

SPEECH BY THE HON'BLE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE LUNCHEON GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER
OF NEW ZEALAND IN THE MEMBERS' DINING ROOM,
PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND
ON 11TH APRIL 1967

Mr. Prime Minister and Gentlemen;

I would like, Mr. Prime Minister, to thank you and your Government for your kind invitation to me to visit your beautiful country and also, for the honour of entertaining me to this Luncheon today.

As you know, Mr. Prime Minister, this is my visit to your great country and I have been looking forward to this visit for some years. Indeed, since we achieved Independence almost 10 years ago, I have been wanting to visit both *New Zealand* and Australia but have not been able to spare the time until now.

When we achieved Independence in August, 1957, we had the communist war in our hand and, as Minister of Defence and Security, I could not find the time to leave the country. We had to devote our energy and resources towards bringing an end to this war. And thanks to the help given to us by your country, Australia and the United Kingdom, and with the solid support of your people, we were able to defeat the militant Communists in July, 1960, and bring an end to this war.

However, immediately after that, we had to embark on a gigantic development programme, in particular, rural development. We had to show to our people, particularly those who live in the rural areas, in the villages who stood by us during our fight against the Communists, that our democratic form of Government is the form of Government that could serve them and meet their expectations. I had to create a new Ministry of National and Rural Development under my personal charge and had to divert all our energy and resources and indeed, the whole machinery that fought the war against the Communists, towards development. We felt it was necessary that we should produce result quickly in order to prevent our people from being subverted and attracted to Communism.

After concentrating our efforts on development for about a year, we had to commence negotiations for establishment of Malaysia, and, as you know, Mr. Prime Minister, Malaysia was established in

September 1963 when the States of Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak joined us to form this new nation.

However, on the very day that this new nation was born, the former Government of Indonesia launched their confrontation against us and we had to face another war. Again, our Independence and sovereignty was challenged by aggression from outside. However, with the full support of our people and again with the help of friends, such as New Zealand, we were able to stand and fight for our own freedom and survival; and the three year old confrontation ended in August last year when we signed the Peace Treaty with Indonesia.

Therefore, Mr. Prime Minister, the strength and the unity of our young nation had been tested in war twice during its short life of 10 years. We are happy and thankful to Providence for sparing us during these years of stress and strain.

This is why, Mr. Prime Minister, I am so happy to have this opportunity to visit New Zealand as it enables me to thank you, members of your Government, and the people of New Zealand, for the assistance that they have given us in so many ways - in the economic field, in the education of our young men and women, in the expansion of our Armed Forces, and most important of all, in the defence of our country. During the confrontation by the former regime of Indonesia, your soldiers stood side by side with our own and with our other friends from the Commonwealth in the defence of our country. Some of them have sacrificed their lives and for all these, we are ever grateful.

Mr. Prime Minister, our two countries have many things in common. We are both small nations - both multi-racial in character. We have similar problems and our people share the same ideals and aspirations. Over the years, through our students coming here in their hundreds to study and through your soldiers helping in the defence of our country, and through constant contact between leaders of our two Governments, we have built up close and warm relations between us.

As I have said, the last 10 years had been difficult and indeed turbulent years for us in Malaysia as well as for the whole of Southeast Asia. The Communists threat from the North loomed large on the whole of Southeast Asia. At one time in 1965, the situation appeared somewhat critical. Vietnam seemed almost lost, Indonesia appeared to be tottering on the brink and we in Malaysia were under great pressure from the Communists inspired confrontation by Indonesia. But as I have said, we stood firm and with the help of friends such as New Zealand, we were able to stop the tide of enemy aggression.

Now, the situation has considerably improved. The position in Vietnam appears brighter. Nationalist forces in Indonesia rose to the occasion and saved their country from being dominated by the

Communists. We can now look to the future with cautious optimism. I say "cautious", Mr. Prime Minister, because so long as militant Communism in Indonesia and other parts of Southeast Asia is not completely wiped out, it can spread again like cancer.

In our country the threat from Communist subversion and terrorism is still serious. On the Border between us and Thailand there are still about 500 Communists lurking in the jungle, waiting for a chance to strike again at us. In Sarawak and on the Border with Indonesia there are about 1000 hard-core, dedicated and determined Communist carrying out acts of subversion and terrorism. That is why we have to continue to be vigilant. Our soldiers and our Police Force are continually operating against them, searching them in their jungle hide-outs.

We in Malaysia are determined to stamp out this menace, and we believe that we are fighting not only for our own survival but for the common cause - for the survival of all those who believe in freedom and democracy and the principle that any nation, however small, has a right to be left alone to pursue its own way of life.

That is why, Mr. Prime Minister, we are doing all we can to fight our common enemies, the militant Communists, not only in the military field, but perhaps more important, in the economic field. We believe that the only sure way of fighting against the appeal of Communism is by giving our people the promise of a better life with freedom and democracy.

While doing everything possible internally ourselves, we are also endeavouring to bring the countries in Southeast Asia closer together to co-operate in economic, cultural and other fields for mutual benefit; for Mr. Prime Minister, in the present age, it is not possible for any country to live in a vacuum or be isolated, particularly, small countries. We can only survive if we stand together united in the defence of the common cause of democratic freedom and of the ways of life which we cherish and uphold.

Once again, Mr. Prime Minister, I think you very much indeed for your hospitality and for giving this opportunity to myself, my wife and members of my delegation to see your beautiful country and to meet your charming people. I can assure you we will go back to Malaysia carrying with us happy memories of our short stay and comfort on the thought that our two peoples will always stand together in the defence of the ideal which we both believe in. Though I do not wish and God forbids that we in Malaysia will again go through the ordeals that we have just passed, but if such a catastrophe does happen again, I am convinced your Government and your people will come readily to our aid. We wish you Mr. Prime Minister, your colleagues and the people of New Zealand, the best of luck and may

the close and warm friendship between our two countries be sustained, continually refreshed and strengthened in the years to come.