

THE GEORGE ADLINGTON SYME ORATION
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

" REGIONAL COOPERATION "

by

Rt. Hon. Dato Hussein Onn
Prime Minister of Malaysia
7th May. 1978 - 7.40 p.m.
Kuala Lumpur Hilton.

1. Sir Edward Hughes President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons,
2. Mr. Watt, Dean of the Faculty of Anaesthetists,
3. The Chairman of the Organising Committee,
(Dr Dato Al-Rady),
4. The President. College of Surgeons of Malaysia,
(Tan Sri A. Majid Ismail)
5. Council Members of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons,
6. Distinguished Fellows,
7. Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. May I, first of all, extend to you a very warm welcome to Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia. We are extremely proud, and indeed honoured, to be the host country for the 51st General Scientific Meeting of your great College. I understand that this is the first time that the College is holding its meeting in Malaysia, and the second time outside Australia and New Zealand. Malaysia welcomes any meeting such as this, because it will not only cement further, the close and friendly relations

between Malaysia and the participating countries, but will also create better understanding and appreciation among the professions, and their members, of their achievements and problems. I believe that there is no better way to understand one another than through meetings and contacts between professions and individuals. We hope that you will have a pleasant stay and bring back home happy memories of Malaysia.

2. The Royal Australian College of Surgeons has honoured me tonight with the

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award of Honorary Fellowship. While I am grateful for the honours, I do not think that I have enough courage to cut open people.

The reason I did not become a surgeon was that I could not stand the sight of blood, and the thought of leaving behind in the stomach, hammer, nails, screwdriver and saw, terrified me. However, remembering that lawless once also did surgery, I may practise surgery by becoming a barber, when I am no longer - wanted as a politician.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

3. Although in order to qualify myself as a surgeon, all I need do is to deliver an oration before this august Assembly, I do not intend to speak about surgery or, on how to avoid mistaking a kidney for the appendix. The subject of my oration is "Regional Cooperation", which has to do more with politics and economics, than with stomach ulcer, cancer or gallstones.

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I am

grateful for the opportunity to participate in a tradition which has endured for more than four decades. At a time when the

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only certainty is change itself, and traditions everywhere never so vigorously assaulted, the endurance of the George Adlington Syme Oration, is indeed remarkable.

5. However, recognising the inevitability of change, does not by itself guarantee endurance. We have also to understand the forces of change, and most of all, we must be willing to make fundamental adjustments in response to these forces. A common form of attack against institutions and

traditions is directed at their incompatibility with present-day realities. It is the natural requirement of the process of change and evolution, that institutions and traditions that cannot defend themselves against this favor of attack will succumb to make room for new ones. Those which do not succumb to these onslaughts, can survive only after adjustments have been made and they survive in a form which is different from the original.

4. An important force of change arises from greater international inter-communication, the shrinking of physical distances due to rapid communication, and the ease of travel. The development of communication to such a stage, has brought into sharp focus, the interdependence of nations as a present-day reality. This is a reality which no governments should overlook when deliberating on the direction of national policies.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

5. Unfortunately, while these forces

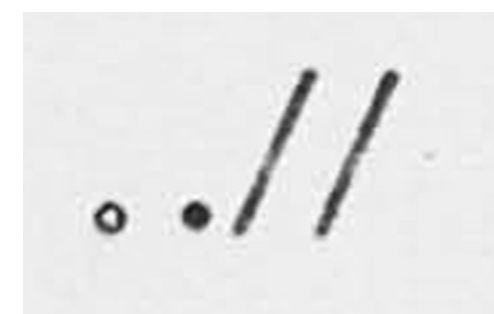
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of change can be identified, and the inevitability of change be acknowledged, there is still the lack of will to adjust and modify, so as to be compatible with present-day realities. A resistance to change results in contradictions, which will only complicate matters.

6. An obvious contradiction today, is in the resurgence of old-style nationalism amongst the developed nations of the world.

The extrovertedness of the developed world has undergone a turnabout, and is replaced by an introverted brand of nationalism, which we would normally associate with developing nations. We would have expected the developed nations to be less prone to such nostalgia. After all, had not Western writers prophesied, the withering away of introverted nationalism as a consequence of greater international inter-communication?

7. This resurgence of nationalism amongst the developed nations, has arisen from their lack of confidence to face up to the challenges of a new international economic order, We can compare their nationalism with the nationalism of the newly independent nations in the 40's and the 50's. At that time, these newly independent nations projected a nationalism, which displayed their lack of confidence in having to face an economic system, where relationships were based on domination and dependence. Today, the developed nations



display a similar lack of confidence in the face of the need to establish new relationships of interdependence, in place of the older patterns of dominance and dependence.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

8. This resurgence of introverted nationalism is manifested in the state of the world economy today. Trade protectionism, is at its worse ever level for more than a generation. Monetary instability has been left unchecked, because governments refuse

by the major industrial countries

to lead world economic recovery, have been unfulfilled, because this governments lack the will to introduce expansionary domestic policies. In short, the world's major economies

are lacking in political will and moral
courage to meet the challenges of
stimulating world economic recovery.

