

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT THE
DINNER OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS
MALAYSIA ON 9TH OCTOBER, 1965

Mr. President, Ladies & Gentlemen:

I am grateful to you Mr. President and members of your Committee for having kindly extended this invitation to my wife and myself to attend your dinner here tonight and for giving me this opportunity of meeting and addressing you.

During the last few months there have been several thought-provoking events in our country as well as countries in this region of Asia and S.E. Asia. Therefore it will be useful for us to cast our thoughts back and to ponder soberly on these happenings which naturally have consequences in our country. It is a good thing from time to time, for us as a nation to take stock of our position, to look into the past so that we can plan carefully into the future and look ahead with care and confidence.

Exactly two months ago on the 9th August, we had to take a sad but desirable decision to separate Singapore from Malaysia. That action on the part of our Government with the agreement of Singapore Government came as a shock to the country and to our people. However as the two countries, Malaysia and Singapore settle down after the operation of separation and the leaders of the two countries have realized the desirability of maintaining close cooperation in all matters namely, defence, security, economic and trade, our people have recovered from the shock and have realized that the separation of Singapore from Malaysia in the best interest of peace and security of our two countries and in the interest of our two people.

Sometime back when I addressed the Graduates' Association of the University of Malaya, I said Malaysia and Singapore were like a pair of Siamese twins, born out of the wedlock of Malaysia in September 1963. After two years it was found necessary to carry out an operation to separate the twins. Now, although the skin that binds them together has been cut off there are still ties of blood and of parent-hood. Therefore the two countries must move forward together) like a pair of twins, independently but working close together for the mutual interest. I have also just visited most of the important areas of Sabah and Sarawak and had the opportunity of meeting the leaders of the various communities at various levels and I am firmly convinced

that the people there as well as the people here in Malaya have understood the reason for the separation of Singapore from Malaysia and rallied solidly behind the Government at this time of National Emergency to defend our country as well as to make Malaysia succeed.

We in the General Government here have stated many a time that we shall do everything possible to work together with the Government of Singapore for the benefit of our two countries which have so many things in common and which are linked together so closely. If leaders of the Government of Singapore will give us that same cooperation and are prepared to work sincerely together in close cooperation then clearly there will always be a happy and friendly relation between Malaysia and Singapore.

After this important event in our history, trouble broke out between India and Pakistan. For a few weeks there was fighting on the borders between these two countries with whom we had friendly relations. Both these countries are members of the Commonwealth together with us Malaysia. Therefore we considered it was our duty to do all within our power to try and bring peace so that whatever differences they had could be settled by negotiations and by peaceful means. From the very start we made it clear that we took no side in the quarrel. We were neutral and that our only wish was to see that the two friendly countries of ours would stop fighting each other. As a member of the Security Council our duty was clear, not only to the two countries but to all member countries of that august body — United Nations - to restore peace. Our representative at the U.N. Security Council was given a clear mandate to support the efforts of the Secretary-General to bring about a ceasefire between India and Pakistan and to bring an end to the fighting. That was our first objective. Naturally in a situation like that we could not please either side but as I have said, it was our duty to bring an end to the fighting. However in our sincere efforts to do our duty to these two friendly countries and to do our duty as a member of the Security Council we were misunderstood. Pakistan had accused us of taking side just because certain of the words said by our representative in the Security Council did not please them. Pakistan went on as far as to break diplomatic relations with us. As I said, we had not done anything against Pakistan. We were merely trying to do our duty, to bring peace, to bring a halt to the fighting between India and Pakistan. Is it fair or just, for Pakistan to take such action against us? Let the world judge. Let the Security Council and the U.N. judge our action and our attitude.

During our trouble with Indonesia, Pakistan had clearly shown a partisan attitude. They had actively sided with Indonesia on a number

