

UCAPAN PERDANA MENTERI DI PEMBUKAAN RASMI PERSIDANGAN PERWAKILAN MCA DI HOTEL MERLIN, KUALA LUMPUR PADA 2HB SEPTEMBER, 1972

Y.B. Tun Tan Siew Sin,¹ Ahli-Ahli Majlis Kerja Tertinggi MCA,
Para perwakilan, Saudara-saudara sekalian.

Saya sungguh gembira dan bangga kerana sekali lagi dapat penghormatan untuk merasmikan Persidangan Perwakilan MCA ini. Sukalah saya terlebih dahulu mengucapkan terima kasih kepada Tun Tan dan ahli-ahli Majlis Kerja Tertinggi MCA kerana memberi saya peluang keemasan menemui ahli-ahli perwakilan MCA dari seluruh negara, jauh dan dekat menghadiri Persidangan yang penting ini.

Setahun telah berlalu sejak saya berucap kepada saudara-saudara dan kita telah menyaksikan banyak perkembangan terutama dalam kehidupan politik tanah air. It is more than a year since I addressed you all and during the intervening period we have seen considerable developments in the political life of the country.

Satu peristiwa yang tidak kita lupakan hari ini ialah kehilangan rakan seperjuangan kita, mendiang Tan Sri Khaw Kai Boh, Naib Presiden yang telah banyak berjasa kepada MCA dan juga kepada Perikatan. Saya ingin mengambil kesempatan ini menyatakan setinggi-tinggi penghargaan atas khidmat bakti beliau kepada Parti dan Kerajaan selama hayat beliau. Nama mendiang Tan Sri Khaw akan dicatatkan dalam sejarah negara sebagai seorang tokoh nasional setaraf dengan pemimpin-pemimpin agung MCA seperti mendiang Tun Tan Cheng Lock dan Tun Leong Yew Koh.

Dalam beberapa bulan yang lepas ini, kita telah mengadakan beberapa perjumpaan penting iaitu Persidangan Perwakilan UMNO bulan Jun dan kemudian itu ulangtahun ke sepuluh Parti USNO Sabah. Saya memandang Persidangan Perwakilan MCA ini penting dalam hubungan yang sama kerana parti kita tergabung dalam Perikatan dan seterusnya dalam Grand Alliance.

¹ Y.B. Menteri Kewangan Malaysia dan Presiden MCA.

Adalah jelas kepada kita sekalian bahawa masa depan negara bertali erat dengan kekuatan parti kita kerana disinilah letaknya punca kekuatan yang menggerakkan jentera Kerajaan dan menggembelingkan tenaga rakyat untuk pembangunan. Kemampuan parti kita memberikan bimbingan dan ketuaan yang jujur dan dinamis akan menentukan sama ada kita boleh berjaya mencapai matlamat pembangunan negara dengan sepenuhnya.

Sidang Perwakilan,

It is of utmost importance that everyone of us, every party member, be he in the MCA or MIC or UMNO, should fully recognise his duties and fully realise his obligations to the Party and the people and to fulfil these duties and obligations with sincerity, with determination and with dedication.

I have repeatedly reminded members of UMNO, particularly the leadership at all levels, how vital it is for them to keep close to the people, to understand their problems and endeavour to assist them in whatever way possible. It is by maintaining this close and cordial relationship that we develop a greater degree of rapport and better co-operation from them which will bring about more effective result in terms of party-people relationship. Only then will we be able to carry them along with us in whatever projects government has planned within the framework of our development programme. This is indeed the essence of party leadership.

