



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS



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**STATEMENT BY THE HON. DATO' SRI REEZAL MERICAN
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DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MALAYSIA**

**AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE
ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST,
INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION**

NEW YORK, 22 OCTOBER 2015

His Excellency Mr. José Manuel García-Margallo,
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain and President of the Security
Council for the month of October,

On behalf of my delegation, I thank you Excellency, for convening and chairing this
meeting. Malaysia highly values your presence here today, which clearly demonstrates
the importance Spain attaches to the subject of today's open debate.

2. I wish to also warmly recognise the Foreign Ministers of Jordan, New Zealand,
and Venezuela and also thank them for their presence here today.
3. I appreciate the in-depth briefing by Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson.
4. We also associate ourselves with the statements to be delivered by Iran and
Kuwait, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Organisation of Islamic
Cooperation respectively.

Mr. President,

5. The untiring efforts by the Secretary-General in his recent visit to the Middle East
region in a bid to steer the parties towards peace, and to return to meaningful
negotiations based on the two-state solution, is much appreciated.

6. We strongly support the goal of the two-state solution. However, we are increasingly becoming sceptical that the best way to achieve that goal is **only** through direct bilateral negotiations between Palestine and Israel.

7. Twenty years since Oslo, the possibility of achieving the two-state solution based on direct bilateral negotiations appears more remote than ever.

8. The continuing expansion of illegal Israeli settlements and construction of the illegal Apartheid Wall by Israel, as well as the increasing radicalism on both sides have perhaps irreparably damaged any possibility of two states to exist side-by-side in peace and security.

Mr. President,

9. In 1947, the Trustee Power in the Middle East decided to refer the problematic Palestine Mandate to the UN, after they were severely tested and had grown weary from years of fighting a bloody guerrilla war with Jewish paramilitary organisations.

10. These organisations perpetrated terror and violence by targeting British interests and even civilian infrastructure, in their bid to achieve statehood.

11. The unwillingness of both sides, the Palestinians and the Jews to come to an agreement essentially forced the Trustee Power to resort to the UN.

12. In response, the UN General Assembly subsequently decided to partition the disputed land, creating the state of Israel.

13. Now, over six decades later, in an ironic and tragic twist of logic, the international community declares that Palestinian statehood can **only** be achieved through direct bilateral negotiations with Israel, the Occupying Power.

14. Furthermore, there are some of us who do not want the UN Security Council, let alone the General Assembly, to play any substantial role in realising the two-state solution.

15. If we had applied the same standard on Israel and insisted for the past 70 years that it could only come into being via direct bilateral negotiations with its Arab neighbours, would the State of Israel exist today?

16. Yet today, Palestine's attempts to access the same legal, diplomatic and multilateral channels are derided as "unilateral and counter-productive measures" which would jeopardise the so-called "peace process".

Mr. President,

17. If the principal players are sincere about salvaging the two-state solution, there is a serious need to do away with old thinking and habits and come up with bold actions to achieve this end, because our past approaches proved that we have miserably failed.

18. For too long now, every time violence erupts in Occupied Palestine, the approach by the international community, including this Council, is to scramble to patch up the ruins of the peace process.

19. Then, we would dangle whatever we could muster in front of the Palestinians, as a bait to pacify them, so that their frustration and anger would soon subside, in the false hope of a successful initiative.

20. Once the situation in Occupied Palestine returns to calm, the world would again forget about the plight of the Palestinians. They would continue to languish in inhumane conditions under occupation, until they lose their patience once again and the next cycle of violence erupts.

21. Albert Einstein once said: "*Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting a different result*". After two decades of failed attempts, let us stop fooling ourselves that our old approach could still work.

22. It is foolhardy to wait several more decades, before we finally muster the political will and courage to do what is right and just for Palestine.

Mr. President,

23. The majority of UN member states in this room, including those around this table had, at one time or another, fought for self-determination from colonial powers.

