

**SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE AT THE
HANDING OVER CEREMONY OF THE ROYAL
AIR FORCE STATION, KUALA LUMPUR TO
THE ROYAL MALAYAN AIR FORCE, AT THE
AIRFIELD PADANG OCTOBER 25, 1960**

Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is an historic date in the development of the Royal Malayan Air Force. From today they will be responsible for the running of all aspects of this, their first airfield. Our Air Force is still very young and it reflects great credit on all ranks that it is already in a position to take over completely the running of this station.

The operation of a modern Air Force is a complex matter, demanding much skill and experience in all ranks. It is quite clear that, despite their diligent application, our officers and airmen could not have progressed as quickly as they have without considerable assistance. This assistance has readily been provided by the United Kingdom, and by the Royal Air Force in particular, and it has taken many forms.

Through their generosity, a number of our officers and the majority of our airmen came to us fully trained from the Royal Air Force Regiment (Malaya) and Royal Air Force (Malaya). This of itself gave us a cadre of experience which otherwise would have taken many years to build. It also enabled us to start operating very quickly after our formation and saved a lot of time and money which otherwise would have to have been devoted to training.

Despite this good start, the Royal Malayan Air Force could not have operated independently during these past two years. During

1 Airfield at Jalan Kapal Terbang lama, Kuala Lumpur.

this time our airmen and technicians have been working alongside their Royal Air Force counter-parts and have received guidance and training from them. As our men have gained the necessary skill and experience they have taken over more responsible aspects of the airfield organisation and the Royal Air Force personnel have been withdrawn gradually. There has been no rigid programme in this and the Royal Air Force have always adapted their rate of withdrawal to meet our requirements. Seldom, if ever, can an Air Force have developed on a more satisfactory basis than has the Royal Malayan Air Force, nor can more generous understanding and assistance have been given than by the Royal Air Force during this period.

Apart from these matters of personnel and technical assistance, the United Kingdom Government has contributed in other material ways to the development of the Royal Malayan Air Force. This gift of the air station, together with earlier financial assistance in providing aircraft and training for pilots and technicians, represents a saving to the Federation Government of many millions of dollars. This material assistance has speeded the growth of the Royal Malayan Air Force so that, since April this year, it has been able to play its part alongside its sister Air Forces of the Commonwealth in the fight against the communist. It has also relieved the Federation Government of a considerable financial burden during a critical stage in the development of the country as a whole.

In accepting this gift of the airfield, on behalf of the Federation Government, I should therefore like, Mr High Commissioner, to thank you personally and the United Kingdom Government for the great and varied assistance we have received, particularly from the Royal Air Force, assistance, which has made it possible for this ceremony to take place so early in the history of the Royal Malayan Air Force.