Saudara-saudara sekalian,

Saya sangat berterimakasih kepada pimpinan MCA dibawah Tun Tan Siew Sin kerana memahami baik langkah-langkah yang telah saya ambil untuk memperkukuh lagi perpaduan di kalangan rakyat. Langkah-langkah dan rundingan-rundingan yang saya jalankan vi-a-vis Parti Gerakan di Pulau Pinang dan kemudian dengan People's Progressive Party di Perak adalah semata-mata dengan tujuan hendak memperkukuh lagi perpaduan rakyat serta mempercepatkan tempo pembangunan. Tidak syak lagi, dengan kerana ada titik-titik sefahaman di kalangan Parti yang pernah dulu menentang kita, dan sanggup bekerjasama melaksanakan dasar-dasar ekonomi, sosial dan politik negara, maka lebih besarlah kemungkinan matlamat-matlamat negara akan tercapai dengan penuh kejayaan.

Politik tanah air kita hari ini adalah jauh lebih maju daripada keadaan selepas pemulihan demokrasi berparlimen pada tahun lalu dan sudah jauh meninggalkan lembaran-lembaran hitam 13 Mei dahulu. Saya percaya, selagi ada keyakinan atas kemampuan kita menyelesaikan masalah kita sendiri dan selagi ada keazaman kita mencari penyelesaian yang sebenar, negara ini akan menghadapi masa depan yang amat cerah dan penuh harapan buat kita dan jenerasi-jenerasi akan datang. Saya percaya saudara-saudara mempunyai keyakinan yang sama.

Today we can proudly tell our erstwhile critics in their face where they have gone wrong in their analysis of our society. No doubt some will continue to entertain their wild hopes and prophecy of doom about impending communal conflicts and racial disintegration. However, on our part, we must always be vigilant and on the guard against any attempt from within and without to destroy the social fabric of our nation. So long as we are able to maintain our social cohesion, and with our growing resilience, I am confident we shall be able to triumph through the future.

Saudara-saudara,

Dua hari yang lepas kita telah bersama-sama menyambut ulang-tahun ke lima belas Kemerdekaan negara dan merayakan hari sakti itu dengan penuh gembira dan meriah. Tetapi yang lebih penting dari perayaan itu, yang lebih utama dari perbarisan dan acara-acara perayaan itu, ialah hasrat kita bersama hendak mendirikan masyarakat adil, makmur dan bahagia, di negara ini.

Saya telah seringkali menegaskan keazaman Kerajaan dan juga keazaman Parti Perikatan kita hendak memberikan kehidupan yang sempurna kepada rakyat kita dengan tidak mengira kaum atau keturunan, atau samada mereka duduk di kampung atau di bandar. Cita-cita ini bukanlah terlalu tinggi ataupun terlalu sukar bagi kita hendak mencapainya tetapi haruslah diakui bahawa jalan ke arah itu adalah masih jauh dan tentulah mengambil masa sampai kepada matlamat itu.

Bagaimana pun, saya yakin bahawa kita sekalian adalah bersama-sama mendukung hasrat ini dengan penuh tekad berusaha ke arah cita-cita murni ini. Kita menghadapi tugas besar ini dengan rasa pengabdian kepada bangsa dan negara serta berikrar akan

memenuhi tugas itu dalam tempoh hayat kita. Apa jua yang kita usahakan pada hari ini, akan menjadi warisan yang bakal disempurnakan oleh anak cucu kita akan datang.

Saudara-saudara,

Our nation is now faced with the task of modernisation. The goal of our New Economic Policy is to accomplish this task and in accomplishing this task, each of us will have to discard his selfishness and unite for the common good. It is our responsibility to first create the mood for modernisation. Only with the existence of this mood could the twin objectives of our Second Malaysia Plan be achieved.

I would like to remind all Malaysians that the colonial organisation of our society had left a deep imprint in the minds of our people. This has resulted in among us a tenacious habit of thinking that the inherited conditions, especially economic, cannot be changed. The people have been led to believe that only one group could be successful in commercial activities, while another group was only suitable for agricultural activities. As a result, healthy economic concepts have not developed and, for a time, the people were deprived of all will for rebuilding their society.

However, the New Economic Policy is aimed to free us all from this skewed belief. What is important today is to realign the minds of our people to the new environment—an environment where all of us could determine its movement—thus enabling them to take a positive attitude toward economic development and progress. Only with this realization could we ensure our people of their social responsibility.

