

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IN REPLY  
TO MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE DEWAN  
RAKYAT ON 22ND MAY, 1964

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to reply to a number of points raised by Honourable Members, particularly those of the Opposition, on his Majesty's Speech.

First, I would like to reply to the speech made by the Honourable Member for Batu.<sup>1</sup> In the course of his long speech, the Honourable Member asked what are the qualifications for Ministers thereby casting aspersions on members of this Government. The Honourable Members should know that we here practise parliamentary democracy and we have a party Government. Our Government and our Cabinet is collectively responsible to this House and to the country. It is the sole privilege of our Party and of the leadership of our Party to choose from among the leading members of our Party as Ministers of the Government. The main qualifications are sincerity and devotion to duty which we have proved to the country that we the Alliance for nine years have served the people well and that is why the people voted us to power after nine years with such a overwhelming majority.

The Honourable Member still sings the old tune so often sung by his colleagues previously in this House that Malaysia was established against the wishes of the people of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore and that the Alliance is responsible for this confrontation and not Indonesia. He blamed us for bringing this country, as he said, 'to the brink of war'. Now, Sir, it is many times stated in this House and fully explained to this House and to the country and this can be confirmed by the representatives of the people of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore here that Malaysia was established out of the freewill of the people in those territories. They had expressed by an overwhelming majority their desire to achieve independence through Malaysia and, as a result of that, we agreed to establish Malaysia and to have them with us as partners in building a new and a bigger nation.

On the subject of confrontation, everyone knows — at least everyone who has the loyalty of the country at heart — that this confrontation is caused by Soekarno, by Indonesia, and yet the Honourable Member for Batu blamed the Alliance Government. Does he not know

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Tan Chee Khoon.

that there is aggression in our territories now? Does he not know that Indonesia had sent in their troops, regulars and irregulars, into our territories? Does he not know that the Indonesian troops had murdered our men, had burned their houses and their villages? And, yet, he blames the Alliance Government for the present state of emergency with Indonesia. What right has Indonesia to send troops into somebody else territories? Because of this, the Socialist Front is furthering Soekarno's cause and is helping Soekarno to achieve his intention of engulfing our country into what he terms 'Greater Indonesia'.

The Honourable Member put up a five-point plan for peace as he called it and this is what his Party, the Socialist Front, stand is for peace. Sir, his plan is completely out of date. First, he called for an immediate ceasefire. A ceasefire was effected as the result of the good officer of Mr. Robert Kennedy, the Attorney-General of the United States. President Soekarno agreed to call a halt to fighting and we in turn agreed to stop fighting, but we regarded the ceasefire arrangements as unsatisfactory because Indonesia refused to withdraw their troops to their side of the border. We had two meetings at Ministerial level in Bangkok to try to resolve this ceasefire arrangement but the meetings ended in failure because Indonesia would not agree to withdraw their troops from their side of the border. We, on our part, cannot tolerate or condone the presence of foreign troops in our territories. We have a right to exist as an independent and sovereign nation and our integrity and sovereignty cannot be a subject of negotiation. That is why we made our stand clear, but although we wanted peace and cooperation with our neighbours, particularly with Indonesia, we are not prepared to sacrifice our honour and our integrity. We are prepared and are always willing to talk about peace, to find ways and means of living in cooperation and in friendship but we must talk as equals and we cannot allow another country to talk from a position of strength and dictate terms to us by having their troops in our territories.

On the question of supervision of the ceasefire, it is wrong to say that the Secretary-General of the United Nation<sup>2</sup> refused to supervise the ceasefire. The three countries, the Philippines, Indonesia and ourselves, agreed to ask Thailand to supervise the ceasefire and the Secretary-General United Nation took note of the position.

On the question of withdrawal of all foreign troops, both British and Indonesian, from our territories, as I have said, Sir, Indonesia had refused to withdraw their troops. British and Commonwealth

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<sup>2</sup> U. Thant.

troops are in the Borneo territories merely for defence of those territories under our Defence Treaty with the United Kingdom. Before confrontation and before Indonesia started its aggression against us there were no British Troops in the Borneo Territories. Any country, Sir, has the right to make defence treaty with other countries and has the right to ask for assistance for the defence of its independence and integrity.

