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Venue : MANDARIN ORIENTAL, KUALA LUMPUR
Date : 16 FEBRUARY 2003
**Title : CLOSING STATEMENT AT THE PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE FOR PEACE
MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

YB Dato' Hishammuddin Tun Hussein
Patron, PEACE Malaysia

Yang Dihormati Sdr. Zulkifli Mohd. Alwi
Working Group Coordinator,
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Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri-Tan Sri, Dato'-Dato'

Ahli-ahli Jawatankuasa PEACE Malaysia

Tuan-tuan dan Puan-puan yang dihormati sekalian

1. Foremost, I would like to express my appreciation to PEACE Malaysia for inviting me to speak and deliver the Closing Statement at this International Conference.

2. I am pleased to see that since its establishment, the Movement has managed to gather enormous support for its noble cause from numerous NGOs and individuals from all strata and walks of life. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate PEACE Malaysia for its success in getting more than a million signatures for its Peace campaign. Indeed, in a world plagued with conflicts, there is no greater issue for humanity than the search for a lasting global peace and security. Conferences such as these have an important role to play in encouraging participants to reflect on the effective ways to engage in this quest.

3. As a peace loving nation, we are naturally concern over developments that are unfolding before us in the Middle East, in particular on the issue of Iraq and Palestine. Iraq has been charged by the US and its allies of developing weapons of mass destruction with subsequent threat of war. Malaysia is strongly opposed to any unilateral action against Iraq. War is not a right solution to any conflict. It would lead to the destruction of the country, lost of innocent lives and misery to many, in particular young innocent children and the elderly. It will further destabilize the region which is already grappling with unjust Israeli aggression on Palestine. In addition it may further fan the flames of terrorism worldwide. Malaysia will continue to find ways to resolve this issue peacefully through diplomatic channels and via multilateral process. War is not the best solution to resolve this issue. There is no proof, despite of wide-ranging number of inspections carried out by the UN arms inspectors in Iraq recently, that Iraq is in possession of huge weapons of mass destruction that could be used to threaten the security of neighbouring countries and the region. The war, if it were to happen, is bound to have serious negative effects on the world economy. Malaysia will not support effort by any country to wage war against Iraq. Malaysia concurs with the position taken by the overwhelming members

of the UN Security Council including France, Russia, China and Germany that UNMOVIC and IAEA (UN weapons inspection team) should be given more time to complete its task in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1441. Malaysia will continue to support Iraq's sovereignty and condemns any attempt to replace Baghdad's regime by any external force as it is illegal, undemocratic and tantamount to interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. Malaysia is pleased with the cooperation rendered by Iraq to the weapons inspection team and strongly feels that Iraq's compliance should be compensated with assurance of full and unconditional lifting of sanctions against it.

4. I am deeply gratified to hear voices of support by our people against war in Iraq. We are not alone in opposing war for there is growing public sentiment against war in Iraq worldwide. The ability of PEACE Malaysia to collect the signatures of over one million Malaysians to support its petition for world peace and to avert war in Iraq only goes to prove that the people and the Government of Malaysia are hand-in-hand in the quest for peace and prosperity and in rejecting any element which leads to war. Malaysians are indeed not alone in this struggle as we are joined by many anti-war activists in major cities all over the world in rejecting the looming threat of war on Iraq.

5. On the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory remains precarious as violence continues to claim lives and injure civilians. In addition, curfews and restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities continued to impoverish increasing numbers of Palestinians. The international community cannot stand idle as violence in Palestine threatens not just regional peace but also world peace. We believe that much of the root causes of acts of terrorism today are connected with the Palestinian issue and therefore there is a dire need for the international community to urgently address this issue. Malaysia strongly condemns the military aggression and persistent violation of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Israeli authorities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These acts of war against the Palestinian do not contribute to the ongoing efforts to seek a solution for a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace in the Middle-east. We call on the international community to exert pressure on Israel to halt all military action, to withdraw fully from all the occupied Palestinian territory and comply with all relevant UN resolutions as well as the principle of 'land for peace' and other arrangements reached to date as the only way to achieve a lasting solution to the crisis. Malaysia supports the diplomatic efforts of the ' Quartet' together with the Arab initiative and agrees that these efforts in the political security, economic and institution-building fields must proceed together. I wish to reiterate Malaysia's support for the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestine state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