24. Based on our own historical struggles toward self-determination, perhaps we should step back and try to understand the message that we have been sending to the Palestinians all this while.

25. Effectively, what we have been saying to them is:

“Obey the Occupying or Colonial Power despite the grave injustice, discrimination, the lack of freedom and human rights violations done unto you;

Lay down your arms and do not fight the Occupation because doing so would amount to terrorism or anti-semitism;

Do not proceed with any legal or diplomatic means for statehood because it might anger the Occupying Power into not granting you independence;

Wait patiently for your statehood, even though the Occupying Power is changing the realities on the ground to make your statehood ultimately impossible;

and most of all, stay moderate and subservient at all times despite losing your children, babies, your parents, your spouse, and your siblings, due to the illegal targeting or disproportionate use of force by the Occupying Power, even if there is no accountability for the perpetrators.”

26. I really wonder, how many of us in this room and around this table, with our own history of legitimate struggle for self-determination, could pass the standards that we are currently insisting on the Palestinians?

Mr. President,

27. The continuing occupation of Palestine and the systematic oppression suffered by its people serve as a powerful unifying factor that have inflamed radicalism and extremism globally.

28. We certainly do not condone the terrorism and violent extremism perpetrated by the likes of Da’esh and Al-Qaeda, who manipulate the plight and suffering of the Palestinians.

29. Having said that, can we reasonably expect the long suffering, oppressed, humiliated and subjugated Palestinian population to remain passive when all legal, political and diplomatic means of resistance have been effectively blocked for decades?

30. Even Malaysia – a non-Arab country, in a region culturally and geographically removed from the Middle East, with a moderate, majority Muslim population – **is not spared** from increasing radicalism due to frustration and anger at the sufferings of fellow Muslims in Palestine.

Mr. President,

31. Since Oslo, a whole generation of Palestinians have grown into adulthood knowing only occupation, blockade, repression, and violence.

32. If the Occupation continues, we will eventually reap what we sow, and one day, we will wake up realising that peace and the two-state solution are no longer within our reach.

33. It is thus in the international community's interest to act urgently to address the root cause of the conflict and end Israeli occupation. I wish to echo the sentiments expressed by my colleagues around the table and by the UN Secretary-General, on the need to re-establish the political horizon and to return to a meaningful peace process.

34. We strongly support and welcome all peaceful initiatives to resolve the long-standing conflict and revive the Middle East Peace Process, including the initiatives by France and New Zealand.

35. Nevertheless, Malaysia would stress the need to set a reasonable timeframe to realise the two-state solution. The Council has various tools at its disposal that it could use, to realise this aim, for the maintenance of international peace and security.

36. Malaysia also firmly supports the request by Palestine for UN protection, including by having temporary international observers in Occupied Palestine. We have numerous precedents for such UN protection to guide us in our deliberation.

37. I urge the Council start serious discussions on the request for UN protection, in close cooperation with the Secretary-General. Malaysia believes that such UN protection would provide a way forward to stem the current debilitating violence, in line with international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Conventions.

38. This would ensure accountability for all parties to the conflict and enforce adherence to international law, international human rights law, and various General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Mr. President,

39. We are hopeful that the Council could agree on an outcome for this Open Debate that would manifest our solidarity on the gravity of the situation on the ground.

40. Should the Council continue to remain paralysed, rendering itself irrelevant as far as the Middle East Peace Process is concerned, we must be prepared to look beyond the Council for a solution. We must not give up all diplomatic efforts and let the Occupation continue in perpetuity.

41. The international community must continue to uphold the legitimate right to self-determination, which constitutes one of the very core principles of the UN when it was created 70 years ago.

42. We owe it to the Palestinian people to mobilise our political will and explore other peaceful, legal and diplomatic avenues available to us, in order to end the longest occupation in modern history.

43. If we do not act, there is no doubt that we will be condemned by history, and we will face a bleaker future.

I thank you, Mr. President.