On the question of the release of all political detainees and as to the restoration of normal democratic life, there is in this country now, despite confrontation, a normal democratic life. Indeed we have a very liberal Government, the Alliance Government. We have given full freedom to all opponents to criticize us so long as they do that within the law. This Parliament sometime back, passed the Internal Security Act and the system of this Act was endorsed by a vast majority of the people in this country in the last Election, in order to save democracy from people who want to make use of democracy merely to destroy. As the Prime Minister of Singapore<sup>3</sup> said yesterday, if we release all political detainees, then there will be no need for Indonesia to carry out aggression and confrontation. Our democracy and our way of life will be destroyed by agents of the enemies from within our borders.

On the fifth point, Sir, the question of holding direct simultaneous elections in Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore, elections had been held in these territories and according to democratic practice and just because the Alliance Government won by a great majority in Sabah and Sarawak, there is no ground to say that the elections were undemocratic. In Singapore, the P.A.P. won the State elections by a big majority and we here never accused that the elections were undemocratic. We believe in democracy and we always accept the verdict of the people expressed in true democratic ways.

Now, Sir, I come to the allegation made by the Honourable Member that I was chummy with Encik Ibrahim bin Yaacob on the visit that we made to Indonesia in December, 1955. It is true, Sir, that Encik Ibrahim bin Yaacob called on the Tunku and myself and it is true that Encik Ibrahim bin Yaacob invited me to his house and it is true also that we took a photograph together with the former Minister of Agriculture and Cooperative, Encik Aziz bin Ishak, in Encik Ibrahim's house. I knew Encik Ibrahim and he comes from by own state, Pahang. At that time in December, 1955, the Alliance was fighting for our independence

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<sup>3</sup> Mr. Lee Kuan Yew.

and when he met us in 1955, he said he was keen to support our fight for independence. We had no quarrel with him at that time and as I said, I knew him well and I went to his house to see the son of a distant relative of mine who was living with Encik Ibrahim. When we were fighting for independence, we welcome support from anyone who was willing to support us to achieve freedom for our country. However, Sir, later when we achieved independence, Encik Ibrahim, if he was a true nationalist, would have come back to Malaya to help us consolidate our freedom and to help us build up our nation. In fact he was asked by our Minister for Information and Broadcasting then Ambassador to Indonesia, to come back to Malaya, but he refused to do so and instead he took up Indonesian citizenship. Since then, Sir, we also know that he has been instigating some people in this country to overthrow this Government, a legally constituted Government, by violence and by force. We also know that he is working hand in hand with the communists to overthrow and over-run our country. Therefore, Sir, such a man, whatever his previous background might have been, must be regarded as an enemy of the people and an enemy of our country because he is working against the interest of our people and our country. I will regard him so, whoever he may be, even if he is my own brother. There is no confusion at all in this matter. Who have ample proof and evidence to show that Encik Ibrahim is working against the interest of our country and in support of some outside power. Therefore, Sir, if the Honourable Member for Batu and his colleagues choose to associate themselves with Encik Ibrahim, then we also know where they stand.

There is no need for us here to talk about visits made by Ministers and Councillors of this Government to Jakarta and their meeting with Soekarno. Before confrontation, we had no quarrel with President Soekarno. In fact, we had no quarrel with anybody except those who want to destroy us, like the communists. Indeed, we wanted to live in peace and in friendship with Soekarno and with Indonesia just as we want to live in peace with other countries. It is only because Soekarno and his colleagues who decided to have this confrontation against us and to attack our country that we oppose him because he has done wrong to us.

Our stand, Sir, in international affairs is clear. As stated in the King's speech, we desire to live in peace with all countries and particularly with our neighbours; but it must be based on respect for our independence and our integrity.

