

SPEECH BY THE HON'BLE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
IN NEW ZEALAND ON 24TH APRIL 1967

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First of all, I wish to express my sincere thanks and those of my wife and other members of my delegation for the kind invitation of your Government for us to visit your beautiful country. I would like, at the outset, to extend to you warm greetings and good wishes from the Government of Malaysia and the people to the Government and people of New Zealand as a whole. As you know, we in Malaysia have heard and have seen a lot through pictures about your life, about your beautiful land and about your balmy climate. In fact, it has been my wish since my young days to see for myself all these and much more in your picturesque country.

Our two countries are thousands of miles apart but there is a strong bond existing between us. This bond of friendship which has interwined our two peoples for the past many years, is really born out of many similarities resulting from numerous common experiences and common ideals and aspirations.

Our peoples, New Zealanders and Malaysians, have benefitted and have flourished under a parliamentary system of democracy which we have cherished dearly. Like New Zealand, we in Malaysia are proud of our ways of life in which our individual freedom and liberty are fully guaranteed. Both you and I firmly believe in the rule of law, the dignity of the individual and the common brotherhood of mankind irrespective of colour, race and creed. We both believe in the freedom of religion and the right of anyone to worship God as befits his conscience and in the manner of his choosing. Like yours, our society is multi-racial which makes these principles and concepts of human relation, all the more significant and valuable.

I have always been impressed by examples of your race relations, how you attempt to solve them not by emotional dialogue, or theoretical analysis, but rather by examples and deeds, by making the life of every individual citizen of yours rich and meaningful regardless of his racial origin. I have come this time to see for myself and perhaps to benefit by the knowledge I have gained in this short visit. I always believe there is wealth in diversity with each racial component contributing all its best features towards creating a truly rich national identity. In this respect your nation is already far in advance and had already been well established. We in Malaysia are committed to follow this same path of evolution in solving our multi-racial problems.

I would be failing in my duty if I had not mentioned your contribution and that of your Government towards the educational advancement of my people. Hundreds of our young men and women are now in your various educational institutions imbibing whatever knowledge and technical know-how you can offer them. The Malaysia society, as you know, is a young society and more than fifty per cent of them are still in the school going category. More than a quarter of our annual budget is devoted to providing them with education. Still this is by no means sufficient to meet the educational need of our growing population; and for this reason every parent in my country is sincerely grateful to you all, for your warm care and hospitality in looking after the growth and development, in the most formative years in the life of our young children. Perhaps you little realise how much this contribution of yours meant to my people. Most of these young men and women return home zealous and determined to uphold the ideal and aspiration which they have come to respect and admire in the course of their stay here. In these young men and women who become the fibre of my nation lies the future of my country and the continuous happy relations between New Zealand and Malaysia.

As you all know this bond of friendship that exists between our two Governments and peoples is further strengthened by the fact that we belong to the same Commonwealth, that great family of nations which is bound together by an invincible tie which is singularly unique in the history of international relation. Equally significant, I think, is the fact that both your country and mine belong to this same turbulent region of the world, Southeast Asia. We, are, therefore, bound by common ideals and confronted by common problems. Whether we are big or small, events in neighbouring countries of ours are bound to affect us directly or indirectly. As you all know our parts of the world is continuously confronted by threats from the north which could only be effectively eliminated or contained by all of us, all our friends and neighbours acting in concert.

Twice in the brief history of my country we have become victims of militant communist insurrection. The first was the twelve year emergency in which the communist elements took up arms to topple the national government. The second was the Indonesian confrontation which was inspired directly by the Communist Party of Indonesia and Peking. On both occasions your country and Australia and a few other Commonwealth countries have made enormous military contributions in the defence of the right of small countries to lead their own ways of life, to protect and preserve their liberty and freedom from coercion and subversion by totalitarian forces. During this period my people have come to know your country very well through your soldiers whose tenacity in battle and prowess in game

especially rugby is famous. They are really worthy ambassadors of goodwill from your country.

Both your country and mine therefore in the course of years, have gone a long way to prove the effectiveness of our cooperative endeavour to protect our common ideals and aspirations. Although these battles in Malaysia are by no means over, and the fact that agitation and subversion have shown signs of growing into serious proportions especially along the Indonesian and Thai borders, I am confident that our growing cooperation and our readiness to fight for the common cause will in the end doom the militant communist activities to failure.

I am sure you are interested to know how we tackle this onslaught of militant communist propaganda and subversion in my country. Our efforts to counter this menace is based on the strong belief that the most effective way of fighting against the appeal of communism is by ensuring the smooth and effective functioning of democracy and of fulfilling the expectations of our masses. The life of our people must be meaningful through realistic and effective rural and industrial development projects designed to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. We know from bitter experience that totalitarianism would only breed chaos and poverty. The major task of my country is therefore to fight in an equally militant and determined manner poverty in all its forms and manifestation and all those on which communists thrive. In this we are grateful to you and your Government in participating actively in our development programme not only in opening up new settlements such as the famous New Zealand village in Central Malaya but also in contributing to our educational institutions such as the building of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Malaya. These positive contributions from you and your country will go a long way in facing our common threat in making not only Malaysia but also the region in which we all are, a more prosperous and stable part of the world. I am confident that the happy relations existing between your country and mine in the form and context which I have described to you will grow in the years to come in our cooperative endeavour to determine our future in Southeast Asia. Once again, I wish to extend to you the sincere thanks and good wishes of the people and government of Malaysia.