

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT A  
DINNER IN HONOUR OF THE RT. HON'BLE  
WILLIAM McMAHON, THE AUSTRALIAN  
PRIME MINISTER, AT SRI TAMAN, KUALA  
LUMPUR ON 12TH JUNE, 1972

Mr. Prime Minister, Excellencies, Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure indeed, on behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, to extend to you, Mr. Prime Minister and to members of your party, a very warm welcome to our country.

I am sorry, however, that this, your first official visit to Malaysia, since you assumed the high office, should be so brief. Nevertheless, we have had a very fruitful and constructive meeting this morning and I hope that you will find the rest of your stay here both pleasant and rewarding.

Mr. Prime Minister, both my wife and I are also sorry that your gracious lady cannot be with you on this journey. However, we understand the reason and we rejoice with you at the happy event that is to take place soon.

Mr. Prime Minister, both our countries have been good steady friends for a long time. We have been so, despite the expanse of waters which separates us, because of the many ideals and interests which we share—whether it be in our long and established association within the Commonwealth or in our experience of co-operation in the Colombo Plan and in defence matters or in our commitment to the democratic process and democratic values.

Above all, I think there is a shared feeling of vibrancy and vitality between our two peoples who are informal, relaxed and unostentatious, but who are at the same time determined to build peaceful and prosperous societies for ourselves and to contribute to the building of similar societies in our region.

Mr. Prime Minister, as a small Nation in this somewhat turbulent region of Southeast Asia, we in Malaysia have repeatedly expressed our commitment to a policy of peace and prosperity at home, and the promotion of goodwill, understanding and friendship with our neighbours and other countries abroad. It is with

this sense of concern for the peace, security and economic well-being of the region that my Government together with the Governments of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand has taken the initiative of issuing what has now come to be known as the Kuala Lumpur Declaration.

There is no doubt in my own mind that Malaysia and Australia, as two countries who have been allies for so many years, have a mutual interest in providing the conditions that would make for peace and progress in this region. Over the years, Australia has given much in men, money and material for the defence of this region and it is, therefore, as much in Australia's interest as it is in Malaysia's to ensure peace and security in Southeast Asia.

The Kuala Lumpur Declaration is a first step—an important first step—which the five Southeast Asian countries have taken along the difficult road towards keeping this region safe from the conflicts which have plagued us for so long. There is no doubt that it is in Australia's enlightened self-interest to keep this region safe and secure and it is in that spirit, Mr. Prime Minister, that I commend that Kuala Lumpur Declaration to you.

Let me say here, Mr. Prime Minister, that we in Malaysia will never forget the sacrifices and assistance which Australia has given us in the defence of Malaysia and of the values that we have in common. We have been allies in war and in peace and it is my hope that, as Malaysia, together with other Southeast Asian countries, embarks on this new venture to ensure our security and our stability, Australia will view our efforts with sympathy and with understanding.

Mr. Prime Minister, from defence I turn to development which is another area of mutual interest to both our countries. As Malaysia strives towards development and progress, we have learnt over the years to value our ties with Australia more and more. Your Government has extended technical and financial assistance and has generously provided places in Australian universities and other institutions of higher learning for thousands of our students.

Mr. Prime Minister, since our Independence some fifteen years ago, Australia has sent three extremely able, sympathetic and distinguished High Commissioners to us here in Kuala Lumpur. But the good name of Australia has been enhanced even more

widely, if I may put it that way, by the thousands of Ambassadors that you have in this country who have studied in Australia and by those Australians who have worked with us here in our development programmes.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Australian Government and the Australian people for their warm understanding and genuine appreciation of the needs of developing countries such as Malaysia.

Mr. Prime Minister, looking to the future, I believe that there are fresh possibilities of co-operation between our two countries, namely in the fields of trade and investment.

As you are aware, Malaysia has embarked on an ambitious Second Five-Year Development Plan which has important and wide-ranging economic and social objectives to cement unity in our multi-racial nation by restructuring our society and by eradicating poverty.

As the Second Malaysia Plan gathers momentum, there is ever increasing scope for the private sector in terms of trade and investment to play its part which would not only bring benefits to itself but which would also contribute to the success of the Plan. In these ways—through inter-governmental co-operation, through trade and through investment—I am confident that Australia and Malaysia will continue to be true partners in development in the decade of the seventies.

Finally, Mr. Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, may I take this opportunity to reiterate our good-will and good wishes to Australia and to her people.

And now, Excellencies and Gentlemen, I invite you to rise and join with me to drink a toast to the good health of the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. McMahon, and to the Government and people of Australia.