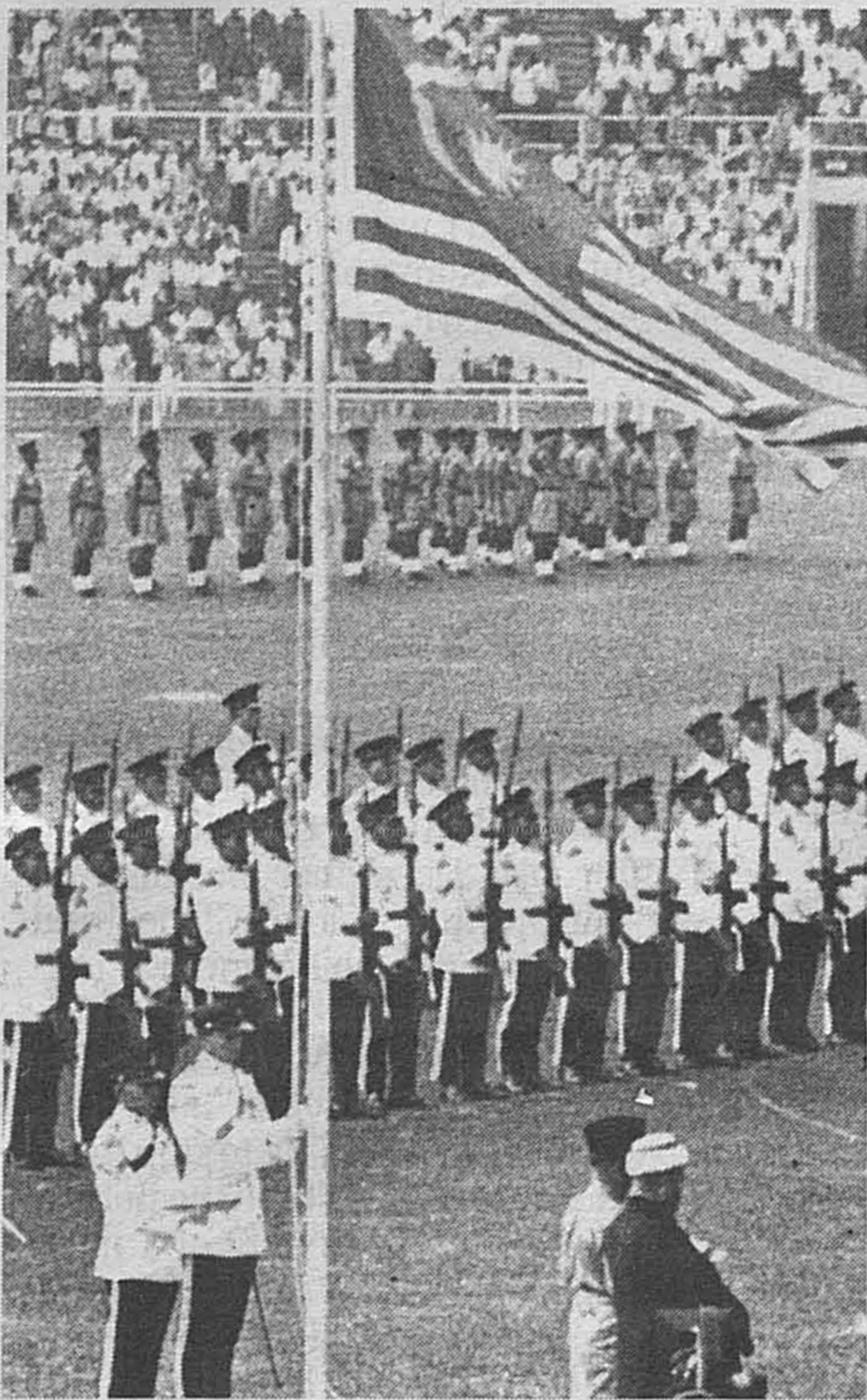


47th MALAYSIA DAY

NST-16/09/2010



Tunku Abdul Rahman's son, Tunku Ahmad Nehrang, raising the Malaysian flag on Sept 16, 1963.



Tunku Abdul Rahman leading the shouts of 'Merdeka' after he had read the proclamation of the formation of Malaysia at Stadium Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur. Behind him are the sultans.

"MERDEKA Malaysia! The great day we have awaited has come at last, the birth of Malaysia," wrote Tunku Abdul Rahman in his Malaysia Day message on this day in 1963.

Finally, the first prime minister could breathe a sigh of relief. Two years after his proposal, Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah (then British North Borneo) became a union, free from the British.

"Firm in our resolve for nationhood, the peoples of Malaysia look forward with confidence to a future of peace and prosperity, harmony and happiness.

"We do so because we know that we have come together through our own free will and desire in the true spirit of brotherhood and the love of freedom," he wrote.

But Tunku said the road to nationhood was not easy, as it was marred by surprises and disappointments, tension and crises.

His grand vision of this new nation to be called Malaysia would be founded on the ideals of freedom, justice and equality. Economically, the union would serve to bolster the new nation as each territory had its own strength.

Singapore, an important trading port, was undergoing a massive industrial boom. Development might have been slower in the Borneo territories but each state had one thing Singapore lacked.

From timber, oil and gas, and fertile grounds, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei had seemingly endless natural resources. A union would also keep communism, which was thriving in Singapore and the interiors of Sarawak, in check.

It was a union made in heaven.



Lord Cameron Cobbold (fourth from right), former governor of Sarawak Sir Anthony Abell (third from right) and former chief secretary to Malaya Sir David Watherston (second from right) were members of the Cobbold Commission. The commission went to Sabah and Sarawak to gather information and opinions from residents about the formation of Malaysia.

Tunku had in 1961 proposed to merge Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei.

Singapore and Brunei reacted positively to the news. Sabah and Sarawak, on the other hand, were apprehensive. They were worried that the union would lead to a loss of rights for indigenous peoples and Malays.

The Malaysian Solidarity Consultative Committee, comprising representatives from four states except Brunei, was formed to gather and put together views and opinions on the proposed federation. Brunei served as an observer.

The series of four meetings held to work out the constitutional, economic and political aspects of Malaysia resulted in a 44-point memorandum.



With the inquiry into Malaysia completed, the chief delegates of the five proposed states signed a memorandum. They are (left to right) Yeo Cheng Hoe (Sarawak), Tun Mustapha Harun (Sabah), Tan Sri Khir Johari (Malaya), Tun Fuad Stephens (Sabah), Datuk Pengiran Ali (Brunei) as observer and Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore).