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SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OPENING CEREMONY OF THE KUALA LUMPUR -
SINGAPORE - JESSELTON SECTION OF SEACOM
CABLE LINK AT DEWAN TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN,
KUALA LUMPUR ON 15TH JANUARY, 1965

The Honourable Minister of Works, and Posts and Telecommunications¹,
Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I understand that the word 'telephone' in English, comes from two Greek words 'tele' and 'phone'. 'Tele' means 'distant' or 'far away' and 'phone' means 'sound'.

Therefore this word 'telephone' is obviously out of date because the opening of this telephone service to Sabah today is not the opening of a distant or far away sound; it is the opening of a very close, and a very near sound, near to our hearts.

You will hear, in this very Hall, in a few moments, the voice and sound of the Chief Minister of Sabah² almost as if he were with us here himself. You will also hear the voice of other people in Sabah, as they speak on this new telephone link. To me this is a great thing.

With the formation of Malaysia, and with Sabah joining our Federation, we here, the people of Malaya, became very close in heart, and in mind, with our brothers in Sabah and today is another stepping stone towards the solidarity of Malaysia because, although Sabah may be many hundred miles away across the sea, in fact, after the opening of this telecommunication link, it will be only one second away.

The opening of this cable link to Sabah is very significant at this present time.

At the very time when Soekarno³, in his attempt to crush Malaysia, is breaking links with the Free World, breaking 'links' with the United Nations, breaking 'links' with friendship and goodwill, we here in Malaysia are doing the very opposite, not only by strengthening the solidarity of our new Nation, by strengthening our communications with the Borneo Territories, we are also, by playing our part in this Commonwealth net-work of communications throughout the World, strengthening our 'links', both nationally and internationally.

¹Dato' V.T. Sambanthan.

²Mr. Peter Lo.

³President Republic of Indonesia.

And this is our belief, that the peace and prosperity of the World lies in a close association of freedom and goodwill amongst all nations and the first step towards better understanding, better feeling and better cooperation is an improvement of communication of which this new cable link is an example.

The opening of this project, a tremendous advance in our new communications to Sabah, is an example of what cooperation, understanding and working together among Nations can do for the benefit of all.

But, although this cable is a very important project, it is small in relation to the other greater projects which have come out of this free association of nations within the Commonwealth.

At a time when the sovereignty of Malaysia is being threatened by our imperialistic neighbour, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, which are all partners in this telephone cable link, are also partners in coming to our aid to defend our country against outside aggression. So also some other countries such as India are doing what they can to support our cause.

Soekarno mocks, and makes fun of the fact that we, first Malaya, and secondly Malaysia, achieved our place as a free and independent nation without bloodshed!

He is quite right, that is quite true.

We did not achieve Independence with the revolution like Indonesia; a revolution which has lasted since 1945 and will probably continue until after the end of Soekarno's era.

We achieved Independence by peaceful means, with no bloodshed.

But I can assure you, and I can assure Soekarno, that every drop of blood which runs in the veins of every loyal citizen of Malaysia is ready to be shed, and to be used, in the defence of our Nation and in the safeguarding of our sovereignty, if we are further provoked and aggravated by this Dictator who has no right, no claim, and no reason for wishing to dominate us.

At the present time, we live in a World of words, a World in which the fashion and habit of Communists and Dictators is to play entirely on propaganda.

Soekarno's propaganda is that we are not a really free and independent Nation but, as he calls us, a neo-colonialistic Country striving for liberation.

Each and everyone of his guerillas who landed on our shores and who have the good fortune to be still alive have admitted that they were brainwashed with this propaganda.

But what a shock they got when they arrived in Pontian, in Labis, in Sungei Kesang and other places. When they realised how false were the words of their leader, when they saw with their own eyes how prosperous, how happy and how united the people of Malaysia are.

This means, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the seeds of propaganda which Soekarno has tried to plant in our soil are old, dried up, useless seeds, which will never ever germinate or take root in Malaysia!

So, therefore, the answer is to ignore Soekarno's out-dated methods and attempts to subvert our Nation.

We in Malaysia are not only secure in ourselves, with complete unity of purpose amongst our own people, we are also secure in the support given to us by our friends in the Commonwealth by providing for our defence with troops, with ships, with guns and with aeroplanes.

Some people may ask why, immediately after Independence, we did not build up, like Indonesia, a large Army, a large Navy and a large Air Force. We did not, because our first task after Independence is to build up our economy, our standard of living and concentrate on the development of our nation, rather than concentrating on the destruction of other Nations, like Soekarno; and we were able to do this, we were able to put all our energies, all our funds, all our efforts towards developing our country because we knew that, in a time of need, our friends in the Commonwealth and the Free World would come to our aid not only in Defence, but also in Development, an example of this is the Telecommunications link which I have the pleasure of opening today.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, before I actually declare open this telephone to Sabah, I should like to apologise on behalf of our Prime Minister, the Tunku⁴, for not being able to be here today to perform this rather pleasant task.

I am sure that if the Tunku had known that he was going to be able to lift up a telephone and talk to Sabah without being charged on his own telephone bill he would have been here with us now!

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have much pleasure in declaring open the Kuala Lumpur—Singapore—Jesselton Section of SEACOM Cable Link.

⁴Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj.