Now, Sir, talking about development. The reason why the name of

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<sup>4</sup> Encik Senu bin Abdul Rahman.

the Ministry of Rural Development is changed into Ministry of National and Rural Development is in order to show clearly what the Alliance Government policy has always been and, that is, while we give priority to development in the rural areas, we are also carrying out development in the town and urban areas and that we intend to give added impetus in urban development in matters of housing and such other things. Our Development Plan is national in character, national in intent and in scope. We carry out development in accordance with priorities because it is our intention first and foremost to give all our people of all races wherever they live the basic amenities of life and to raise their standard of living so that they can live as decent, civilised human-beings. This is the first task and that is what we have been doing for the last five years. The success of our Plan was amply proved by the overwhelming support given to the Alliance Government in the last Election by the people in the rural areas. Therefore, Sir, it is completely untrue to say that rural development had not benefitted the Malays or the non-Malays. Rural Development has benefitted people in the urban areas because prosperity in the urban areas must depend on the prosperity of the people in the rural areas who form the majority of our population. If the people in the rural areas have a better standard of living, have a higher income, there is more money in the country and when there is more money, there is increased demand for goods and this in turn means better business for the people in the urban areas. So, our National Rural Development Programme has benefitted everyone both in the rural and the urban areas and has benefitted the country as a whole. The massive support that the people gave the Alliance Government in the last election, as I said, is ample proof of the success of our Rural Development Programme. It is our intention to carry out rural development programme in the Borneo Territories with the same speed, efficiency and dedication as we have done here. We, in the Central Government, intend to assist the respective State Governments in whatever way possible to enable the development programme of these two territories to be implemented with speed and with success. We are determined to show to the people of Sabah and Sarawak that Malaysia benefits them and that independence to Malaysia means better and higher standard of living and more amenities of life. It is only by this way can we prevent them from being infiltrated by the communists or influenced by Indonesian propaganda. As I have said, recently in my visit to Sarawak, it is necessary for us to fight this confrontation by Indonesia on all grounds, in military, as well as in economic and social fields. Therefore, our Development Programme in the Borneo territories must be carried out with the same sense of urgency and dedication as we are facing the confrontation there. I do appeal to the leaders in these two territories and to the people there of all races, the Dayaks, the Ibans, the Kadazans, the Malays and the Chinese to give us their full and whole-hearted co-operation.

If Malaysia is to succeed, then we must show to our people of all races that we can provide them with better way of life, higher standard of living and better opportunities. To do this, we must be able to gear our whole administrative machinery so that our administration can face to the great task of not only meeting the confrontation militarily but also carrying our economic development programme with a sense of urgency and dedication.

It is easy for people to talk that there should be equalities for all. But before we could have equalities or equal opportunities for all our people, the conditions in the various areas in which our people live must be changed and must be brought up to a level in which it will be possible for them to have equal opportunities. In the past, under Colonial rule, the rural people were neglected. There were no means of communication. There were no social amenities. There were very few schools. So the rural people had very limited opportunities of life, in particular, opportunities for education. Therefore, all this must be changed so that, as I said, our people of all races, wherever they maybe, will be able to have the basic amenities of life and also opportunities for higher and better standard of living.

We, in the Alliance Government, have for the last nine years been saying that the future of our country depends on our ability to wield together our people of various races into one united nation. But in order to do this, it is necessary to eliminate imbalances, and inequalities so that every citizen in this country, whatever his racial origin may be, can feel that he has a proper place in our country. As was stated in the King's Speech, this building of one nationhood is a challenge to all of us, to every citizen of Malaysia. In order to meet this challenge, we must approach the problem in a practical and in an objective way. We must take the conditions of our people of various races as they exist today and endeavour to correct the differences and imbalances without stressing on the differences. We have to come to understand certain basic principles, such as religion, language and education. The Alliance Government has reached an understanding on these vitally inflammable delicate issues. Our policy on these issues has been accepted by the great majority of the people in this country and, therefore, I say it will be dangerous and to the detriment of the interest of our country if we are now to attempt to change our policy and our approach on these basic and fundamental issues. We should bearing in mind the principles that we have agreed on the basic issues, move forward to try and help our people of various races, of various racial origins, to obtain opportunities and better amenities of life. We must not endeavour to upset the plans on the basic and fundamental issues that we have achieved and that is why I say in our approach on these issues we must be careful

and we must always endeavour to try and bring out common grounds and bring out matters on which our people do agree and try and dampen on matters which there is a possibility of conflict or differences. It is only by this carefully and properly calculated approach that we can achieve real unity among our people and build that united nationhood that must be the corner stone of the peace and prosperity of our young Nation.

