

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

EVENT: DINNER IN HONOUR OF H.E. GERHARD SCHROEDER
THE CHANCELLOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

VENUE: SERI PERDANA, PUTRAJAYA

DATE: 12 MAY 2003

TIME:

It is a privilege and an honour to welcome Your Excellency and your distinguished delegation to Kuala Lumpur. Your Excellency's visit affords me the opportunity to reciprocate the very warm hospitality my delegation and I received when we visited Germany in March 2002. Also this is the first time ever that a German Chancellor has visited Malaysia.

2. I hope, Your Excellency would get a better insight into Malaysia's multicultural diversity and our development, which had gained much from German expertise and interest.

3. I regret that your business people are not in your delegation. The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome is not a threat in Malaysia. W.H.O has not put us on their list. I hope German businessmen would come later. Last year Germany was the biggest investor in Malaysia. We are keen to see more German investments for the mutual benefit of our two countries.

4. Since our last meeting in March 2002, the state of the world has been steadily deteriorating. Today the economy of the world is very sluggish. In addition we the small countries now live in fear, not just of terrorists but also from unilateral actions by powerful countries. We can expect no protection from international organisations like the United Nations (UN) since powerful countries like the United States and Britain can attack Iraq without the sanction of the UN.

5. When international law and conventions are ignored by the very people who formulated and promote them, then there will be international anarchy. Weak nations cannot now be expected to submit to international laws and conventions if their security is threatened.

6. I would like to congratulate you for the very principled stand that Germany under your leadership took over the invasion of Iraq. We are much heartened to see that your country and a few European countries still believe in the UN and international consensus. We look up to you and other like-minded countries to restore confidence in the

UN and in International Law.

7. Malaysia believes that the present tension and turmoil in the world have their roots in the decision to expropriate Arab Palestinian territory in order to create the state of Israel. Ever since then there has been no stability or peace in the Middle East. And now that instability has spilled over to every corner of the world. It is certainly the cause for worldwide terrorism that we see today.

8. We should really be trying to identify the causes of the Palestinian / Israeli conflict and to remove them. But instead we see an attempt to out-terrorise the terrorists in order to deter them. Now countries are being threatened and invaded even though there is no proof of their involvement in terrorism.

9. The attack against Iraq is seen by the Muslim world as an attempt to terrify Muslim countries. But terrorists are not under the control of Governments. Neither are they always in their own countries. They may be anywhere, in the UK for example, and as desperate and angry people they will not be deterred. The war against terrorism will not be successful even if all Muslim countries are subjugated. As fighters for freedom they will physically oppose their colonisation.

10. The outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome has created havoc with the economies of East Asia and the world. New diseases are appearing more and more frequently now. HIV - Aids, Mad Cow disease, Ebola, Japanese Encephalitis and resistant strains of dengue, malaria and tuberculosis are among them. Our responses to these outbreaks have been haphazard. There is real danger for these diseases and new ones to spread worldwide causing immeasurable damage.

11. We can logically expect more new diseases to appear. The world needs to formulate a strategy and to be well equipped to deal with new diseases. Money must be expended on centres for the early detection, and the curbing of these diseases. It would be a good thing if a fraction of the funds expended for weapons development is reallocated for the setting up of centres worldwide to respond quickly to these new diseases.

12. Your visit to Malaysia has amply demonstrated Germany's desire to strengthen the bonds of friendship for the mutual interest of both our countries.

13. Allow me once again to extend a warm welcome to Your Excellency and to your distinguished delegation. Your visit, albeit brief, has given new emphasis to our bilateral linkages. I remain confident that these ties can only improve and move forward in the future.

Thank you.