of occasions. At the preliminary Afro-Asian Conference in Jakarta the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Bhutto tried his best to stop our admission, also representatives of Pakistan in Afro-Asian countries had been carrying out propoganda against us in support of Indonesia. Also at the last Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference, Pakistan Foreign Minister did his best to stop the Conference from making a statement condemning Indonesian aggression. In our trouble with Indonesia it was clear Indonesia was the aggressor. In the U.N. Security Council a vote of 9 to 2 passed a resolution condemning the use of force by Indonesia against us and yet Pakistan still supported Indonesian action. It was clear that we are being made the scapegoat for Pakistan's interest. We are being made use of perhaps to please Pakistan's big brother, Communist China. We know that the action of the Government of Pakistan and in particular that of her Foreign Minister does not have the support of the majority of the people of Pakistan as in that country the people have no real say in formulating Government policies and actions. Pakistan Foreign Minister thought Malaysia is a small nation, our friendship is of no value to Pakistan. In international affairs it is not the size of the country that counts, it is what the country stands for. We stand for peace and cooperation, for freedom and justice and for friendship among nations. We always believe in justice and fair play and in international affairs respect the integrity and sovereignty of other nations. Time and the course of events will prove that we have been right, we have been sincere in all our efforts and activities. We have no ambition to dominate any territory or country, our only wish is to live in peace, to be left alone to carry out our own way of life, to bring happiness and prosperity to our people.

Since Indonesia carried out its policy of confrontation and aggression against us, peace-loving countries of the world, particularly those in Afro-Asia have come to realize that we have been the subject of unprovoked aggression. During my visit to Africa and Asia early this year, to about 20 countries, I found that the leaders of these countries have now understood what Malaysia is, a peace-loving nation and that we have been subjected to aggression by Indonesia. Our image and prestige in the world has been enhanced. We have shown to the world in the past that we are always ready to play our part and to contribute our small effort for the maintenance of the peace of the world as shown by our action in the Congo and also our action in the Security Council.

Now coming to internal affairs. Our young nation — Malaysia — is two years and two months old. We knew when we decided to establish Malaysia that there were problems and difficulties but we also believes that we could face and overcome all these problems giving the cooperation, loyalty and understanding by all citizens.

Of all the problems, the one that appears to be the most difficult is the problem of endeavouring to build a strong, united and independent nation with one loyalty from our people of various racial origin. This problem of multi-racial society at times comes under great strains and stresses and often it threatens peace and harmony in this country due to careless utterances and actions of extremists which are found in our communities. But fortunately for us and Malaysia, we have a Government which believes in justice and fair play, our Constitution has been drawn up by persons of knowledge and experience and they brought their knowledge and experience to bear on the problems of our country. Also the former Federation of Malaya had many years of experience working successfully under a federal system of Government. I have no doubt that with patience, understanding and cooperation all these difficulties can and must be resolved if we want Malaysia to succeed and become a happy country for all our people.

As you know our country was threatened out of its existence the very day of its birth. However, despite Indonesian aggression and confrontation I am proud of the way in which our people of all races have stood together in unity and with harmony and goodwill. We in the Alliance have from the start made our concept of Malaysia clear. Our concept of Malaysia is to bring together the peoples of various territories under one flag so that they all regard Malaysia as the sole object of their loyalty. We want all our people, Malays, Chinese, Dayaks, Dusuns, Indians and others to regard themselves as Malaysians and this concept of ours is embodied in our Constitution. Our Constitution provides and guarantees everyone a place in this country and protects his rights and privileges. There is no question of discrimination or dominance of one race over the other under our Constitution.

Of course in a multi-racial society like ours there are problems, there are sensitive issues which may be brought up from time to time. However, let us all realize that in everything we do we must put the real and true interest of our country and people above everything else. We must always endeavour to look at things in their true perspective, to look at the substance rather than the shadow. Before we achieved independence in 1957 for Malaya, we knew we had a number of sensitive issues to be settled i.e. the question of citizenship, religion, language and economic position of our people. That is why we decided to ask persons of knowledge and experience from outside to help formulate our Constitution, to help find out the Constitutional framework to these problems. The 5 members of the Constitution Commission from friendly Commonwealth countries came to our country to help draft our Constitution and that Constitution which was

accepted by all races in this country when we achieved independence in 1957 and which was also accepted by Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak with minor adjustments in 1963, provided the legal and constitutional framework for us to establish a united, free and democratic nation and to give our people a measure of happiness and prosperity which they desire.

