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Tunku's reply to PM's speech

PETALING JAYA, Sun. — Tunku Abdul Rahman said today that it is not true that Umno, the Alliance and the Cabinet were not consulted before the formation of Malaysia was announced at a function in Singapore.

"What was said at the Press Club lunch (in Singapore on the matter) was said in jest and not intended to be serious," he added in a statement.

He was replying to an allegation by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the first Government of the country was undemocratic and had not brought up such matters for discussion.

Dr Mahathir had also said, in his presidential address at the Umno general assembly on Oct 28, that the decision on the separation of Singapore from Malaysia was made in London and that Tun Abdul Razak (then Deputy Prime Minister) was informed of the decision only after it was made.

Dr Mahathir also said that the late Syed Jaafar Albar was later removed from his post as Umno secretary-general for opposing the move.

The Tunku said the British were in fact the last to know about the Government's decision to expel Singapore from the Federation.

The decision was finally discussed in Parliament and it was agreed to by all except Syed Jaafar, he said.

Syed Jaafar resigned as Umno secretary-general and was not removed, he added.

The Tunku noted that Dr Mahathir had said in his speech that more than 2,000 people were detained under the ISA during the terms of the previous three Prime Ministers.

"He mentioned that Lim Kit Siang, Aziz Ishak and Anwar Ibrahim were also detained under the ISA then.

"It was necessary in my time to fight the communist terrorists and (then Indonesian President) Sukarno's men who were out to crush Malaysia.

"The ISA was used for communists and never used against political leaders," he said.

He added that those detained before were all suspected members of the communist terrorist organisations, their sympathisers and front men.