

By : DATUK SERI SYED HAMID ALBAR
Venue :
Date : 23 NOVEMBER 1999
**Title : OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MEETING OF THE ORGANISATION
OF THE ISLAMIC SHIPOWNERS' ASSOCIATION**

BISMILLAHIRAHMMANIRAHIM

H.E Dr. Abdullatif bin Abdullah Sultan
Secretary General of OISA;

H.E Mr. Mohamad Shawki Younis
Chairman of OISA;

H.E Mr Mohammad Souri
Chairman of National Iranian Tanker Company on behalf of the
Member States and members companies of the Organisation of the Islamic
Shipowners' Association

H.E Ambassador Thierno Nabika Diallo
Assistant Secretary General of the
Organisation of Islamic Conference for Economic Affairs;

Excellencies;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I have been asked by the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, Datuk Seri Syed Hamid bin Syed Jaafar Albar to convey his sincere greetings and also his deep regret at not being able to attend this function this morning due to urgent and unavoidable commitments.

2. The following is the text of his speech which I have been asked to read on his behalf.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

3. I wish to thank the Organisation of Islamic Shipowners Association (OISA) for inviting me to address and to officially open the Meeting of the Executive Committee and the General Assembly of OISA this morning.

4. The Malaysian Government is pleased indeed with the OISA for choosing Kuala Lumpur as the venue of the Meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Maritime transport, or more accurately, commercial shipping is an integral part of the global economy. It has been historically important throughout the ages – from the activities of the Phoenician merchants to the practices adopted by the merchants of ancient Greece and Rome as well as the maritime powers of the Middle Ages and modern times.

6. The development of the shipping industry has been a significant barometer of human progress and civilisation. The 19th Century saw the revolutionary development of shipping practices with the inauguration of common carrier line services and the use of steam propulsion and iron in shipbuilding. The subsequent development of the compound steam engine, the perfection of the turboelectric drive and the introduction of nuclear powered passenger cargo ship in the 20th Century further revolutionise the shipbuilding industry for the benefit of mankind. The technological progress achieved is indeed a tribute to the ingenuity of man.

7. The Malaysian Government views the shipping industry as an important component of the country's economic development. As the nineteen (19) largest exporting nation in the world, much effort has been devoted since independence towards the development of the industry in Malaysia. The impressive development of infrastructure facilities at Malaysia's major ports of Klang and Penang as well as the new Port of Tanjung Pelepas has significantly improved the country's competitive edge in meeting the various challenges faced in this field. Such development has considerably boosted Malaysia's direct trade worldwide. Malaysia today is poised to assume an increasingly expanding role in the development of maritime transport in the region. The recent restructuring of the Malaysian International Shipping Corporation Berhad or MISC, as a subsidiary of our national petroleum company, PETRONAS should provide the necessary focus, direction and impetus in meeting this objective.

8. The advent of globalisation however, has brought about a new dimension to the development of the shipping service industry. Increased capitalisation through mergers of giant shipping companies within the industry has made it increasingly difficult for the relatively smaller national shipping companies to increase their share of the market. The dominance of maritime traffic by shipowners of the developed countries in the liner service, tramp shipping, industrial service and tanker operations made it all the more necessary for the smaller players to enhance mutually beneficial cooperation in these areas.

9. In this regard, the establishment of the OISA way back in 1981 as an affiliated organ of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has indeed been a step in the right direction. I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the founding fathers of the Association for their vision and farsightedness in developing smart partnership and cooperation for the mutual benefit of all members. Malaysia is pleased to join hands with our brother member countries in strengthening linkages for economic

cooperation, consolidating the rights of the members in sea transport and freight, overcoming the monopoly that ships from Islamic countries are currently subjected to, strengthening the voice of Islamic countries in international shipping affairs and more importantly, maximising the utilisation of the scarce economic resources of the member states.

10. The Malaysian Government is also fully supportive of the broad objectives of the OISA and the various measures that need to be undertaken by the member states in realising their common aims. I am confident that by pooling our limited resources together, the various constraints and weaknesses faced by Islamic shipowners could be addressed to the satisfaction of all OISA members. As a gesture on our part, Malaysia is prepared to offer places in some of the specialised training programmes on maritime affairs conducted by the Maritime Academy of Malaysia (ALAM) and other relevant institutions that are considered useful by the members concerned. Malaysia is also prepared to share our experiences and findings within the various ASEAN groupings on those matters which are of common interests to OISA like safety of navigation and pollution from ships.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. Malaysia foresees the maritime transport sector continuing to play an important role despite the advent of air transport. This is because it is by far the cheapest and most convenient means of transporting cargoes and commodities. It is also the safest, cheapest and most practical means of exporting crude petroleum and bulk export items. Indeed the years ahead will see the maritime transport sector continuing to be the work horse of international trade.

12. As a most practical step, Malaysia welcomes the establishment by the OISA of an Islamic Shipping Company – Bakkah Shipping Company or BASCO in response to the Resolution adopted at the 21st Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Karachi in 1993. In supporting this project Malaysia hopes that the capital required to launch the company could be raised by the member states of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), members of the Organisation of the Islamic Shipowners' Association and Islamic Financial Institutions. We already have the resources and networking in place, namely the ships belonging to members of the OISA and the members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference as ready clients. BASCO, among others, could act as an agent, chartering the ships from the members of the Association and sharing the profits from these activities among the participating companies.

13. In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to thank the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud, for his invaluable and continued support to the OISA. Without His Majesty's support the OISA would not have been as active as it is today.

14. I would like also to thank the Secretary General of the OISA for his contribution to the Association and to wish the meeting of the Executive Committee and the General Assembly of OISA every success.

15. With these words and in the name of Allah, the most Benevolent and Merciful, I declare open the meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Shipowners' Association.

Thank you and Wassalammu alaikum Warahamatullahi Wabarakatuh