

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE OPENING SESSION OF MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE IN MANILA, PHILIPPINES ON
7TH JUNE, 1963

Your Excellency Mr. Vice-President Pelaez¹; Your Excellency Dr. Subandrio²; Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to take this opportunity of expressing on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf our profound gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Vice-President Pelaez, and through him to the Government and people of the Philippines for the very warm welcome and hospitality which they have extended to us.

We deem it a rare privilege to be in Manila as guests of the Philippine Government whose distinguished leader, His Excellency President Macapagal³, one of the most illustrious sons of Asia, is held in high esteem and deep admiration by the Government and people of the Federation of Malaya. It was the charm, friendship, vision and above all the inspiration of President Macapagal which has made this historic meeting possible. It is therefore my fondest wish and indeed the earnest hope of the people of Malaya that this warm and friendly spirit which President Macapagal has generated would conduce this conference towards a fruitful discussion with salutary and far reaching effects on the destinies of South East Asia.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention also the very great pleasure which has been given all of us over the very cordial and fruitful meeting that had taken place between our Prime Minister and the President of the Republic of Indonesia⁴ in Tokyo recently.

1 Vice President of the Philippines.

2 Minister of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia.

3 President of the Philippines.

4 president Sukarno.

This meeting has created an enormous fund of goodwill and understanding between the two leaders. I am sure its fruitful outcome was warmly received by the people of Malaya and Indonesia and no doubt by the peoples of Philippines too. This "little summit" undoubtedly has greatly contributed in clearing the way towards the realization of this very conference for which we are all gathered here today, and later on towards the convening of a summit meeting of the three leaders of our countries. Of immense gratification is the agreement that has been reached at that meeting to the effect that any outstanding differences on matters directly and exclusively affecting Malaya and Indonesia should be settled by them in a spirit of neighbourliness and goodwill through every available channel as envisaged in the Treaty of Friendship. Malaya and Indonesia should look forward to a very bright future.

This Ministerial Conference is a momentous and historic event in the history of our peoples and of South East Asia as a whole. For the first time in the history of our three countries our Foreign Ministers are sitting together to discuss freely and frankly matters of common concern to our three countries and of our region with a view to promoting friendly relations for the preservation of the security, peace and stability of our region.

I am confident that with goodwill, sincerity of purpose and courage the leaders of our three countries echoing the spirit of Malotos, Matavam and Malacca where the fires of independence were rekindled in the hearts of our people, we shall be able to overcome all problems and difficulties that we face in common.

The millions of our people whom we represent have so many common ties of history, culture, race and language, although for centuries in the recent past we have been unfortunately separated by colonial domination. Now that we are forging ahead in our independence the way is wide open for us to establish once again the so many ties that we have in common and to come together. The people in Malaya are following this Conference with the keenest anticipation and hope that it will pave the way towards a greater understanding and harmony among our three countries: so

that instead of division we shall have unity, instead of hostility, we shall have co-operation and friendship for the benefit and well-being of all our peoples.

Malaya has always stood for peace with honour and justice. Consistent with the purposes of the United Nations, Malaya has all along striven for the preservation of peace in the world, for the promotion of international co-operation towards higher living standards, and for the establishment of a world order based on the rule of law, and on respect for the principle of equality, non-interference and mutual respect among nations.

We firmly believe that in their conduct of international relations all nations should refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. That is why we have come in the most forthright manner in condemning the recent Communist Chinese aggression on India. The Malayan people will always condemn aggression and deplore any policy of achieving its objectives by the threat or use of force. Militant attitude has been proved time and again by history not only to be counter productive, but also highly injurious to the peace and security of mankind. We believe in the equality of peoples and in their inalienable right to pursue their destiny in freedom and self-respect.

To the Malayan people as to all peoples in Africa and Asia which have only recently freed themselves from the shackles of colonial rule, the injustice and humiliation of colonial domination are bitter experiences still fresh in our minds. But it is not for this alone that we are resolutely opposed to colonialism. Colonialism as a system of relations between peoples is not only outmoded, but also constitutes a definite barrier to the promotion of economic and social progress and hence to the promotion of world peace.

We have shown by our action in the United Nations our dislike and our distaste for colonialism in all its guises for all forms of denial of fundamental human rights and freedom. In the United Nations the Federation delegation has been second to none among the Afro-Asian delegations in championing the cause of liberating

subject peoples from colonial and imperialist domination. We supported the anti-colonialist struggle in Algeria, Angola, South West Africa, West Irian, Southern Rhodesia, to mention only a few instances, and this constitutes a clear proof of our attitude and our policy in this matter.

As regards the racist policies of Apartheid in South Africa, the Federation was in the forefront in opposing it not only in the United Nations but also in the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London. Indeed, if I may refresh memories on this subject, it was largely the firm stand taken by our Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, at that Conference in condemning the iniquitous policy of apartheid which ultimately resulted in the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth.

The Federation of Malaya is dedicated to the continuation of the struggle until Apartheid practice and policy in South Africa has ceased. At this very moment the Federation Delegation at the United Nations has been given the honour of serving on the Committee which is keeping South Africa's Apartheid policy under constant review.

