

very minor. It was only later on, especially following the arson of Al-Aqsa mosque in 1969, that this issue has become a major concern for the Malaysian people and government. Since then, Malaysia has acted in concert with fellow Muslim countries within the OIC, and on several occasions took the cause of the Palestinian people to International forums such as the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Noticeably, the arson led to the reenergizing of Islam in the International arena through the holding of the first Islamic Summit Conference in Rabat. The Tunku himself attended the Islamic Summit. His speech on the occasion may suggest that Islam had already become an important pillar of Malaysia's foreign policy. In his address, Tunku stressed that The Palestinian issue was actually an Islamic issue. He stated that:

I have come here as a brother in Islam, moved by my very deep concern and anxiety for the holy places of Jerusalem. We are all here at this gathering not as so called Arab Muslim or non Arab Muslims, but simply as brothers in Islam. The future is not a matter between Israel and Jordan only, or even between Israel and the other Arab states only. It is a matter of deepest concern to us all as Muslims²²

Malaysia's pro-Arab attitude in the Palestinian issue during Tun Razak was clearly manifested in its unreserved support for the Arab cause in the West Asian conflict. All the joint-communications, signed between Malaysia and the Arab states during the Premier's visit of January 1975, reiterated the conviction that the liberation of occupied Arab lands and the restoration of the right of the Palestinian people were pre-requisites for a lasting peace in the Middle East.²³ They also reaffirmed their recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

The most significant event related to the Palestinian issue during the tenure of Tun Razak was the eruption of the Arab-Israeli War of

22. Speech by Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman at the First Islamic Summit Conference in Rabat, Morocco, September 22-24, 1969. See also *The Malay Mail*, 26/9/1969.

23. See *The Straits Times*, 23 January 1975 and *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, March 1975, pp. 7-22