A proper sense of social responsibility is also a pre-condition for the success of democracy, especially when our democracy lacks its roots. Belatedly, we have recognised the necessity for adapting democracy to our Malaysian way of life. Since democracy does not mean the satisfaction of individual or sectional interest but more the satisfaction of the majority or national interest; therefore, those who aspire for leadership, like we in the Alliance, who are entrusted with it now, must strive to be exemplary and remain above sectional or individual interest. We do not want the past to repeat itself. What we want is the continuous growth of enlightenment of our people at all levels, in order to ensure the successful modernisation of our society under a democratic system.

Consequently, we cannot afford to allow dangerous tendencies to mar the growth of our democratic wisdom nor can we afford to allow political apathy and indifference to co-exist. Irresponsible action under the guise of democratic tradition especially in a multi-racial environment of ours could only lead us to disaster. Therefore, there is only one choice before all of us—either to allow ourselves to be led by unhealthy democratic practice or to steer away from this pattern and to follow a path that would give us maximum benefit as enshrined in the Rukunegara. On our choice, at this juncture, depends the survival of our people and nation.

The realities faced by us today are by no means easy or comfortable. The jagged economic and social configuration would live with us for sometime to come, but let us all make it on a diminishing scale. Let us not allow the jubilant enthusiasm of independence and the fifteen year efforts of consolidation evaporate like a morning dew in the face of sectional or communal pressures. Let us be alive to the threat that comes under the various guises to undermine our responsibility and rationality. Let us isolate them and prevent them from confusing us to the extent of not being able to distinguish a sectional or communal issue from a national issue.

There is no doubt that the Alliance is very strong today, but it is precisely because of its towering strength that provocative elements could make their inroads more easily. They could agitate and propagate on issues that could stir the emotion of a certain section of the Alliance; and if this is allowed unchecked, the national unification efforts could be highly jeopardised. In the same way, if we allow ourselves to be subjected to disintegrative pressures, as experienced in the past, again the future of our people would be gloomy and dark.

It was to prevent disintegrative tendencies from getting their upper hand that the Sedition Act was legislated two years ago; but sometimes the enemies of this Act operate under the cover of democratic process, which makes it more difficult for us to identify them. But, as I said earlier, if we are all united and committed to our common goal, they would inevitably be alienated.

However, I think it is important for us all to remember that we in the Alliance, be it UMNO, MCA or MIC, is the biggest political party in the country and as such our members should

not easily succumb to any particular issue or become victim of circumstances arising out of political manipulation by irresponsible opportunists. We cannot avoid having issues from time to time, but we should always have the resolve to overcome them in a positive manner, and not allow them to divide us and break the strong bond we have established and nurtured for the past twenty years.

Saudara-saudara,

Akhirnya saya suka mengulangi lagi satu perkara yang telah saya tegaskan pada Persidangan Tahunan UMNO bulan Jun lalu mengenai penggunaan Bahasa Malaysia dikalangan pekedai dan business houses.

Keadaan hari ini masih dapat diperbaiki lagi dan saya sukalah melihat semua yang berkenaan bekerjasama tanpa memerlukan kuatkuasa undang-undang. Inilah cara yang sebaik-baiknya bagi kita semua memupuk keperibadian bangsa dengan menghormati dan menjunjung tinggi Bahasa Malaysia. Bahkan kita harus berbangga dengan perkembangan baru-baru ini iaitu persetujuan antara kita dan pihak Indonesia menggunakan sistem ejaan baru yang disempurnakan. Saya percaya seluruh rakyat akan menerima perubahan ini dengan sebaik-baiknya demi kemajuan dan keutuhan Bahasa Kebangsaan kita.

Saudara-saudara,

Sekianlah pesanan saya kepada Persidangan Perwakilan ini dan saya akhiri dengan harapan semoga persidangan ini menghasilkan keputusan-keputusan yang membawa kita selangkah lagi ke depan untuk membina masyarakat adil dalam negara yang makmur, aman dan bahagia.