

**By : DATUK SERI SYED HAMID ALBAR**  
**Venue : PUTRAJAYA**  
**Date : 1 JULY 2002**  
**Title : BILATERAL MEETING BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE**  
**ON THE PACKAGE OF ISSUES**

His Excellency Professor S. Jayakumar  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore,

Distinguished Members of the Singapore and Malaysian Delegations,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, let me extend a warm welcome to Your Excellency and members of the Singapore delegation to this First Ministerial Meeting on the Package of Issues between Malaysia and Singapore in Putrajaya today.

2. This two-day Meeting is extremely important for both countries. It demonstrates our sincere commitment to resolve controversial issues that have long affected relations between our two countries. Malaysia is pleased to be the host. We appreciate Your Excellency's coming to Malaysia and the priority that you have given to this Meeting as demonstrated by your presence.

Your Excellency,

3. The primary task before us is to resolve the package of issues, consistent with the understanding reached between Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and Prime Minister Goh Chock Tong during the ASEAN Summit in Hanoi in December in 1998. These are the supply of water to Singapore, the KTM Land in Singapore, the stationing of Malaysian Custom, Immigration and Quarantine Officials, the withdrawal from the Central Provident Fund and the use of Malaysia's Airspace by the Singapore Air Force (RSAF).

4. As Your Excellency is aware, three rounds of negotiations at the Senior Officials' level on the package of issues have not brought about the desired results. All eyes are now upon us to reach a solution. It is therefore incumbent upon us to reach an amicable settlement. The earlier we do so, the better it is for our bilateral relations.

Your Excellency,

5. Malaysia appreciates the complexity of the issues involved. The historical, political, economic, legal and social dimension of our negotiations today can be most

complicated. Resolving the issues in a package can even be more difficult than treating them singly.

6. But the demands imposed upon us require that we do our level best. This calls for mutual trust, sincerity and commitment. We need to have an open mind. We need to have a win-win situation. We need to be creative, not with a view to further complicating what are already a difficult set of issues but to contribute to resolving them. We need to be constructive and not inject elements the impact of which would only derail the very process of reaching a settlement.

7. The greatest challenge before us is not to outdo one another. This is not an exercise in one upmanship. On the contrary, it is to help each other, the ultimate objective of which is to seek what is fair and just for the people of our two countries.

8. The responsibility that we shoulder in reaching an amicable solution is no less great. A satisfactory outcome of our efforts would have a positive impact on our relations. Such an impact would not only benefit the present but the future generations, long after we ourselves are all gone from this earth.

Your Excellency,

9. Malaysia and Singapore are close neighbours. Our mutual interests demand that we learn to live with each other. There is simply too much at stake. Conflicts and confrontation will not bring us anywhere. Shared prosperity is always better than destroying what we have built up over the years, through hard work, sweat, tears and pain.

10. It is with the above backdrop that Malaysia is approaching this very important Ministerial Meeting. It is our sincere hope that, given mutual understanding, goodwill, maturity, wisdom and mutual accommodation in the interest of the larger good, the objective for which this meeting is held and for which so much is expected, would be crowned with success.

Thank you.