

UCAPAN PERDANA MENTERI MENGENAI
DASAR LUAR MALAYSIA DI DEWAN RAKYAT
PADA 26HB JULAI, 1971

Tuan Yang Dipertua,

Saya mohon izin Tuan dan juga Ahli-ahli Dewan ini untuk membuat satu kenyataan berkenaan dengan dasar luar negeri kita terutama sekali berkaitan dengan perkembangan-perkembangan dalam beberapa bulan yang lepas.

Tuan Yang Dipertua,

Dari pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang telah dikemukakan dalam sidang Dewan ini, saya mengambil kesimpulan bahawa terdapat kecenderungan yang menyeluruh di kalangan Ahli-ahli Dewan ini terutamanya perkembangan terakhir dalam perhubungan kita dengan Republik Rakyat China.

Saya sukacita adanya kecenderungan ini oleh kerana apa yang kita buat atau pun sebaliknya di bidang dasar luar negeri boleh menyentuh keselamatan dan kesetabilan negara di masa hadapan.

Saya ingin mengingatkan bahawa dasar luar negeri bukanlah merupakan satu kemewahan yang boleh dipermudah-mudahkan sebagai Pernyataan Simbolik Kemerdekaan sebuah negara. Sebaliknya dasar luar adalah merupakan garis pertama benteng pertahanan negara. Bagaimanapun saya telah perhatikan juga setengah-setengah soalan yang dikemukakan oleh Ahli Yang Berhormat mendedahkan salah faham dan keraguan mereka mengenai perkembangan-perkembangan dalam dasar luar negeri Kerajaan. Dengan sebab itulah saya berharap kenyataan saya ini akan menghapuskan sebarang salah pengertian demi menghilangkan kebimbangan yang mungkin ada di kalangan ahli-ahli serta orang ramai amnya.

Tuan Yang Dipertua,

Oleh sebab perkara yang saya hendak sebut ini penting dan mustahak difaham terutama sekali oleh negara-negara sahabat dan negara-negara luar, saya mohon izin untuk bercakap dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

As I have stated, I have noted from the Parliamentary questions which have been submitted during the course of this session that there is widespread interest among Members of this House on various aspects of our foreign policy and in particular on recent developments in our relations with the People's Republic of China. I am happy to note this interest because what we do or not do in the field of foreign policy can vitally affect the future security and stability of our country. Foreign policy is not a luxury to be indulged in as a symbolic assertion of independence. It represents in fact our first line of defence. However, I have also noted that some of these questions reveal a degree of misunderstanding and confusion regarding these recent developments in our foreign policy. I hope that this statement which I am now making will help to clear any misconception and allay any fears which may exist.

Sir, there is no doubt that the situation in Southeast Asia today is in a state of flux. Many of the familiar factors in the equation of Southeast Asia have changed and it is clear that a new equation is slowly emerging. Certain salient features of the regional landscape of the last decade are fast disappearing and new features are appearing on the horizon. There is, for example, the British military withdrawal from the Malaysia/Singapore area—somewhat revised, it is true, after the return to office of the Conservative Party last June. There is the gradual American disengagement from the Indo-China area. There is the growing power of Japan and her increasing interest in Southeast Asia beyond questions of trade only. Above all there is the new posture in Chinese foreign policy and her gradual emergence onto the regional and international scene. The change in China's attitude began quietly enough with the so-called ping-pong diplomacy and other similarly gradual and cautious steps in the last few months. Last week it suddenly climaxed in the dramatic announcement of the secret journey to Peking by Dr Kissinger and the forthcoming visit to Peking by President Nixon.

It is clear, therefore, that we are living in a world very different from that which obtained up to only a few years ago—even, in some ways, up to only a few months ago. In these circumstances, it behoves us to understand clearly the forces at play, so that

we will adopt a foreign policy that is careful, coherent and far-sighted in conformity with our principles and our basic national interest to ensure our own security and our own stability.

