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(PRIME MINISTER)

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OF TURKEY HER EXCELLENCY DR. TANSU CILLER

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TIME:

May I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Your Excellency and to the Government of Turkey for the very warm welcome extended to me and members of my delegation since our arrival in your beautiful country. My wife and I are indeed delighted to have this opportunity to return to Turkey on another official visit. We recall with fond memories our last official visit to your country eleven years ago.

2. I have been looking forward to this visit to acquaint myself with you, Madame Prime Minister and your efforts at nation building and economic development. This visit will provide me with the opportunity to exchange views with you on subjects of mutual interest to both our countries.

3. Malaysia and Turkey have enjoyed good and cordial relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations. There have been several exchanges of visits at high levels in recent years and these visits laid the foundation for greater collaboration between our two countries. I am happy to note that cooperation between our two countries in several areas are expanding. We have over the years gone a long way in increasing our awareness of each other and of what each can offer. To Malaysians, Turkey while rich in its heritage of the Islamic grandeur of the past, is recognised as a very modern and dynamic nation peopled largely by Muslims. I am sure that if we examine closely there will be many areas ripe for cooperation for mutual benefit.

4. However, despite our keen desire to promote trade and economic cooperation, our potentials have not been fully exploited. The trade figures between the two countries indicate that it is still small. We need to inject more substance to our collaboration so as to tap the full potentials of trade and economic opportunities available in each other's countries. I firmly believe that the private sectors should be encouraged to take the lead and act as a catalyst in fostering direct economic and trade linkages between our two countries. It is for this reason that I have included in my delegation prominent Malaysian businessmen to enable them to look around and identify business opportunities. I hope this visit will give them

the opportunity to learn more about your country and to establish contacts with their counterparts here. I am confident that with our mutual commitment towards strengthening of bilateral cooperation, a greater flow of trade, investment and tourism between our two countries could be further facilitated.

5. Turkey has an unique position, being situated at the cross roads between Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia. I would like to encourage the Malaysian private sector to take advantage of this fact as Turkey can act as a gateway to the vast markets of the European Union, the Middle East and the Central Asian States. We have also learnt about your success in seeking opportunities in the Central Asian Republics. Malaysia is keen to explore the possibilities of collaboration with Turkey in that region.

6. The end of the Cold War has unfortunately not made this world a better and safer world. Many people and nations who have heard about the greatness of democracy and the free market have rushed to adopt these systems. But for many, the results have been disastrous. In Bosnia-Herzegovina the lure of independence and democracy has resulted in hundreds of thousands being massacred and millions being forced to leave their homeland. The great protagonists of democracy in the West merely look on while their converts are massacred and raped. It is a mistake to think that we can depend on others for our safety. All the talk about human rights, workers' rights, and the freedoms of democracy are merely to justify interventions when their interests are at stake. In the light of this reality, perhaps it is worthwhile for our two countries to continuously consult one another regarding policies and strategies in a unipolar world.

7. Malaysia and Turkey share many common ideals and principles. I hope that my visit will contribute towards better understanding of each other and towards stronger cooperation, both bilaterally and in international affairs.

8. We note with admiration the vast strides that Turkey has made in the transformation of its economy. The pragmatic approaches taken by the Turkish Government and the liberalisation programmes have made a positive impact on the country's development. Like Turkey, Malaysia too is a nation in transformation. The economic growth in Malaysia during the last five years has averaged more than eight percent. Priority is now accorded to high-tech manufacturing in consonant with Malaysia's desire to become a fully industrialised country by the year 2020. Science and technology have a major role to play in promoting economic development. Malaysia has taken steps not only to be a consumer of technology but also a contributor to new technologies and scientific discoveries. I am sure Your Excellency will share with me that in our march towards industrialisation, there will be many areas we can learn from each other through the sharing of experiences, pooling

of expertise and exchange of complementary technical capabilities. The imperatives for such exchanges and cooperation are made more relevant as we are two industrialising and largely Muslim states.

9. We appreciate the active role played by your country in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

10. My wife and I will take home with us many pleasant memories of our stay in your beautiful country on this occasion as we did on our previous visits. May I, once again, on behalf of my wife and my delegation, take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for the hospitality and warm reception accorded to us by the government and the people of Turkey.