepreneurs bodes well for the rapid development of trade and investment between Ireland and Malaysia. We in the Government must be fully supportive of this process. We also need to get to know each other's potential better.

3. My visit to Ireland opened our eyes to the prospects that Ireland offers. Your visit here will help you and your delegation to understand better what we have to offer. We will build on the momentum created by this exchange of visits so as to maximise the results. The possibilities for cooperation in trade and investment are now much more easily appreciated. I believe we should, in particular, focus on cooperation in the services sector, a sector in which your country has made great progress. Ireland can contribute to Malaysia's own development of this sector and our two countries can also work together to take advantage of opportunities in this area in third countries. Ireland has developed sophisticated linkages between its R & D and the Universities and the manufacturing sector. We can learn from you and you can use Malaysia as the base for your specialised services to penetrate this very dynamic region.

Mr Prime Minister,

4. Ireland is a member of the European Community which is in the process of implementing the Single European Market, a market of critical importance to Malaysia. Malaysia is a member of ASEAN, which through the proposed ASEAN Free Trade Area, will develop into an integrated market with its ASEAN fellow members. Malaysia is also an East Asian economy, and today, intra-regional trade in East Asia has reached the remarkable level of 42 percent of the region's total trade, notwithstanding the lack of formal arrangements between East Asian countries. Intra-regional trade further reflects the significant free flow of capital between the East Asian economies which has stoked regional dynamism.

Mr Prime Minister,

5. The importance of our cooperation must be seen against the backdrop of the huge markets with which our two countries are respectively connected. As small countries heavily dependent on trade, we should work together to ensure that these markets remain open. In the uncertainties which cloud international

trade, regionalism has thrived. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this trend so long as open regionalism is practised. Open regionalism can contribute towards the goal of an open global trading system. The success of the Uruguay Round is crucial in this respect as it will support this process. Its failure will have the opposite effect, in that it will encourage regional groupings to develop a fortress mentality.

Mr Prime Minister,

6. Malaysia has spoken out in favour of an East Asia Economic Caucus, a loose consultative forum which will allow East Asian countries to speak with one voice in their common interest, that is, to ensure that international trade remains unfettered. The forum will also allow greater coordination between the East Asian States where mutual help in the form of cross investments has stimulated growth. But the main objective is to allow the dynamic East Asian economies a greater say in multilateral trade negotiations and decision-making, which at the moment the individual states do not have. If the achievements of the East Asian nations are anything to go by, their views on world trade and economic development must be worth listening to and respected. Effectively silencing them by dividing them into ineffective non-entities helps no one. As Ireland gained by being with the other European countries, we hope that we will not be denied the same benefit of a collective voice.

Mr Prime Minister,

7. While we talk about trade and economic development, thousands of people are starving and are subjected to blatant aggression. The end of the Cold War should bring peace to everyone but to the Bosnian Muslims it has brought tragedy of the worst kind. Hundreds of thousands of them have been killed, raped, mutilated and incarcerated, while some two million have been uprooted and made to flee their ancestral homes. The tragedy is that they were made to believe that the proponents of

democracy would protect them as new converts. Instead, they are not only being exposed to the worst kind of oppression but they are being prevented from defending themselves or being defended by countries willing to help them. To them and to Malaysians too, the New World Order is not only meaningless but also utterly repulsive. And the saddest part is that in a world where the media is controlled by the powerful, what we say will be blacked out. Where is the much touted freedom of the press in the West?

Mr Prime Minister,

8. Closer to home, Malaysia will steadfastly collaborate with the international community in seeking a settlement to the Cambodian problem. We are happy that the elections in Cambodia has been conducted without any major disruption by the Khmer Rouge. The 85 per cent voter turn-out is extremely encouraging and augurs well for the future. This election is the only way for the Cambodian people to have a representative government. Malaysia will therefore fully play its role in continuing to support UNTAC in the implementation of its task in Cambodia. In the post-election period, Malaysia hopes to play a constructive role in Cambodia's rehabilitation and reconstruction and would like to urge the United Nations to remain engaged in bringing long term peace and stability to the country.

Mr Prime Minister,

9. It is indeed a pleasure to have you and your delegation with us in Malaysia. It is my hope that in the short time you are here in Kuala Lumpur and in Penang, you will also have the opportunity to enjoy Malaysia and renew old contacts and make new friends.

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Prime Minister's Office  
Kuala Lumpur