

## FIRST ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVE RESULTS

### AND THE DEADLY SINS OF BUREAUCRACY

*Tun Razak hazarded a guess as to what the letters E.R.O.P.A. stood for. He surmised that they might stand for expedite results out of plans and administration. In his opinion the first essential to achieve development results was to set up a machinery of Government which would ensure a directive control for the correct implementation of Plans and which would function as an efficient machine manned by a purposeful singleminded team. He explained this in his speech at the official opening of the 5th General Assembly of Eastern Regional Organisation for Public Administration at Dewan Tunku Abdul Rahman on 20th June, 1968.*



Tun Razak speaking at the opening of the General Assembly of Eastern Regional Organisation for Public Administration in Kuala Lumpur, on 20th June, 1968. The conference marked the tenth anniversary of EROPA.

In opening any international conference, as is my task today, one has to be very careful what one says so as *not to be misunderstood*, particularly by the Press!

I remember, the story of a Conference on Tuberculosis, when the opening speaker, with considerable *dramatic effect* put

right-hand over his heart and said.      have Tuberculosis very  
*near my heart*"

The result was that his speech was mis-reported by a junior reporter, who produced an article the next day, saying how *serious* it was to have the disease *Tuberculosis creeping near one's heart*, and wondered how much longer this V.I.P speaker had to live in this world!

But I. to-day. stand here *with no fear* of being *misreported* can put my right-hand over my heart and say, that the subject of your Conference, the subject of *Development*. is the one which is *nearest to my heart!*

The *heart and essence* of Development which we in Malaysia have been trying to apply to the utmost, for the last ten years, is the ability to *expedite tangible results out of our Plans*, by the correct application of our *Administrative* resources.

My Development "war cry" for the last ten years has been, as everyone in Malaysia knows, to produce *quick results* in Development, and when I went deeply into the meaning of this word EROPA. I came to the conclusion that it must stand for the following:

"Expedite Results Out of Plans and Administrative action."

Recently. on this very platform. I was involved in the opening of a Conference on Telecommunications!

To-day. I feel I am involved with the subject of "Telepathy!"

Because when I read your background Paper for this EROPA Seminar; the Paper produced by Prof. Hahn-Been Lee, your Co-ordinator. I felt a *very close telepathic bond* between the thoughts generated by your Planning Sessions in Bangkok, last March, and the thoughts generated in my own heart when I apply my mind to Development.

I can prove this by giving you a summary of the action Malaysia has taken on Development since gaining Independence ten years ago.

I think you will agree when you hear what I say that we in fact apply the very same thoughts and philosophy which are contained in your background Paper.

As the main topic of your Seminar is Administrative Reforms and Innovations, let me give you a very brief description of how we in Malaysia set about the task of trying to get our Development Programme really moving.

Any government, particularly, one with a colonial heritage tends to be merely temporary and carry out little more than basic minimum administration with no sense of urgency and no dedication to development for the sake of the nation.

Because the Civil Service after Independence was the same Civil Service which had served during the days of colonial dependence, the first thing which had to be done in evolving a technique of development implementation was to bring about a change of attitude in the hearts and minds of every Government employee; to instil a sense of urgency, a sense of dedication to development, a spirit of initiative and a feeling of "belonging".

In other words convening an impersonal, lifeless administrative Government machine, into a vital, lively and loyal group human-beings, with a feeling of *belonging*, dedicated not merely to their monthly pay packets, but rather to the Development and Service of their country.

I am pleased, since Independence, there has been a great change in the attitude of the entire public servants in this country—in their awareness of their responsibility, of the desirability of working together as a team and to achieving results. There is an awareness among the public servants that they are serving their people, their country and this in itself is a reward and satisfaction. Indeed. I would say with modesty that a new spirit and a new life has permeated throughout the Government Service.

The other main deterrent factors which tend to delay development are what I call the 'Deadly Sins of Bureaucracy.' such as inter-departmental jealousy in the execution of Government functions, conflicting departmental policies lack of co-ordination between departments in carrying out national policies; lack of day-to-day co-operation between Government officers on the ground mainly due to lack of understanding of each other's task and **responsibilities**.

So often, each Government department thinks that its own function is the most important without appreciating the importance of others.

These factors or "Deadly Sins" tended in the past to decrease the efficiency of Government and hampered development.

Therefore, we realised in the early days of our Independence that the *first essential* to achieve development results was to set up a machinery of Government which would eradicate such defects; which would ensure a *directive control* for the implementation of our Plans and would ensure that our Government, at all levels, would function as an efficient machine manned by a *purposeful single-minded* team and driven towards one goal, that of our National Development for the benefit of our people.

Of the three-fold process of national development planning, implementation and evaluation. I would say that implementation is perhaps the most difficult of the three and requires extremely clear definition of action if Development Plans are. in fact, to be translated from paper to projects producing tangible results, both on the ground and in raising the standard of living of our people.

The technique of national economic development planning is now well advanced throughout the world and it is fairly easy for any developing nation to have a plan prepared, but the technique of implementation and putting some push and punch into the translation of that plan from paper into factual results is a technique for which there was little international knowledge available. At the time we launched our Development Programme immediately after Independence, therefore, we in Malaysia had to evolve our own technique of Plan implementation.

