

UCAPAN PERDANA MENTERI, DI UPACARA
PERASMIAN PERHIMPUNAN AGUNG MCA
DI BALAI SEMINAR, DEWAN BAHASA DAN
PUSTAKA, KUALA LUMPUR, PADA 11HB OGOS,
1973

Y.A.B. Tun Tan Siew Sin, Presiden MCA; Y.B. Menteri-menteri;
Para perwakilan MCA, Tuan-tuan dan Puan-puan sekalian,

Terlebih dahulu, sukaiah saya mengucapkan berbanyak terima-
kasih kepada Jawatankuasa Pusat MCA khasnya kepada Tun
Tan Siew Sin kerana memberikan saya penghormatan sekali lagi
untuk merasmikan Perhimpunan Agung MCA tahun ini.

Saya sukacita kerana dengan ini saya mendapat kesempatan
untuk menegaskan lagi beberapa aspek penting mengenai dasar
negara kita yang sedang dijalankan sekarang ini. Terutama me-
mandang kepada perkembangan-perkembangan yang berlaku di
masa akhir-akhir ini, saya rasa amatlah penting dan mustahak
kita meninjau semula serta memahami perkara-perkara ini
dengan lebih jelas supaya kita sentiasa berada di jalan yang
sebenar menuju ke arah matlamat pembangunan negara dan
perpaduan rakyat seperti yang dicita-citakan itu.

Saya rasa amatlah kena pada tempatnya saya mengambil
kesempatan ini menyatakan kenangan dan merakamkan setinggi-
tinggi penghargaan kepada pemimpin kita yang dikasihi dan
sangat banyak jasanya kepada negara dan parti—Allahyarham
Tun Dr Ismail. Semasa hayatnya Tun Dr Ismail telah sentiasa
mempertahankan kebenaran dan keadilan serta memberikan
khidmat bakti dengan jujur dan penuh dedikasi tanpa meng-
hiraukan kepentingan diri. Bagi kita yang tinggal, sebaik-baik
balasan kepada jasa beliau itu ialah dengan meneruskan cita-cita
serta perjuangan suci beliau itu hingga tercapai matlamat negara
yang adil dan aman damai di mana setiap rakyat mempunyai
tempat dan kedudukan yang wajar sebagai bangsa yang merdeka
dan maju.

Saya juga mengambil kesempatan ini mengalu-alukan Tuan-
tuan dan Puan-puan para perwakilan yang datang dari jauh dan
dekat untuk menghadiri Perhimpunan yang penting ini dan saya
sangat gembira kerana dapat bertemu muka pada hari ini.

Para perwakilan sekalian,

I am particularly pleased to be with you all again at this General Assembly of the MCA. Besides renewing acquaintance with all delegates from far and near, this occasion gives me an opportunity of restating some of the crucial aspects of our national policy which embody our long-term aims and objectives. Particularly, in view of recent developments within the MCA, I feel this is of vital importance lest we forget or lose sight of them in our daily lives and in the routine involvement of party politics.

I think it is most appropriate on this occasion for us to pay the highest tribute to our beloved and respected leader, the late Tun Dr Ismail, who in his lifetime set a fine example of sincere and dedicated service to the nation, in complete disregard of his personal well-being. In my view, the best tribute we can show to his memory is for everyone of us to pursue relentlessly the goal of a just society and prosperous and peaceful Malaysia for which he had already strived and given the best years of his life.

It hardly needs reminding that we are a young nation of diverse races, each with its own cultural tradition, its psychological outlook and way of life. And, because of historical and other reasons, there has been a segregation of the races; in fact, our society is compartmentalised into two broad categories of rural and urban which is reflected in the life pursuit of each group.

We are determined to correct this situation and I need hardly stress the point since I have touched on this so often before—that it is the policy of the Government to eliminate this segregation of races once and for all and to restructure our society in such a manner as to bring about real integration of our people into a truly united Malaysian nation.

To achieve this, we must create a situation where there is free communication among our people and an absence of suspicion of fear, and what is more important, an abiding conviction in every Malaysian that he has a stake in this country. A day must come when our people would stand up for the cause of national unity and join hands on national issues free from any racial overtones.

Adalah dasar Kerajaan kita hendak menghapuskan tembok perpisahan kaum ini dan menyusun semula masyarakat supaya

mewujudkan perpaduan rakyat sebagai bangsa yang bersatu. Untuk mencapai matlamat ini patutlah diwujudkan keadaan di mana rakyat dapat berhubung antara satu dengan lain dalam suasana muhibbah tanpa perasaan bimbang atau curiga. Bahkan yang lebih penting ialah keyakinan di hati setiap rakyat bahawa ia mempunyai hak dan tempat di negara ini.