Therefore I say if we have any doubts on any fundamental issue, let us go back to the Constitution. Lately there was some discussion in the Press and outside over the question of language. In a free and democratic country such as ours, people have the right to express their views publicly and openly and in any society there are extremists and on this question of language there are extremists who believe that after 1 SEP 67 when Malay becomes the sole official language the use of other languages would not be allowed. There are extremists on both sides but let us look at the Constitution. The Constitution clearly says: That after a period of 10 years after Merdeka Day, Parliament may, by law, provide for Malay to be the sole official language, but the use, the teaching and learning of any other languages should be permitted and encouraged. The Constitution Commission in its report says that they decided to recommend Malay to be the National language and they do not consider it necessary for any other languages should become an official language except that English can be used for a period of 10 years after Merdeka as an official language and thereafter it will be left to Parliament to decide when the change should take place.

The Constitutional experts had made proposals which they consider fair and just in the light of circumstances pertaining to our country. However, in deciding to effect the changes as allowed by the Constitution, it is necessary for us to do so in the manner fair and just to all communities so that the measure we take will have the support of everyone. As the Tunku stated, it is the last thing we want to have any bloodshed or trouble in this country over the language issue or any issue. Indeed, there is no reason whatever that there should be any trouble or even differences of views.

It has always been the intention and policy of the Alliance Government to be fair and just to all sections of our communities. During the last 10 years since we have been in power, although we have endeavoured to help the various sections of our communities to give them better and greater amenities of life and a higher standard of living we have not taken away the rights or privileges from any group or section of our community.

Now under our Education System we have different types of schools and different languages, while endeavouring to carry out our National Education Policy we have endeavoured to be fair to the various types of schools. We have given a place and a status to Chinese Education in this country that it did not enjoy under the British colonial government. In 1954, which was the first year before the Federation first General Election, when the Alliance came into power for the first time, the amount spent on Chinese education was \$11.7 million. The amount spent on education as a whole was \$99.9 million. In 1963, and I have taken 1963, because after this year we will be dealing in Pan-Malaysian figures and from a comparison — the figures were \$46.4 million and \$283 million respectively. In other words while the amount spent on education as a whole increased by 183% in 9 years the amount spent on Chinese education increased by 282%.

Therefore as I have said, we wish to be fair to all section of our community as it is our policy to give everyone of our citizen of whatever racial origin a rightful place in our country. While Malay will assume the role of our official language in our country it is clearly provided in our Constitution and it is the declared policy of the Alliance Government that the growth of the other languages will be fostered and encouraged. In fact, I wish as many Malaysians as possible to know as many languages as possible and we should endeavour to learn the principal languages of our country.

I would therefore ask all our people, Malays and the non-Malays to be fair to each other. The Malays must be fair to other communities in order to have their support of Malay as the official language and the other communities, particularly the Chinese, to realise that their languages and education will always have a place in our country in return for their support for the National Language.

As I have said, I have just visited Sabah and Sarawak and I am very pleased to see that despite Confrontation and aggression by the enemies across the border, the people of these two territories had maintained high morale and have stood up to the Indonesian aggression with complete loyalty and devotion. I am confident with loyalty, cooperation and sincerity of purpose from all concerned, we shall be able to make Malaysia a happy and united country.

It is true that there is a small body of persons who are not happy over Malaysia in Sarawak particularly members of the Communist-dominated SUPP. But even in SUPP there is now a division and a section of that party seems to be supporting Malaysia. In Sabah there are one or two politicians who are making use of the separation of

Singapore as a political capital to further their own political interests and personal ambitions. I would like to repeat what the Tunku has always stated, that all we wanted in Malaysia is that our people, Malays, Chinese, Indians and others to regard themselves as Malaysians and this is what our Constitution provides and guarantees. It is the duty of all our people to work towards building a united nation with one loyalty but this must necessarily take time and I am sure that with patience and cooperation and goodwill we will be able to achieve this ultimate objective.

There is one current topic which I am sure is of interest to all of you, Ladies and Gentlemen, and that is the recent development in Indonesia. The situation there seems to be still confused and it is difficult for me to make any useful comment. However, I do hope out of all this will emerge a Government which will work for the good of the Indonesian people and which will be conscious of the need for peace and cooperation in South East Asia.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have dwelt at length on some topics of current importance and events taking place during the last few months. As we look out around in this Region of our disturbed world there are dark storms blowing and tales of misfortunes, murders and treachery filling our newspapers daily. However, in Malaysia if our p'ople of all races continue to show their goodwill and unity and their will to survive against this dark background there is shining a bright gleam of the fulfilment of our ideals and the achievement of our concept of a happy and united country.

Berjaya Malaysia.