

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT
THE OPENING OF MIC CONFERENCE AT SUNGAI SIPUT
ON 29TH JUNE 1967

Like your President, who was recently conferred the title "Tun" by the King, Malaysians of Indian origin, have rendered great services to Malaysia. I would like to congratulate Tun Sambanthan and the Indian community he leads for their patriotism, services and contributions towards political stability, racial harmony and economic progress of this country. In true Alliance spirit, together with Tun Sambanthan, another top Alliance leader, Tan Siew Sin, was also made a Tun by the King. This means that the position of each Alliance partner has not been overlooked. And today, again, leaders of the UMNO, MCA and MIC are being honoured by MIC.

This manifests the understanding, mutual respect and trust that each partner/each race has for each other. The Alliance of UMNO, MCA and MIC, must remain for all time because it is obviously the wishes of the people of this country that the Bumiputra, Chinese and Indians should and must always remain together to safeguard our sovereignty and independence and to maintain and strengthen racial tolerance, peace and prosperity.

The MIC and in fact the Indians as a whole (except those in militant Trade Unions) have never caused the Government much trouble for which the Government is always thankful. I would like, on behalf of the Government, to publicly thank the Indians for their undivided support to the National Language Bill. There is not a single other major community which has given the Bill its undivided support. While the majority of Malays support it, there exists opposition to the Bill from one section of the Community. The same is true with the Chinese. Some support the Bill while others strongly oppose it. This is one distinction the Indians or the MIC can justly be proud of.

Malaysian will continue to be a "good place to live in" for everyone or even become a "better place" for all if the Indians will keep the MIC going; I know the Malays will always keep the UMNO going, and the MCA can hold the Chinese together. This is the only way ... the Alliance way. Only the Alliance can keep Malaysia going for the good of all Malaysian irrespective of race, creed, caste and colour.

Under the Alliance, Malaya and now Malaysia, had achieved great progress in all fields - in economic development, agriculture production, education, health, social services and in all fields of

human activities. All these have been made possible because of political stability which is the product of good government under the UMNO, MCA - MIC Alliance; the unfailing co-operation and patriotism of the people and the dedication and devotion shown by the members of the public services.

Everywhere we go in Malaysia, whether in the town or kampong, we can see changes affecting and benefitting all races. They are responding to the progress the Government has been able to give them and this material as well as mental change is providing them impetus for greater progress.

After almost ten years of Merdeka, we can feel and look back with satisfaction of our past achievements and with the sound economic and political foundation that we have laid, we can look forward to the next decade with confidence.. that we will even do better than during the departing decade - a decade of solid progress and development.

But what is our future going to be like? Let us not *recall* what we had done for all that we had done is done and appreciated! I would not like to bore you with the past which will soon be in the pages of history. Everyone has spoken about our achievements - ability to maintain parliamentary democracy, maintenance of racial harmony and understanding; political and financial stability; steady economic and social growth and progress; growth in literacy rate, better health and better food, etc.

Now that we have all these ... what must we strive to achieve now and in the next decade?

We must continue to attain and strengthen political stability and continue to gain economic growth. But how and what must be done to ensure the objectives are attained?

(More than 50% of our population today is under the age 21. We are a young nations of 10 years and young because more than half of its people are under 21. The future survival of Malaysia depends on its youths.)

Can we meet the rising expectations of the youth? They want rapid changes. Youth are not contented with full stomachs, they also need intellectual stimulus and satisfaction. Yes, we can! Give them ideals and vision.

That the Alliance wants a nation .. it is in the process of creating it .. where there will be freedom, equality, peace, justice and prosperity for all. That no one single race must try to dominate the others in any field. We want a society where the less fortunate of them are to be given help, the strong must help the weak, the clever must teach the less clever without regard to race or religion.

This is nation building, the first prerequisite of which in the cultivation of a common outlook, a Malaysian consciousness.

This is a gradual process. We cannot rush the various people who were brought up in separate compartments during the Colonial days towards integration. We must abide with time. But are we moving fast enough from the communal to national or common outlook? Are the major races in Malaysia gradually coming closer together?

Are the Chinese responding to the call to feel, think and become Malaysians? Are the Indians being Malaysianised and are the Malays really becoming less Malay in their outlook?

The Government is doing its part to bring the races together through the national education policy and other Government policies all of which are designed to diminish if not altogether abolish, the feeling of racial separateness. But are the people themselves doing anything to help bring this gradual change? I hope all the people are doing their bit to be consistent with the Government's efforts; otherwise, we will always have "nations" within this great nations of ours.

The nation we want and which we all are helping to create is 'this Malaysia which we can be justly and truly proud of- a country which all can live and share our happiness in brotherhood, a kingdom we can really be loyal to. We want a kingdom and a democracy of many races and creeds living in peace as a united family of Malaysian people. This nation cannot emerge and even if it does, it cannot become a really strong nation until all inequalities and imbalances are remedied and adjustments made. The Government must and will continue to create opportunities for all the people of various races to bring them together as Malaysians.

The process for a united nationhood would be faster if each community appreciates and understands each other's legitimate aspirations.

Just as Merdeka would mean almost nothing to the Malays if they could not share in the economic affluence and growth of the Nation. The non-Bumiputra must help them if they want the Bumiputra to understand their aspirations.

I call upon all races in this country to have an urgent sense of purpose, of great vigour and determination to meet the shifts and demands of a nationhood. They must now decide once and for all with moral and political courage whether they want to remain as Malaysian citizens or not, and as I am sure they all want to belong to Malaysia, they must inculcate a sense of belonging, a sense of ownership, a sense of national identity and a sense of pride to the King and Malaysia. By acquiring citizenship, it will not make one a good Malaysian when he is not prepared to carry out the duties and responsibility of a national

guarantees us, we must strive to safeguard these very same freedoms for posterity - so that our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren can enjoy them too.

Many foreign visitors as well as Malaysians have asked me how is that the Alliance is so successful; how the Alliance could have lasted 12 years and now that even the Opposition has already said that we would easily win the next General Election?

What is the secret of the Alliance success?

A lot of people expect us to fail and some even wish us to break-up because of the strenuous competition and the complexity of a multi-racial society such as ours. But we did not, whereas many new developing countries with homogeneous societies have failed or are failing.

Our secret lies ... in the commonsense, pragmatism and humane qualities of all top leaders of the Alliance ... the Tunku, Tun Tan Siew Sin, Tun Sambanthan, myself and others. But above all, the real reason is that neither in Government now in the Party we ever take vote on any issue. We always strive for consensus among the Ministers and Party leaders. We don't even vote in the Cabinet. Once we start ruling this country, at our level by simple majority rules, then that is the day troubles will start. If we allow it, there will obviously be scramble for the number of Cabinet seats on racial line. As it is, even if the Malays are in the majority, one need not fear it because the Government does not work at the highest level by simple majority rules. And this is the real secret of Alliance success - hence complete agreement in Singapore Separation and the Language Bill.