In order to ensure that we are moving in the right direction, we must focus our attention on those specific policies which we consider vital to achieve that overall objective and see that they are implemented properly. I refer first of all to our National Education Policy in the context of giving the national language or Bahasa Malaysia its rightful status both as the official language and the medium of teaching in our schools and institutions of higher learning as well as a language of unity.

However, we are equally mindful of the fact that we have to keep abreast with the scientific, industrial and commercial developments that are taking place around us in other parts of the world. In this connection, we recognise the role of the English language which, for all intents and purposes, has acquired a position of prominence in these fields of human endeavour. English, therefore, will have an appropriate place in our national education system so that our young men and women will not be deprived of this important medium to equip themselves with the necessary knowledge and skills relevant to our projected development requirements.

We shall at the same time, see to it that there shall be ample opportunities for Malaysians of Chinese and Indian origin to study their respective languages and receive education in the mother-tongue as provided in our education policy.

Para perwakilan sekalian,

Earlier on, I mentioned that the compartmentalization of our people has brought about a clear division of the various races into rural and urban communities. We are fully aware of the undesirable economic and social consequences of the situation particularly as the living conditions of the urban community are generally better off than the rural people and there is a distinctly wide gap between the haves and the have-nots in our society.

We have already taken steps to redress this imbalance. The New Economic Policy which the Second Malaysia Plan is based

seeks to ameliorate the ills of the past and at the same time strengthen the foundations of our unity through the restructuring of the society. I would like to stress again here that the NEP is not aimed to benefit any one particular community but indeed meant to benefit all Malaysians.

There is no question about the policy itself as the need for it was first deliberated in the National Consultative Council during the NOC period and subsequently debated at length by both Houses of Parliament. The fact that it was approved by an overwhelming majority in Dewan Rakyat is clear testimony of the unqualified support and acceptance of the NEP by the people. And as I have said on many occasions, it is the success of the NEP that would determine our survival as a nation.

If any clarification is further needed, I can only say that the concepts of the NEP are new, but their potential effects are far-reaching. It is accepted that there may be differences of opinion on methods of implementation and the pace it should proceed and these could be debated with a certain amount of fervour so long as it is done in a lawful and responsible manner.

It might be useful for me to state once again the stand of Government on this important matter. We mean to see that the National Economic Policy succeed because there can be no enduring stability unless the economic imbalance between the major races is rectified and unless the have-nots of all races are given reason to feel that the Government is alive to their problems and difficulties.

We shall not be taken in by well-meaning pessimists or, worse still, people who talk of doom and destruction, who point to imaginary obstacles. We shall do all that is necessary to give effectiveness to the laws and administrative measures that subserve the Economic Policy and see that the objectives are fully realised.

As I have stated on many other occasions, we see very clearly that the objectives of the NEP can be realised only in conditions of constant economic growth and fairly rapid expansion. We shall not allow extremists and demagogues to influence us to take what may seem to be popular measures at the expense of the health and efficiency of our economy. We shall listen attentively to those who put forward reasonable arguments that specific measures in its implementation are ill-advised or untimely

or apt to prove counter productive and we shall not lack the courage to correct our mistakes.

Para perwakilan sekalian,

As we are all aware, it is the policy of the Government in order to restructure our society and ensure National Unity that there should be Bumiputra participation in commerce and industry and the target is that 30% of all activities at all levels should be in Bumiputra hands during the next twenty years.

It is important to remember, as I have pointed out earlier, that in doing this we are not depriving anyone of their rights and pursuit. Indeed, those non-Bumiputras who have had no opportunity to participate in the economic life of our country will also be given opportunity to do so.

But, at the same time, we must be reminded of the fact that it is no longer the day when certain trade and vocation are identified with any particular community. In other words, our economic life must reflect the racial composition of the Malaysian society.

I want to draw your special attention to these facts as it is ultimately vital to our national stability and security that there should be a more equitable distribution of the nation's wealth. This stability will in turn ensure the climate for further industrial investment and economic growth. With the restructuring of the society, with the sense of Malaysian identity becoming increasingly widespread and with the intrinsic good sense of our people steadily finding further expression, I envisage the day when racialism and racial politics will only linger as an ugly memory.

However, we fully well realise that we are not going to achieve this overnight: a certain time dimension is necessary since it is not easy to define a schedule and say at what projected time we hope to become a properly integrated society. Much will depend upon events and circumstances, some of which may be outside our present contemplation.