9. On the other hand, developing nations are assuming an extrovertedness which used to be the hallmark of developed nations two decades ago. Developing nations are now playing their role to the full in the community of nations, and in all international fora, we are asking the developed nations to make international cooperation a reality. When the alternative to cooperation

tation, it is unfortunate that till today, there has been no positive response from the developed nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

10. If we are faced with the choice between economic stagnation and confrontation, it will not be too difficult to foresee our preference. However, there is still an interim step towards the full realisation

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of international cooperation and this is, in like-minded nations, no matter how few, to get together in the interest of their economic progress and prosperity. This interim measure is regional cooperation.

11. There is nothing new about regional cooperation. *from a long time ago,* Nations have / learned to cooperate with their neighbours

if they are to avoid confrontation and war. In cooperation, there have to be many adjustments. These may be made deliberately or they may have evolved from necessity.

However they may come by, these adjustments are-necessary for cooperation to succeed. For example, the Theory of Comparative Advantage was born from such a necessity, so as to place cooperation on a workable basis for the greater economic development of the partners.

12. The European Economic Community or EEC, has been singled out many times, as an example of regional cooperation. The inability of the three major economies to perform their designated roles as "engines" of world economic recovery, has caused the EEC

to proceed on their own. This is a new development. By doing so, the EEC is demonstrating its willingness to play its role as a major economic force in stimulating world economic recovery, regardless of the inaction on the part of some of the major industrial economies outside of the EEC. In addition, as a united group, the EEC have negotiated with Japan on the questions of trade imbalances and greater trade liberalisation, and have had some success.

13. In this region, ASEAN is a good example of regional cooperation, ASEAN is

intensifying and expanding the cooperation amongst its members, so as to increase our economic self-reliance. We have given emphasis to the implementation of programmes such as the launching of the ASEAN industrial projects and the introduction and expansion of preferential trading arrangements. ASEAN is also cooperating in the international fora, through the presentation of a coordinated approach on international economic issues, which directly affect the economies of the ASEAN countries.

14. These regional cooperative efforts towards the self-reliance of ASEAN nations, in no way preclude the participation of the developed economies of the Asian-Pacific region. In fact, ASEAN views their participation as essential for regional and national development. It was with this purpose that the leaders of Japan, Australia and New Zealand were invited to the post-Summit meetings with the ASEAN Heads of Government in Kuala Lumpur last year.

15. ASEAN is continuing the dialogue with these developed nations and we have enjoying some measure of success. These three nations have committed financial and technical assistance to projects in ASEAN merger nations, and there have been a willingness on their part to support price stabilisation schemes for primary commodities,

We acknowledge the importance of such assistance and support to complement our own efforts. However, we would like to see greater willingness on their part to adopt a deliberate policy of expanding intra-Asian-

Pacific trade, and undertaking greater private investment in the developing countries of the region. These are more in keeping with the realities of our times. Developing nations in this region have progressed, over the past decade, to a position where it is not aid, but trade and private investment, which can further sustain and improve their economic self-reliance.

16. Through a policy of trade and investment, the three developed nations

can help to build up a healthy and enmeshing net of relations amongst the countries of this region, and enhance their economic development. This requires a sense of statesmanship, which we feel, governments of our developed neighbours are capable of. A fundamental requirement is that their economies will have to be restructured on the basis of comparative advantage. They should not be involved in industries which can best be undertaken by the developing nations. There must be a liberalisation of trade,

and the willingness to arrange for the transfer of capital, skills and technology, so as to complement the efforts at self-reliance by the developing nations. This means the doing away with introverted nationalism in their economic policies.

17. If we acknowledge the inevitability of change, and we recognise the need for new responses to new realities, and we accept the interdependence of nations, regional cooperation can become the economic institution and tradition through which, the future of

the Asian-Pacific region can be built with confidence. Regional cooperation requires many adjustments in national perspectives and outlook, and we acknowledge that it will be a long process. However, the urgency with which we regard world economic recovery, must motivate us to take the first step towards regional cooperation in the Asian-Pacific region. The first step is the acknowledgement that our future and destiny are linked together with those of the other countries in this region.

18. I have spoken at some length about economic development. However, for a developing nation, the issue of security is inseparable from economic development. Economic development cannot proceed without the maintenance of national security, and likewise, national security cannot exist without sustained economic development. Their inseparable nature, therefore, emphasises even more, the importance for developed nations to realise their role and responsibility towards economic cooperation with their lesser developed neighbours.

19. For developed countries which are free from internal threats to their national security, the inter-relationship between economics and security is perhaps has appreciated, and therefore, they may fail to understand the urgency with which we are seeking greater economic development. It is our hope that those of you who have been able to come to Malaysia, will be able to understand better our people's aspirations for more economic progress which we believe can come through regional cooperation.

20. If it was Sir Garfield Berwick's hope in his oration in 1965 that you, as frequent travellers to other lands, be the antennae to broadcast Australian nationalism abroad, it is now our hope that those same antennae can also receive the aspirations and hopes of the people of the countries you visit. Only then will we benefit from the greater international inter-communication.

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21. In conclusion, I thank you once more for this opportunity, and I wish you all a successful meeting.



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