ISLAM IN MALAYSIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER THE PREMIERSHIP OF DR MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work of this thesis is my own except for quotation and summary which have been duly acknowledged.

20 May 2006

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P34550
Malaysia's foreign policy has undergone successive adjustments since its independence in 1957. The external relations of Malaysia under Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Prime Minister, were markedly pro-Western. When Tun Abdul Razak was at the helm, Malaysia's foreign policy, while continuing its close ties with the West, began to focus on the Arab world, partly because of its admission to the Organization of the Islamic Organization (OIC) in 1972. This pro-Arab foreign policy was followed through by Malaysia under the leadership of Tun Hussein Onn. When Dr Mahathir came to power, he broadened the scope of Malaysia's foreign policy from pro-Arab to pro-Muslim. This thesis examines the role of Islam in the foreign policy of the Mahathir Government. Domestically, Malaysia promoted Islamic values and stressed the role of Islam in national development and in the promotion of the personal economic well-being of the Malays. Externally, Malaysia worked through the OIC to promote the unity of the Muslim world and its economic cooperation with Muslim countries. This thesis discusses the role of Islam in Malaysia's foreign policy under the leadership of Dr Mahathir in the context of the following research areas: The role of Moderate Islam and Islamisation policy in Malaysia's foreign policy; the Orientation of Malaysia's policy on the Muslim world under the umbrella of the OIC; Malaysia's foreign policy in relation to the Iraq - Iran war, Bosnia war and other issues concerning the Muslim world. The outcome of this analysis suggest that Islam is the important factor in Malaysia's foreign policy especially during the Dr Mahathir's era. Islam was not only the trust of its foreign policy, but Islam was the important factor to improve the economic well being of Muslims under the umbrella of OIC, the crimes against defenseless Muslims in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, and Chechnya as well as the humanitarian support to Muslims minorities in Southeast Asia.
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