As I understand that in the course of your discussions, not only do you have a background paper on our system of Development Operations Room, you are scheduled to pay a visit to our National Development Operations Room.

That being so. I shall not go into further details of how we try to do things in Malaysia.

I would, however, like to mention two things which I noticed in your background Paper; the first is concerning Economic Planners; it is mentioned that they used to make an *economic plan* and then almost wash their hands off it and leave the implementation to the politicians and bureaucrats!

In the old days. I noticed this myself.

The old concept of an economic planner reminds me of a *cook* in a *bad* restaurant; he will stick to his kitchen, leaving the responsibility of *sewing up his dishes* to the waiter, who has to serve his cooking "mistakes". If the soup was too *watery* or the steak burned, it was the *waiter* who got hell from the customer, while the cook remained closetted within the security of his kitchen! This has been also the practice of some economic planners!

My definition of the good economic planner is like a Chef in a good restaurant, who has the courage to come out of the kitchen to see his food being *eaten*, and taking the *blame* if need be. for any *mistakes* of his own making.

We apply this principle in the Operations Room technique by making sure that the Planners come out of their economic "kitchen" and sit side by side in development briefings with both politicians and implementers so that they cannot *run away* from any *economic errors* they have made at the planning stage.

The other point I would like to mention which is raised in your Paper, and that is. regarding the wholesale adoption of ideas which have been successful in developed countries and transplanted lock, stock and barrel, to developing countries.

We also in the past have suffered from this defect but now we have got over it.

The answer is not entirely to *reject ideas* which have been successful elsewhere, but to regard them in the same way as a good plastic surgeon who carries out a skin graft or a doctor, a blood transfusion!

You cannot just graft *any bit* of skin on the human body and expect it to take, neither can you pump in *any type* of blood and expect it to be absorbed into the human system.

So it is. in my opinion, with development ideas from other countries.

One has to examine very closely the anatomy, background. traditions and social economic structure of one's own country. and then examine the new idea to be transplanted and make sure that conditions at the receiving end are such that a marriage of ideas and implementation will in fact succeed!

Looking at your programme for discussions I can see that no mention is made of the role that a politician should play in the

administrative reforms and innovations with regard to Development.

You are probably wise to ignore this aspect but as a politician myself, allow me to have a little say regarding the role of a politician, particularly, with regard to development implementation which seems to be the dominating theme of your future discussions.

Let me remind you of a quotation which dates back to the 16th century when an eminent scholar described the "art of government" by politicians in these words: "They that govern *most* make *least* noise!"

I wonder how many of you in this room agree with this oft repeated quotation?

I have no intention of putting my question to the vote before you. because to do so. I would have to first analyse it in detail, and having been trained basically as a lawyer. I would have to go into the detailed definition of each word, particularly, the word "*Noise.*"

However, let me give you my opinion on this quotation. I think it really needs to be brought-up-to-date!

My political philosophy and the philosophy of my government is that a good politician and a good government should *make noises*, but in the right places. In other words, they should create the *right noises* in the *right places*.

I feel it is this principle that should apply throughout the developing nations of this Region *Less noise* on political *platforms* and *more noise* from the *echoes* of *economic* development made by the physical forces at work laying the foundation of stability and building the bulwarks of economic progress in the developing countries of our Region.

I like a *lot of noise*, and in certain areas of our national development nothing is sweeter to my ears than the *noise* of *tractors* and *bull-dozers* clearing our jungles for the development of new land and new life.

I like the *noise* made by the *hammer* and *clatter* of thousands of workmen as they get on with the task of building new schools. new hospitals, new bridges, new water-supplies, and all these hundreds of development projects which are *vital* to the stability and economic progress of a developing country such as Malaysia.

It is my belief that if all political leaders in the world were really dedicated to these types of **noises**, then less frequently would we have in this troubled world the **noises** made by guns and bullets because I believe that the true application of sound economic planning in countries such as ours with the resultant benefits of higher standard of living and greater economic productivity is in fact the best defence against aggression and an insurance policy against internal subversion.

You have made great strides towards the aim of every sensible citizen in the Region. The aim of **regional cooperation** is substantiated by tangible results. You have, before your Association, a tremendous challenge and opportunity to help stabilise Development and help push along the path of progress all member countries in this region.

## **CLOSER LINK URGED**

"IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF EUROPE AND  
SOUTH EAST ASIA"

*Though separated geographically by thousands of miles and though they differ in culture, creed and stock. both Malaysia and Belgium share the same ideas. This was pointed out by Tun Abdul Razak at a luncheon given in his honour by Mr W. De Clercq. the Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium, in Brussels in May. 1968. Opportunity was taken by the Tun in the course of the following speech. to thank Belgium for the assistance she had given Malaysia in the past and for her promise to continue such help.*

Our two countries, Malaysia and Belgium, have maintained close and friendly relations ever since we in Malaysia achieved independence 11 years ago. Last year we have had the privilege of receiving the Economic and Trade Mission from your country headed by His Royal Highness Prince Albert, and a year before that in 1966 we also had another economic mission from your country.