Our opposition to all forms of colonialism makes no distinction between the colonial domination by the West, and the imperialist domination by the Communist powers. We stand for the freedom of the individual and firmly believe that domination of man by man in whatever form must be brought to an end. Thus the Federation of Malaya has not hesitated to make her voice heard at the United Nations and elsewhere in calling for the restoration of liberty and freedom in Hungary and Tibet.

The liquidation of colonialism in our midst does not by itself bring about the happiness and prosperity to which our peoples aspire. Independence is only the first step—the most important step though it undoubtedly is—the next most important step must be the progressive attainment of economic and social advancement of all our people in freedom and self-respect.

There are numerous problems confronting each and every one of us—problems of poverty, disease, illiteracy and undernourishment/malnutrition—in short problems of economic and social injustice—which we have inherited as a legacy of colonialism. These problems, if allowed to deteriorate will no doubt pose a threat to the peace, security and stability of each of our country and of our region as a whole. The fostering of healthy economic and social growth is therefore a gigantic task facing our countries individually and collectively. It is the moral responsibility of governments to provide the basic economic and social progress. These objectives are indeed a pre-requisite to the healthy development of democracy, and their attainment constitutes a bulwark against communism.

We in Malaya know too well from bitter experience that Communism poses a great threat to the territorial integrity of our country and to the happiness and prosperity of our people. The Communist threat is real: and it must be vigorously encountered. Communism acts like a cancer in the human body and it must be totally eliminated before the human body can grow in health. If we want to give our people all the opportunities to advance economically and socially as is their aspiration then this Communist cancer must be removed from our region.

We in Malaya have seen Communism in practice and we firmly believe that Communism is contrary to our national aspirations and to our ideas of freedom and democracy. In keeping with this belief for democratic ideals and individual freedom we have embarked on a gigantic development programme to give our country the high level of productivity employment and prosperity and indeed all our energy and resources are devoted to this programme of National development, in particular, Rural Development Programme.

With her free market economy and stability Malaya has successfully attracted investment from all over the world for the development of new and much needed industries. Malaya's vast Rural Development Programme is bringing to our people in the rural areas much of the amenities, comforts and prosperity which have hitherto

existed only in the town. There are now more schools in the countryside, more health clinics, more roads, more bridges and water-supplies to meet the economic, social, educational and cultural requirements of our rural population. Under our Land Development Programme thousands of families who have no homes before and no means of livelihood have been given new homes and adequate means of livelihood in properly planned surroundings with the necessary amenities of life.

Much as we have done and achieved in our own country in these fields, we are convinced that much more can be achieved if there is closer co-operation among our three nations in attacking our common problems. There can be no better way of achieving our universal objective of happiness and prosperity for our people in freedom and justice than for us to work together, to plan together, to pool our resources for the economic and social betterment of our respective peoples, and for the region as a whole.

That is why we are keenly participating in the Association of South East Asia together with the Philippines and Thailand. That is why also we place our great hopes in this Ministerial Conference among the countries of Indonesia, Philippines and Malaya.

This Ministerial Conference, and the summit meeting which we hope will follow, offer us exceptional opportunity to find ways and means of achieving effective co-operation among our three countries in this region in wider and expanding fields.

Let us not miss this opportunity. The problems confronting us are many and difficult and the challenge is therefore great. But it is a challenge we must face resolutely. The stakes are high because on us will depend the future security, peace, stability and prosperity of this region of South East Asia.

We in the Federation of Malaya pledge ourselves to give all the co-operation necessary to remove any barrier which may stand in the way to bring our three countries closer together in all fields of activity.

In the past, we in the three countries in this region, have taken a number of concrete measures to promote closer economic, cultural and educational co-operation. Malaya and Indonesia are bound together by a Treaty of Friendship while with the Philippines, Malaya are founder members and partners in the Association of South East Asia. Let us, therefore, build up on the measures we have already taken, much greater and closer co-operation in all spheres of activities. Our three countries have so many ties in common—ties of history, race, language and culture. Indeed, we are like brothers belonging to one family which have been separated for generations by the forces of colonialism. Now that we are all three fully independent sovereign nations, let us re-discover ourselves and revive the old ties which bound our forefathers together. For countries which have so many things in common, such as ours, there is no limit to the area of activities in which we can co-operate **and** work together for the benefit of our people.

We, in the South East Asia, will not be able to join in the race for the building up of stockpile of nuclear armament nor can we join in the race for journey to the moon, but here in this region we have an abundant stockpile of tolerance, understanding and goodwill. We have an abundance of wealth and natural resources which can be used for the benefit of our people. Let us, therefore, bring to the surface all those potentials of wealth, tolerance and goodwill and let us be the launching pad not of missiles or of spaceships but rather the launching pad of goodwill, understanding and friendship among nations. Let us show to the world, to all nations, big and small, that co-operation, friendship and respect of one another are the only means of achieving peace, progress and happiness. Let us also show to them that force or aggression are counter productive. Let us show by example and by positive measures the means by which the people in the present world in which we are living, a world so fraught with dangers and difficulties and so disturbed and so divided, can look forward to an era of peace, progress and enlightenment. Let us, therefore, here dedicate ourselves to this task of working out positive and constructive measures by which our three countries can work together for the progress and happiness of our people and for the peace and enlightenment of the whole world.