

UCAPAN PERDANA MENTERI DI MAJLIS MAKAN MALAM TAHUNAN DEWAN PERNIAGAAN DAN PER-INDUSTRIAN KEBANGSAAN MALAYSIA, DI HOTEL HILTON, KUALA LUMPUR, PADA 17 MEI, 1979.

Saya tidak selalu mendapat peluang berjumpa dengan ahli-ahli perniagaan dan perindustrian — dan seterusnya “tycoon-tycoon” dan jutawan-jutawan! Saya dan isteri saya mengucapkan berbanyak terima kasih kepada presiden dan ahli-ahli Dewan Perniagaan dan Perindustrian Kebangsaan Malaysia kerana sudi menjemput saya berdua ke majlis makan malam ini. Saya menghargai sangat jemputan dan peluang ini oleh kerana perniagaan dan perindustrian adalah perkara-perkara yang amat mustahak dalam pembangunan negara kita.

Pihak kerajaan memang berharap kepada “private sector” supaya bergerak dengan lebih giat dan cergas lagi supaya matlamat Dasar Ekonomi Baru dan projek-projek di bawah Rancangan Malaysia Ketiga dapat dicapai dengan sepenuh-penuhnya. Di sinilah terletaknya peranan dan tanggungjawab Dewan Perniagaan dan Perindustrian.

Sebentar lagi, saya akan memberi pandangan saya terhadap “private sector”. Pandangan saya itu adalah disampaikan dengan hati yang tulus ikhlas dan saya harap diterima dengan baik dan tulus ikhlas juga.

I wish to thank you Mr. President and the members of the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry for inviting me and my wife to this dinner to-night. It is seldom that I have the opportunity of meeting our bussiness and industrial community. Perhaps it is partly my fault and partly due to the increasing pressure of other work. However, I would like you to know that commerce and industry are some of my main preoccupations. We have just had a mid-review of our Third Malaysia Plan which gave us some idea of the performance of both the public and private sectors. On the whole, we have made satisfactory progress. The target for economic growth has been exceeded. This has greatly increased the opportunities and resources for accelerating the momentum of development. We are gradually building up the basic strength and resilience of the nation. We have worked hard and patiently for political stability, and we must preserve it. We will make further progress in solving our country's socio-economic problems. At the moment, there is great instability, and even conflict, in some countries in our region. But Malaysia must keep cool head, and not be deflected from its policy of neutrality and peace.

In all our development plans, the private sector has always been expected to play a major role. The public sector provides the necessary

infrastructures and facilities for the private sector to make use of our economic, industrial, fiscal, monetary, investment and other policies are all designed towards encouraging development and economic growth, in which the private sector should be the spearhead. We often wonder whether the private sector in this country is marching with the times, and is modern and strong enough to face the challenge and competitions of modern commerce and industry. On the other hand, we often hear from the private sector apologies, excuses, fears real or imagine, and doubts about all sorts of things. The private sector dwells more upon all these negatives factors than upon modernisation and expansion of its enterprises. Our country cannot develop and be strong economically if its private sector is not robust but live in an environment of perpetual fear and doubt.

To develop our agriculture, industry and commerce, we need investment, both from outside as well as from inside the country. We are making great efforts to attract foreign investments. The climate of uncertainty which prevailed before has gradually cleared. More and more foreign investors are coming to this country. We are streamlining our governmental machinery and procedures to encourage investment. We formulate policies which encourage investment rather than hinder them. These who have travelled extensively abroad will tell you that the conditions in this country are not as bad as they have been made them out to be. While we do not claim to be perfect in every respect, it cannot be denied that as people and government, we are gentle, reasonable and pragmatic, perhaps to a fault, we are considerate and generous, we are fair in our dealings with others, we value friendship and are loyal to our friends.

I have spoken generally about a number of things. I think they have relevance to the private sector upon which we have put so much hope in contributing towards the economic development of our country. Has the private sector really made sufficient efforts to expand and modernise its enterprises? Or increase our country's exports in agricultural commodities and manufactures? Or being back to this country trade and services that can now be done in this country? Or has confidence to invest more in this country? These are some of the questions which I would like the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry to ponder upon. I hope that I do not sound aggressive in putting these questions to you. We — that public sector and the private sector are in partnership in respect of the growth and development of our country. The responsibility is not on the public sector alone, the private sector has an equally heavy responsibility.

Thank you.