I am confident that the majority of Malaysians of all races will see the National Economic Policy a necessary programme to achieve a truly Malaysian Malaysia, not as a mere slogan but as enduring reality. No matter what the hazards, no matter what the impediments, we intend to get there. We intend to be a

people with a homogeneous outlook in all the diversity of our cultural heritage.

Para perwakilan sekalian,

Coming back to this important meeting, I would like to dwell a little on the position of MCA within the Alliance and as the original partner of UMNO which blazed the path to our independence. It is without doubt that you are meeting in a novel situation as the Alliance which we forged over twenty years ago and later blossomed into a Grand Alliance, which together with Party Gerakan, PPP and PAS today forms the bulwark of the National Front. This is in keeping with the interests and wishes of the vast majority of our people and further strengthen the foundation of our unity.

You will agree with me that the National Front clearly demonstrates the flexibility of our approach to national politics for it is in this very flexibility that our strength lies. I take this opportunity once again to reiterate my sincere appreciation to the leaders of the Gerakan, PPP and PAS for their foresight and perception, and their preparedness, to submerge sectarian issues for the sake of an overall national consensus.

Of course, at the same time, we accept the fact that there will always be and continue to be conflicts of varying degrees among our people. This is a normal feature in any democratic society. However, these conflicts must not and cannot be allowed to come to a point of explosion, leaving permanent scars in our body politic.

By and large, almost everyone—and this includes foreigners who have written on the Malaysian political scene—agrees that the Alliance represents the most realistic meeting of minds of our people of divergent backgrounds. It provides the maximum possible accommodation to all the pressures and pulls that exist in our society. Furthermore, it is ample testimony to the maintenance of a liberal and tolerant society to which we are fully committed.

Para perwakilan sekalian,

It necessarily follows that this vary accommodation of political parties in the Alliance must mean the abandonment of chauvinistic politics. Chauvinism in any form or guise is incompatible with the outlook and spirit of the alliance. In this light,

it is undesirable to talk about the rights of particular racial group or to seek unity of particular community first albeit to achieve national unity.

I can well understand that the politics of moderation and tolerance which we have practised throughout the years may not hold much appeal to some people. They think that by putting on an aggressive posture, they could embarrass or harass the Government into doing their bidding. Let me remind them that as a Government, we are not easily embarrassed or harassed. We shall not bend to any form of pressure.

Haruslah diingat iaitu dengan adanya persefahaman antara parti-parti politik dalam Perikatan bermakna tidaklah ada tempat untuk politik perkauman. Sesungguhnya perkauman atau chauvinism dalam apa corak atau dalehan adalah bertentangan dengan semangat Perikatan. Oleh yang demikian, langkah memperjuangkan hak sesuatu kaum ataupun menyatukan sesuatu kaum dengan helah mencari perpaduan tidaklah diingini sama sekali.

Saya faham benar kenapa dasar sederhana dan bertimbang rasa yang kita amalkan selama ini tidak memuaskan setengah-setengah pihak. Pada fikiran mereka, dengan bersikap lebih agresif, mereka boleh memaksa Kerajaan tunduk kepada kehendak mereka. Saya hendak mengingatkan di sini bahawa Kerajaan tidaklah mudah dipaksa dengan apa tekanan sekalipun. Saya dukacita ada setengah-setengah ahli politik yang mengharapkan populariti dengan menggunakan sentimen perkauman di kalangan sebahagian rakyat. Helah politik mereka itu tidak sekali-kali diingini.

Regrettably, there are some politicians who are out for short-term popularity and have chosen to pander to the more extreme sentiments prevalent among certain section of our people. I must say openly how much I dislike this kind of politics. Whatever they do, we may well remember what Lincoln said, "You may fool some of the people all the time or all the people some of the time but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

Para perwakilan sekalian,

We have had a long standing association in the Alliance and I am glad to say that over these years the leadership of the MCA has stood together through many a trial. Ours is an association that has endured the test of time and I am confident we shall

continue to move forward together in a single step and solid body for many more years to come.

It is equally essential that there should always be full and free discussions among members of the UMNO, MCA, or MIC so that we can contribute to the final formulation of Alliance policies—policies that must be the subject of constant review. But once the outlines of these policies have been worked out, it is equally essential that everyone must adhere to them. This is the essence of discipline in the Party.

We must accept the fact that Party discipline needs to be enforced to ensure loyalty and to maintain unity in the Party. Let us not forget that politics means power and power means responsibility. It goes without saying that any lack or lapse in this sense of responsibility on the part of any member must be dealt with firmly.

