

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE
IN ADDRESSING THE DEFENCE MINISTER
OF UNITED KINGDOM AT KUALA LUMPUR
ON 20TH MARCH, 1962**

I am very glad to have this opportunity of welcoming you, Mr Minister,¹ to the Federation of Malaya and particularly to our Ministry of Defence. I extend this welcome to the members of your delegation and I wish to say how much we appreciate your presence in Kuala Lumpur. My only regret is that your stay here is so short. We hope you will come again and stay a little longer with us. You will be pleased to note that this is the first visit we have had of a Minister of Defence in Office from the United Kingdom since Malaya became a British Protectorate and now a member of the Commonwealth.

We have already agreed in the London Talks that, in the event of the creation of the proposed Federation of Malaysia, the Agreement on External Defence and Mutual Assistance of 1957 and its annexures should be extended to apply to all the territories of the proposed Federation of Malaysia and any reference in that Agreement of the Federation of Malaya should be deemed to apply to the Federation of Malaysia. We have also agreed that this should be subject to the proviso that the Government of the Federation of Malaya would afford to the Government of the United Kingdom the right to continue to maintain the bases and other facilities at present occupied by their service authorities within the State of Singapore and would permit the United Kingdom to make such use of these bases and facilities as the United Kingdom might consider necessary for the purpose of assisting the defence of Malaysia and for Commonwealth defence and for the preservation of peace in Southeast Asia.

In the context of the Malaysian project, we also discussed in London the problems connected with the transfer of British responsibilities for internal security and defence over the State of Singapore and the Borneo territories to the new Federation of Malaysia. We agreed that further talks should be held in Malaya between your representatives and mine to examine the mechanics of the transfer and all the problems connected therewith. The

1 Mr Harold Watkinson.

run down of the British Forces, the build-up of the Federation Armed Forces and the manner in which your Government might assist in this build-up and glad indeed that we are able to start the series of talks today and that you are present here in person to lead your delegation to the first plenary meeting.

The transfer of responsibilities for internal security and defence will undoubtedly increase the burden on our police and armed forces. The extended Defence Agreement would, however, take care of part of defence responsibilities but assumption of full responsibility for internal security and the increase in the area of our territories and sea and air space would make it necessary for the Federation of Malaysia to make a greater contribution to her own defence. With this in mind, we have prepared a plan on the size and shape for the Malaysian armed forces which involves a substantial increase of our present Order of Battle. This will, no doubt, place a heavy burden on us financially and otherwise.

This raises serious problems for us. You will appreciate that our plans for raising the standard of living of our people, through the Rural Development plan, social welfare projects and education, are very important weapons in the Cold War in Southeast Asia. All this will cost vast sums of money. For this reason we must look for financial assistance from our friends in building up our defence capability.

We realise you wish to reduce your direct defence expenditure in this area. Nevertheless, we believe, in conformity with the principles underlying the Defence Agreement, that the defence of the Malaysian territories from militant Communism is a vital concern to us both as well as to the free world.

We have the manpower and we are prepared to increase the strength of our Armed Forces but would welcome assistance from our allies. There are three particular respects in which I feel assistance would be required.

First, in the transfer of accommodation, installations ships and equipment, as well as in facilitating the transfer of Malayan personnel now serving in the British forces. I would add that the installations so transferred would add to the common pool of resources available for our mutual use in the event of war.

Secondly, in continued and possibly increased assistance in officer training and in the provision of seconded personnel. We

have enjoyed the assistance of seconded personnel from the British Forces and other Commonwealth Countries for many years. With the expansion of our Armed Forces this requirement will continue—and in fact increase considerably. At the same time, I am sure you will appreciate—Mr Minister—that this produces political problems for us. This is mainly on account of the cost involved of employing seconded personnel. I think it is common ground between us that the sooner we can expand our Armed Forces the sooner we can relieve you of some of your commitments in this area. I am sure we are equally agreed that expanded and efficient Malaysian Armed Forces would be a notable contribution to the stability of the area and for that reason an important factor in defence of the free world against communism. Your assistance in mitigating the heavy financial burden which secondment entails would be very welcome.

Thirdly, the expansion of our Armed Forces will involve heavy increases of expenditure both capital and recurrent. We shall find it most difficult, if not impossible, to bear this additional burden of expenditure without outside help, while we are concentrating our efforts on economic development. We feel we will need help from friends both in the Commonwealth as well as in the free world to tie us over during the initial period until our development programme produces results and enables us to increase our revenue. The defence of this area forms the front-line in the defence of the free world against communism, and I am sure that our friends and allies appreciate our position and would come to our aid.

As you are aware, in deciding upon an expansion programme the Federation Government have given priority to close defence aspect. The primary role of the Armed Forces will be defence, though they will also be available to support the Royal Federation of Malaya Police Force in the preservation of public order. However, if the defence of Malaysia is to be a realistic and active matter, positive steps must be taken.

I refer in particular to the exchange of intelligence and joint operational defence planning.

- (a) We agreed at the London Talks that arrangements should be made for a freer two-way flow of intelligence. Discussions on staff level have already taken place, at the

moment we have little to offer, but I hope that with our Military Attaches in Jakarta and Bangkok that we may be in a position to make a contribution to the common pool of intelligence.

- (b)* In regard to operational defence planning, you are fully aware that the Defence Agreement provides for joint consultation and planning for the defence of Malaya. It may be assumed that this principle will apply to the territories of greater Malaysia. So far no active steps have been taken to concert defence plan for the defence of Malaya but I am sure will agree that with the birth of Malaysia the establishment of joint planning machinery is an urgent necessity so that our individual effort may be coordinated to the best effect.

The terms of Reference have been agreed and I fully appreciate that your urgent concern is to arrange the transfer of responsibility for Preservation of Public Order in Singapore and the Borneo territories to the Federation Government. While I fully appreciate your concern, and have given directions to our delegation that this shall be a matter for priority, nevertheless I believe it must, so far as the Federation Government is concerned, be considered within the context of defence of Malaysia as a whole and the part that both Commonwealth and Federation Forces should play to this end.