So far as this Government is concerned, I had directed, when I assumed office as Prime Minister last September that a fresh look be taken on foreign policy questions and in particular on events and developments in the region. In the light of that review, I have had occasion to articulate not only in this House but at other forums as well, both abroad and at home our new foreign policy priorities and perspectives. I have also affirmed that our foreign policy is based on the principles of non-alignment. This is not intended to be a moralistic statement of principle only. It is based also on considerations of realism and our national interest. Following from this basic conviction therefore, we have advocated a policy of neutralisation of Southeast Asia.

When we look at the area around us, we cannot fail to note that Southeast Asia has not enjoyed peace and security for more than two decades. This region has been convulsed by war essentially because of the involvement of major powers in our affairs. It is clear from this therefore that peace and stability can only be safeguarded by a policy of neutralisation which will ensure that this region will no longer be a theatre of conflict for the competing interests of the major powers. It is also clear that this policy of neutralisation can only be successful if it receives the understanding and support—or, more specifically, the guarantee—of the great powers themselves, namely China, the Soviet Union and the United States. This requires first of all that the States in the region should work to bring about the conditions which are necessary for the realisation of the centralisation proposed and show that a neutralised Southeast Asia meets with the basic legitimate interests of the great powers themselves.

Now, when we look at events in this part of the world over the span of the last two decades, another striking fact which emerges is the exclusion of China from playing her proper international and regional role. China has in fact been excluded from the international and regional arena. I do not propose to examine here the reasons for this, still less to apportion praise or blame. I only state our conviction that such exclusion of China is unhealthy, unrealistic and short-sighted. Hence we have emphasized

the need to bring China into the United Nations where she can play her proper role.

I should like to explain clearly here our China policy. It is not a two-China policy or a one-China one-Taiwan policy. It is in fact a one-China policy, on the understanding that the right of the people of Taiwan to decide their own future for themselves should not be denied to them. I have made this plain on many occasions but there continue to arise questions which suggest a misunderstanding or confusion on this matter. I hope that our policy is now clear once and for all. It is on this basis that we assert that China should assume her rightful place at the United Nations.

On the bilateral level our relations with China at present will be at the unofficial level dealing with trade matters. The question of establishing diplomatic relations will have to be considered as a separate matter at a later date. It is our policy to have diplomatic relations with all countries on the basis of peaceful co-existence, respect for our sovereignty and territorial integrity and scrupulous non-interference in our internal affairs—principles which, I need hardly add, guide our own action. This is the basis for eventual diplomatic relations which we trust will in due course be clearly manifested. Let me remind the House that in formulating and executing our foreign policy we cannot take a theoretical view of things. We can only proceed by accepting the world as it is not as we would like it to be and by so managing our affairs as to ensure the integrity and sovereignty of our country.

As I have already explained, our foreign policy is based on the principles of co-existence and of conducting relations with all countries, irrespective of their political ideologies, which wish to be friendly with us. However, I must emphasize that our internal affairs are our exclusive concern and responsibility. Our national ideology is articulated in the Rukunegara and we shall not tolerate anyone who seeks to impose a foreign ideology on us. In our domestic policy we shall continue to be vigilant against the Malayan Communist Party. At the same time, we fully respect the right of all countries to follow their own ideology, their own way of life and their own economic and social systems without any interference from anyone. We for our part do not seek to change other countries to our way of life and in the same manner we expect that right

for ourselves. It follows therefore that our foreign policy of seeking friendship with all countries irrespective of their political ideologies is not at variance with our internal commitment to oppose militant communism.

Let there be no mistake about that commitment. We in Malaysia have had long and bitter experience of the Malayan Communist Party. There was the twelve-year Emergency which pretended to be a struggle against the colonial authorities but which was clearly exposed for what it was as an anti-national struggle by anti-national elements. There was the communist-inspired confrontation against Malaysia. There are the communist operations in our northern border with Thailand and along the Sarawak-Kalimantan border. We now see evidence of their increasing militancy and desperation. I wish therefore to reiterate that on the basis of our own bitter experience, this Government is fully aware of the internal communist danger and will always be vigilant against it.

