

TR: 6.4.1966

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
IN HONOUR OF AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER
ON 27TH APRIL, 1966.

Mr. Prime Minister¹, Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies and Gentlemen,

I should like, Mr. Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, to extend to you a very sincere welcome to our country. My only regret is that our Prime Minister, the Tunku, is unable to be here to welcome you personally, as he is now on leave; but he has asked me, on his behalf and on behalf of my other colleagues, to say how happy we are to have you in Kuala Lumpur. Your visit certainly provides a most useful occasion for us to take counsel with one another on matters of vital and common concern to our two countries.

About six and a half years ago, we have the privilege of welcoming your distinguished predecessor, Sir Robert Menzies; and two years ago, we had the privilege of welcoming you, Mr. Prime Minister, in a different capacity.

I should also like to extend to you our very sincere congratulations on your assuming the high office of Prime Minister of your country; and I have no doubt that, under your able leadership, Australia will continue to progress and prosper, and to play her role in international affairs, in particular, in the affairs of this region of South East Asia.

Australia and Malaysia have very close and most friendly relations. Australia has helped us in a number of ways. She is assisting with the defence of Malaysia. The gallant Australian soldiers are, at this very moment, standing shoulder to shoulder with our own soldiers, as well as soldiers from the United Kingdom and New Zealand defending the Malaysian Borders. Australia has given assistance generously in the expansion of our armed forces, and has promised further generous assistance, which I thought, you, Mr. Prime

Minister, would find much easier to approve now in your present capacity, that you are no longer the Treasurer! Australia has also helped us under the Colombo Plan, supplied us with experts, technicians and equipment, etc. and in various other ways, for the implementation of our Development Plan, She has made available scholarship and training facilities to thousands of Malaysians studying in Australia. There are at present about 5,000 government and private students in Australia, studying in schools and universities, and in other forms of educational institutions.

It is extremely generous on the part of the Australian Government, and the Australian people, to provide places for so many of our students, at a time, when, obviously, there is pressure for places in Australian schools and universities, for Australian students. This act of generosity is appreciated not only by the Malaysian Government but also by the numerous Malaysian families who have their children or relatives studying in Australia.

Over the years, many of our students have graduated from Australia and returned to Malaysia, and are now making a most valuable contribution to the economic and social development of our young nation.

Indeed, Mr. Prime Minister, Australia and Malaysia have very close and friendly ties in all fields.

In trade, the balance is, I am advised, against us, and I hope it would be possible to adjust this trade a little more in our favour. I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Australia for the help and cooperation she has given Malaysia in the International Tin Agreement and in our attempts to obtain a fair price range for this commodity which is of great importance to our economy. Both Australia and Malaysia are producers of primary products and I hope it will be possible for our two countries to continue to work closely together in our endeavours to find remunerative and stable prices for our primary exports.

Also, there are hundreds of Australians, other than military personnel, who are actively participating in various fields - in mining, in finance houses, in property development, in trade enterprises and in manufacturing industries - each contributing, in no small measure, to the economic and social progress of our country.

We in Malaysia owe you, Mr. Prime Minister, and your government and people, an abiding debt of gratitude not only for your assistance in our economic development and other fields and your generous contribution in terms of military equipment, but also for the sacrifice of lives by the gallant Australian soldiers in the defence of our country.

Mr. Prime Minister, I have one confession to make; and that is, I have not yet had the privilege of visiting your great country. I do hope that I shall be able to make up for this shortcoming of mine in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. Prime Minister, we live in a disturbed and a divided world. In South East Asia, dark clouds of aggression and the threat of war are looming across the horizon. However, our two countries, being members of the Commonwealth, share the same ideals. We stand for freedom, peace and cooperation among nations, based on mutual respect. We are determined to see that these ideals are safeguarded. We are ready to play our part and to make any sacrifice for the defence of these ideals and for the cause of peace among Nations.

It is, Mr. Prime Minister, indeed a pity that your visit to our country is so short. We would have liked to have arranged for you, besides your official duties, to play golf or tennis, to do some spear-fishing, or even to see the races. Our Prime Minister, the Tunku, would have loved to see you lose some money at our Race meetings! We hope, in your next visit, you will be able to spend a little more time with us.

Mr. Prime Minister, we in Malaysia are always happy to receive you or any of your colleagues in our country. You are always welcome to Malaysia at any time. I do hope that you will have a pleasant stay in our country.

Mr. Prime Minister, Australia and Malaysia are linked together by ties of close cooperation and solid friendship based on a common belief in democracy and freedom. It is the hope and prayer of all of us in Malaysia that these ties between our two countries will continue to be strengthened and that Australia and Malaysia will work together in harmony and understanding for the benefit of

our people and for the peace, happiness and prosperity of this region of the world.

¹ Yang Amat Berhormat Harold Holt.