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BIN HUSSEIN, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER,  
ON THE OCCASION OF UNITED NATIONS DAY  
OVER RADIO MALAYSIA ON 24.10.67

Today is the 22nd Anniversary of United Nations - a day when men of goodwill everywhere meet to renew their faith in the principles and purposes of the Character they are pledged to uphold.

The United Nations Organisation was formed by 51 Member Nations in the wake of World War II with the avowed purpose of preventing a repetition of further catastrophe. With more territories emerging from colonial servitude the Organisation has, since its inception, more than doubled in size to its present membership of 122. The purposes of the United Nations are fully enshrined in its Charter and are too well known to require repetition by me.

As I have said, 22 years have elapsed since the information of this world body and during this period it has successfully weathered many crises some of which seriously threatened its very survival. It is true that with its limitations the United Nations Organisation has not been able to find solutions to all the problems confronting it, nor has it been possible for it to implement some of the solutions for a variety of reasons. But for all shortcomings the United Nations Organisation remains the only hope on which mankind can rely for the safeguard of international peace and security and for the promotion of better living standards for the people of the world.

The year that just ended continues to be beset with several international problems, the magnitude of some of which has put the Organisation to supreme tests. The search for peace is never an easy one.

In the past much has been done by the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. One has only to recall the successes achieved in this respect by the intervention of the United Nations in the West Irian issue, Palestine, Kashmir, the Congo and Cyprus. Nevertheless, Malaysia has a particular cause for sorrow with regard to the inability so far of the United Nations to find a just and prompt solution to the Middle East problem. With the passing of time the question as to who directed the first shot has now become an academic one. But the consequence of that first shot, or to put it in its true perspective, the pre-emptive attack by Israel, has caused such grave concern to the Arab countries while the very political map of the Middle East is undergoing a drastic change. In this day and age, to change the political status quo of any region through force of military might is an anachronism and militates against a cardinal tenet of the United Nations Charter. Such an act may create a dangerous precedent, or usher in its wake a chain reaction, imperilling the very foundations of the security of small nations and peace and stability of any given region. I sincerely hope that this state of affairs will not be allowed to continue much longer by default on the part of the major powers in the United Nations and that a speedy solution of the problem would be forthcoming.

The United Nations has played a significant role in trying to persuade South Africa to discontinue its abhorrent practice of Apartheid but all the appeals to that country so far has gone unheeded. It has also called on all States to stop selling or shipping to South Africa arms, ammunition and military vehicles and materials used for their manufacture and maintenance. Furthermore, in advocating even broader measures, such as the severing of trade and diplomatic relations with that country, it has deplored the attitude of South Africa's main trading partners in the regard. However, we note with deep concern that the strong and industrialised countries of the West who have the power in them to bring about constructive changes in Southern Africa do not appear to be seriously interested in seeing the course of justice triumph there. Let us hope that this unhappy state of affairs will not be allowed to prolong much longer and that those defaulting member nations in the wider interest of justice and fairplay will make sacrifices and will fully support the United Nations to uphold fundamental human rights and dignity.

In the economic and social fields the United Nations has made sizeable contributions in assisting developing countries in their economic developments, in bringing relief and rehabilitation to refugees, in bringing comfort to the sick and generally in promoting better living standards the world over. Much, however, still remains to be done in these fields, and in the field of trade and development, in particular, the scant progress achieved by developing countries as a result of the reluctance of the industrialised countries to change their restrictive trade policies has not been encouraging. For developing countries like Malaysia who are trying very hard to make our economy viable these restrictive trade policies pose a great difficulty. For us in particular the current year when the price of one of our major exports, viz, rubber has hit a new time low, these policies give rise to grave concern.

In South East Asia the Formation of A S E A N recently promises to be a good augury in regional and economic and social co-operation. This is a logical trend and I am sure similar regional bodies will be formed elsewhere particularly among the developing countries working for economic and social upliftment. Let us hope that the various regional commissions of the United Nations will be actively concerned in the future in assisting these regional bodies in helping themselves.

The shortcomings of the United Nations should not be a cause for despair but rather should spur the Member States to make more vigorous and imaginative efforts towards making the Organisation the effective body it was intended to be for the realisation of the aims and objectives of the Charter.

Let us on this day, the 22nd Anniversary of the United Nations re-dedicate ourselves to the principles and purposes of the Charter and renew our determination to pass on to posterity a world free of war, where fundamental human rights and dignity are preserved, where the rule of law prevails and where social and economic progress and better standards of life are the motivating factors that guide Society.