6. On disarmament, Malaysia believes that nuclear disarmament is a paramount disarmament concern. The world community, especially the nuclear weapon states has the obligation to ensure the end of the nuclear arms race and the phasing out of nuclear weapons. Malaysia would like to call on nuclear weapon states to fulfill its obligation under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and live up to its commitments on nuclear disarmament. The nuclear weapon states should commit themselves to nuclear disarmament through a phased programme of reduction of their nuclear arsenals within a specified time frame, culminating in their

total elimination. Malaysia signed the NPT in 1968 and ratified it in 1970. Malaysia is of the view that NPT State Parties should actively promote the universality of the Treaty, which is the cornerstone of international peace and security.

7. Malaysia signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), on 23 July 1998 but has yet to ratify it. The CTBT advances international peace and security by making significant contributions towards the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It halts the development of nuclear weapons of mass destruction thereby giving new impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Treaty has yet to come into force as presently only 31 out of 44 countries whose ratification are necessary for the Treaty to come into force, as required by Article 14 of the CTBT, have ratified the Treaty. The decision by the US not to ratify CTBT has drawn back the possibility of early entry into force of the Treaty. Malaysia is strongly opposed to any nuclear testing and possession of nuclear weapons by any state and would like to urge the nuclear weapon states to demonstrate a stronger commitment to the goals of nuclear disarmament.

8. Malaysia fully supports the comprehensive ban on chemical weapons and was among the early signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) when it was opened for signature in Paris in January 1993. Malaysia hopes that the achievement of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons will help to promote international confidence and further contribute to world peace and security. Malaysia signed the CWC on 13 January 1993 and ratified it on 20 April 2000.

9. Similarly Malaysia supports the Biological Weapons Convention which bans the development, production and stockpiling of any inhumane category of weapons of mass destruction. Malaysia signed the BWC in 1972 and ratified it in 1991.

YBhg. Dato' Hishammuddin

Tan Sri-Tan Sri, Dato'-Dato'

Tuan-tuan dan Puan-puan,

10. In a matter of days, Malaysia will be hosting the XIII NAM Summit. The Summit will provide the opportunity for NAM member countries to have an exchange of views and opinions on a number of pressing issues of importance to the Movement and find a practical solutions to them.

11. Malaysia will have to bear straight on the full responsibility of running the Movement over the next three years. It would be a heavy responsibility with full of challenges for us all. This is because Malaysia would be leading the Movement during a period when political uncertainty looms over the world. The responsibilities are indeed arduous for Malaysia bearing in mind the hopes and confidence placed on it by other member countries that Malaysia will be able to lead the Movement successfully. Hence the NAM XIII Summit has far reaching significance for Malaysia.

12. At the same time, Malaysia would be leading the Movement at a time when questions have been raised about the relevance of NAM itself as a grouping of Third World developing countries. As such, the issue of revitalizing NAM would be one of the major focus of attention at the Summit.

13. Through the dynamic leadership of Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, Malaysia enjoys good standing internationally arising from our independent and active voice at various international fora. This is something that we need to sustain over the years. Many NAM member countries feel that Malaysia is in a position to contribute positively to the ideals and future advancement of the Movement in particular to provide more clout for NAM in international negotiations. NAM certainly has the numbers and the voice to do so effectively if all its members are able to act in unison.

14. Building roads to peace is a profound responsibility that we must collectively and individually share. Although the goal of a permanent global peace seems far reaching, I believe there are few who would doubt that we must continue to work in concert and with great tolerance towards making this world a more peaceful place for all. Indeed, every single one of us here have a particular role to play.

15. In conclusion I would like to congratulate PEACE Malaysia for the successful hosting of this international conference and to those who have presented their papers at the Conference today and not forgetting all those who have contributed much to the range of activities organized by PEACE Malaysia in championing for its just cause for world peace, much of which would not have been possible without your able support.

16. I would like to end my speech by quoting a wise sayings from a famous American writer (Ralph Waldo Emerson) which reads ' THE REAL LASTING VICTORIES ARE THOSE OF PEACE AND NOT WAR '

17. With these words, I officially declare the Conference, closed.

Thank you.