Adalah sama-sama mustahak supaya terdapat suasana bebas bertukar-tukar fikiran di kalangan ahli-ahli UMNO, MCA dan MIC supaya kita dapat merumuskan dasar-dasar Perikatan yang harus ditinjau kembali setiap masa. Dan manakala garis-garis dasar ini telah ditetapkan, wajiblah tiap seorang mematuhi. Inilah inti disiplin dalam Parti. Sesiapa jua yang tidak mematuhi tanggungjawabnya kepada Parti patut menghadapi tindakan sewajarnya.

Para perwakilan sekalian,

There is another matter which I would like to take up on this occasion relating to our elected members both of Parliament and the State Assemblies. I have been very frank on this with members of UMNO and have advised those who feel that they can no longer contribute to the Party and the electorates to step down before they are pushed out. There have been cases where elected members have neglected their constituencies and to me this is unpardonable. We should realise that people have placed their trust in us and failure to attend to the interests of the constituents is tantamount to a breach of that trust. I must ask our elected representatives at all levels that they owe a duty to the Party and the people who elect them to do their duty and attend to the interests and welfare of their constituents.

The winds of change have been with us for some time and I would expect that the MCA leadership at all levels to respond

to this change accordingly. It is our determination to provide a dedicated and honest Government and I would expect all our Party leaders that they should set an example of honest and sincere service to the people.

Angin perubahan telah bertiup sekian lama dan saya berharap pimpinan MCA pada setiap peringkat akan menerima perubahan ini. Kita berazam hendak memberikan pemerintahan yang jujur dan berdedikasi dan oleh itu saya ingin melihat pemimpin-pemimpin Parti menjadi contoh yang baik dalam memberikan perkhidmatan yang jujur dan ikhlas kepada rakyat.

Kita patut sedar bahawa rakyat biasa baik dia Melayu, Cina atau India meletakkan harapan yang tinggi kepada Kerajaan serta mengharapkan kehidupan yang lebih baik bagi mereka dan anak cucu mereka. Setiap mereka mempunyai hak di negara ini dan ingin mendapat bahagian dalam kemakmurannya. Oleh itu adalah kewajipan kita semua melihatkan agar sedikit sebanyak harapan mereka ini dipenuhi supaya mereka kekal memberikan kepercayaan kepada kita dan rakyat.

I would ask you leaders of the MCA here today to guide the political thinking of Malaysians of Chinese origin in the right direction for the good of the nation, to make them work together hand in hand with the Malays and other Malaysians to support Government policies of building a happy and united people. We Malaysians ought to be proud of the fact that we are one of the few new emerging nations of the world who have maintained a measure of self-respect and dignity and who have won the admiration of almost every country of the world. All Malaysians including Malaysians of Chinese origin have played their part in bringing this about. Let all of us continue our endeavour to perpetuate this image. Although we are still a nation of several parts and our people of various races are not yet fully integrated, there are few of us in this country who can think of a more attractive and pleasant place to live in.

I and my Government intend to ensure that our people of all races continue to live in peace and prosperity and we will do all in our power to deal with forces that may wish to disrupt the stability and harmony of our country.

We ought to realise that the common people be he Malay, Chinese or Indian have high expectations of the Government and hope for a better life for themselves and their children.

They have a stake in the country and they too want a share of the nation's prosperity. It is, therefore, our duty to see that at least some of their expectations are met and by so doing the common people will continue to have confidence in us and the Government.

We have come a long way since the Alliance was formed. We have had our share of joys and sorrows, but our conviction and firmness of purpose have seen us through the years.

The future brings new hopes and expectations but, at the same time, it poses challenging problems before us. A new generation has come into being since merdeka and the process of modernisation has brought rising expectations among our educated youth. We are doing our best to resolve the problems by providing training facilities and ensuring opportunities for employment hand in hand with our policy of industrialisation. Above all, it is a matter of vital importance for us to inculcate an abiding sense of responsibility and belonging in our youth, and thereby ensure the emergence of a stable, progressive and tolerant society.

Para perwakilan sekalian,

Sekianlah sahaja amanat yang dapat saya berikan kepada tuan-tuan dan puan-puan sekalian. Saya ucapkan selamat bersidang dan semoga perhimpunan ini mendapat sepenuh kejayaan.



Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein diiringi oleh Presiden Kebangsaan MCA, Tun Tan Siew Sin semasa merasmikan Perhimpunan Agung Tahunan yang Ke 22 Persatuan China Malaysia di Kuala Lumpur pada 11hb'Ogos, 1973.

(Gambar Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia)