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SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY
PRIME MINISTER AT THE MEETING OF
COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT,
LAGOS, ON 11TH JANUARY, 1966.

Mr. Prime Minister,

I should like, at the outset, to say how pleased I am to be here at this meeting which is a momentous occasion in the history of the Commonwealth.

We are here today to consider a matter of great importance not only to the concept of the Commonwealth but also to the peace and security of Africa.

I should like to associate myself with other representatives in offering our sincere congratulations to you Mr. Prime Minister, our worthy host, for your initiative and the trouble that you have taken to convene this meeting.

When my Prime Minister¹ received on the 11th of December last year from Sir Abu Bakar a message proposing this meeting, he readily accepted it.

We in Malaysia have always supported and cherished the Commonwealth and strongly believe that differences can be resolved by frank exchanges of views in this association of free nations. Also, we in Malaysia, Mr. Prime Minister, have a real and genuine regard and affection for you and have always respected your views and judgements. My Prime Minister had wanted to be present at this meeting but owing to the Ramadan and pressing engagements at home, he is unable to do so and I have been asked to convey to you, Mr. Prime Minister, and to all his colleagues his deepest regret for not being present here today. He has also asked me to let you know that it is his constant prayer that our deliberations would be fruitful and that this conference will be a success.

Mr. Prime Minister, I would like to add my own words of welcome to what you and others have so ably expressed to our friend the Prime Minister of Singapore who is attending this conference for the first time.

Singapore until the 9th of August last year was part of Malaysia but on that day became a sovereign independent nation. We in Malaysia were pleased to be able to sponsor Singapore for membership in the Commonwealth and also for the United Nations. It is, therefore, a matter of added pleasure for me to be able to join you and our other colleagues to greet the Singapore representative at this meeting.

Mr. Prime Minister, we are all here as you have so ably and lucidly explained, with one objective in mind, the quelling of this rebellious Smith regime in Rhodesia and the providing for that country of a legal and constitutional government pledged to granting to the Rhodesian people their inherit political rights in keeping with the aspirations of the majority.

Malaysia's attitude in this has been clear and unequivocal. We in Malaysia have always shown great abhorrence for such acts which totally disregard the fundamental human rights and principles of democracy. It was precisely for this reason that we took a very strong stand against South Africa and her policy of apartheid.

When the Smith regime was threatening UDI we stated quite categorically how we would regard such action and urged Britain to take all measures to prevent it. When Smith took the headlong plunge into UDI we called upon the British Government to employ all necessary measures not precluding the use of force to quell the rebellion and assured Britain that Malaysia would give total moral and diplomatic support and other possible forms of assistance to her to reassert her authority in Rhodesia. We have supported all resolutions and moves on Rhodesia in the various bodies of the United Nations, the Commonwealth and other international forums at which we were participants.

We have severed all relations with Rhodesia. We do not recognize documents, even postage stamps issued by the Smith regime. In addition to Exchange Control measures we have banned all trade

with Rhodesia in spite of its adverse effect on our growing and developing industries.

There is no doubt that we all here agree that the Smith rebel regime must be brought down immediately. We have heard what measures the British Government has taken and will be taking in order to put down this illegal regime. These measures have been and are being taken on the assumption that they will have the impact necessary to quell the rebellion with a period of time. But the British Government has not indicated alternative measures should the present sanctions fail to produce the desired effect. *We consider it essential that there should be contingency planning for such an event, and this planning, we feel, should not preclude the possibility of the use of force.* We were, therefore, disturbed when we heard recently that Mr. Wilson told Parliament that he would never use force (under any circumstances) to bring down that regime.

I feel, in such a matter of great concern to us all and in order to get understanding and cooperation among us close friends of the Commonwealth, we should be frank and put all our cards on the table. So for the reasons given by the British Government for not wanting to use force have not been convincing. I know that politically it may be difficult for Mr. Wilson to carry the British people with him on such a course of action. However, as we are all politicians we do understand that our main concern is survival! *Therefore* I suggest that if Mr. Wilson can be frank and tell us clearly his reasons for not wanting to use force should the need arise, we may be able to consider together effective measures that would be acceptable to all of us at this conference to achieve our objectives to bring down this rebel regime.*

Having considered measures to achieve our first objectives we must not lose sight of the need to prepare for the establishment of a legal and constitutional government. We should also not overlook the possibility of strife and violence within Rhodesia as a result of these measures. It is necessary, as an interim measure, for the British Government to institute direct rule over Rhodesia whilst at the same time bringing in the nationalist Africans to take part in the Government. Such a government must have the means, if necessary, backed by force, to govern the country effectively. *We would therefore wish to be assured by the British Government*

that adequate preparations are currently being made for measures that will be necessary in order to enforce direct rule.

My delegation which heartedly support your views, Mr. Chairman regarding the future of Rhodesia.

Once direct rule has been established steps will have to be taken, and here other members of the Commonwealth can provide facilities to assist the members of the African community there so that they can have a share in the administration of the country. By this means a truly representative institution can be established and Rhodesia can be self-governing and ultimately independent based on the principles of majority rule. It must be the policy to bring about rapid and systematic progress towards majority rule. We are somewhat appalled over the fact that facilities now afforded to African Rhodesians are extremely inadequate and feel that the position must be put right without further delay.

As I have said, African nationalist leaders should be given every opportunity to participate in the administration of the country. At the earliest opportunity a constitutional conference should be held with participation of representatives of the entire population with a view to adopting a new constitution which would enshrine measures guaranteeing an early progress to majority rule. The constitution should have sufficiently representatives institutions to ensure that the granting of independence would be justified and acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole.

We in Malaysia are full of admiration for the stand taken by President Kenneth Kaunda regardless of the effects on his country. *As fellow members of the Commonwealth we should give full consideration for concerted assistance to Zambia.* This concerted assistance should be extended, if necessary, to include Malawi.

Mr. Prime Minister, we are here to discuss freely and frankly measures we have to take to resolve this problem of great concern to all of us. I have no doubt that if we are frank and sincere in our views we will achieve our objectives. Our gathering here and our free and frank discussions of serious and sensitive issues are typical examples of the viability of our concept of the Commonwealth. I am sure we shall emerge from this conference convinced in our

hearts this association of free Nations will continue to march forward in strength and in unity.

¹ Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj.