

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

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED BY H.E. PRESIDENT
GENERAL PERVEZ MUSHARRAF

VENUE: ISLAMABAD

DATE: 18 OCT 2002

TIME:

On behalf of myself and members of my delegation, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for the very warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in Islamabad. I am also happy to have had the opportunity of discussing with you various bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. Since Your Excellency's visit to Malaysia in March 2000, I am convinced that such continuous exchanges would be beneficial in our efforts to create not only greater awareness but also towards promoting closer relations and cooperation.

2. Malaysia is committed to improving its ties with Pakistan. Given the many cultural similarities and historical commonalities, I am confident that we should be able to take the opportunity to widen and deepen our collaborations in many fields. Bilateral trade, which currently amounts to approximately USD 450 million a year could also be enhanced further through an expansion and diversification of our trading basket. Today, Malaysia's exports to Pakistan is mainly palm oil while imports comprise rice, cotton, wheat, fresh fruits and leather products. We are aware that trade balance has consistently been in our favour. In this regard, Malaysia would be more than pleased to work together with Pakistan to promote Pakistani products in Malaysia through trade fairs and exhibitions to help address the trade imbalance.

3. In other areas, Malaysia remains committed to extending technical cooperation to Pakistan under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme. At the same time we are appreciative of the opportunities provided by Pakistan for Malaysians to undergo various training programme under the Pakistan Technical Assistance Programme. Malaysia also follows with keen interest developments in Pakistan. With Pakistan's experiences in the field of information and computer technology, scientific research and development, I believe that there is potential for Malaysians and Pakistanis to work together in the field of information and computer technology and scientific research. In this regard, I am convinced that the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Malaysian Multimedia

Development Corporation and the Pakistan Software Export Board this evening will pave the way for an enhanced collaboration between our two sides.

4. We are glad to see that Pakistan is gradually emerging toward better economic development. We recognise that political stability and security are fundamental prerequisites for investment and economic growth. The positive trend in industrial field, trade and good governance will restore confidence for foreign investors to come to Pakistan. Some Malaysians are already here. Today we witnessed the launching of the power plant by Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB). We hope others will come and make their own evaluation on the opportunities available here.

5. At the international level Malaysia and Pakistan share many common positions. Both countries need to cooperate to face the challenges of globalisation. As such it is imperative for us to collaborate in our efforts to call for a just and equitable world order.

6. We are committed to the global effort in eradicating terrorism and religious fanaticism. We believe that the root causes of terrorism such as oppression, injustice and poverty must be addressed and removed. Combating the menace of terrorism requires global efforts. Unilateral action by any country against any country under the pretext of checking terrorism will not solve the problem. On the contrary it could provoke and fuel anger. It is also wrong to identify terrorism with Islam or a particular race or nationality. Malaysia pledges to cooperate in combating this threat to global peace, security, economic development and political stability based on the principles of the UN Charter and basic norms of international law.

7. The situation in the Middle East is thus not comforting in our resolve to seek a just and peaceful world. The aggression by the Israelis and their persistent violation of human rights and international laws must be strongly condemned by all. A lasting peace is only possible if the Israeli authorities withdraw completely from the land occupied since 1967.

8. Let me once again extend our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, Madam Sehba and the Government of Pakistan for the warm reception and kind hospitality that have been accorded to us. We pray to Allah for the continued well-being, peace, progress and stability of Pakistan and the brotherly people of Pakistan.