This does not minimise our commitment to neutralisation as the best permanent solution to ensure the security and stability of Southeast Asia. We are naturally aware that this is a long-term solution and it requires to be accepted by the super powers as well as by the countries of the region themselves. It requires that we should first of all keep our own houses in order, that we should resolve sources of tension and conflict within the region, and that we should develop stronger ties of co-operation and solidarity among ourselves in Southeast Asia. It also requires, as I have already explained, the support of the super powers which can only be secured when we can demonstrate that this arrangement provides a guarantee that their respective interests will not be adversely affected.

I have also had occasion to explain in this House the progress which has been made in winning acceptance for this concept. I remember that when I first made this proposal there was a general attitude of scepticism. It was regarded as unrealistic, idealistic or even worse. But we have persevered with explaining this concept during the course of my official visits abroad, during visits to this country by foreign dignitaries and through the normal diplomatic channels. I think the House will be aware that there has been increasing understanding of this concept and a more favourable response to it in recent months. Indeed, as a result of the latest exchanges between China and the United States, there has been

growing appreciation that this policy far from being idealistic is in fact a very realistic one. Our analysis has in fact been confirmed by events and our proposal has gradually come to be accepted as the best way in which to ensure peace and stability in this region in the years to come.

While we look ahead we should not of course lose sight of our more immediate dangers and preoccupations. We would be guilty of a gross dereliction of duty if we did not take all the necessary precautions for our defence. Hence together with our neutralisation proposal, we have taken steps in the military field to ensure our own security. I wish to reiterate here that the premise of our defence policy is one of self-reliance and we shall therefore do our utmost to strengthen our military capability. At the same time, we have taken steps to co-operate with our neighbours, Indonesia and Thailand, along our respective borders with them where we both face a common threat. The House is also aware that the Five-power Defence Arrangements were formalised at the meeting in London last April which would enable us to seek the assistance of our allies in the event of any form of external threat or aggression.

I should perhaps take a moment here to explain that the Five-Power Defence Arrangement are in no way incompatible with our neutralisation proposal or our non-aligned policy. As I have already explained, the neutralisation proposal is a long-term objective towards which we are working; the Five-Power Arrangements are for the purpose of meeting our present defence needs. These arrangements are entirely defensive in nature, they are not directed against anyone or any ideology and they are not concluded in the context of great power rivalries. Non-aligned countries are fully aware of the character of these Arrangements and have accepted that they are not at variance with our non-aligned foreign policy.

Finally, I should like to refer to the broad frame-work in which our separate decisions on foreign policy are made. In considering questions on foreign policy, we must not be too taken up with immediate and transient issues. We must have a sense of history and we must be guided by a vision of the future. We must be conscious of the past—and by this I mean not just the immediate past of the last one or two decades. We must have a broad sweep of the historical processes and impulses affecting the area around us. In this way we develop a correct and coherent view of the

future so that we will then work towards a clear and specific objective within which all our other decisions must be framed. For us in Malaysia our vision for the future is that of a Community of Southeast Asia. Ever since our independence we have been consistent advocates of regional co-operation. I need not detail here to the House our efforts both through bilateral as well as multi-lateral arrangements to forge a greater sense of understanding and co-operation, unity and solidarity among the countries of Southeast Asia. When we look at the map of Asia, it is possible to see that Southeast Asia is a clear and coherent unit which through the vicissitudes of history has not been able to play its proper role in the world. As this Government works to strengthen our links with other Southeast Asian countries to promote greater regional co-operation and understanding and to evolve new relationship with the emerging power centres of the seventies, we shall be guided by this vision of a community of nations in Southeast Asia which will finally fulfil its proper destiny in the world.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

The familiar land-marks of the past are disappearing. Some of these changes are almost imperceptible; others are more obvious and dramatic. We will therefore need to be alert and agile as we formulate our foreign policy in the uncertain days ahead. I have sought in these remarks to clarify some of the outstanding factors which we must take into account and I hope that Honourable Members will now have a clear idea of the priorities, the direction and the momentum of our foreign policy, particularly in the context of developments in this region.