

TEXT OF A BROADCAST BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
IN AUSTRALIA ON 8TH APRIL 1967

I am very happy to have this opportunity of speaking to you directly and simply in this way. I have come as your guest and I want to say first of all, how truly happy I am to be here in your great and lively country with its vast expanse of potentials. Let me say at once that those are not just polite words. I think we, Australians and Malaysians, are close enough together to be able to dispense with ceremony and protocol. And so I do not want to say again how truly happy I am to be here.

I am happy because this visit is the realization of a wish that I have long cherished. I wanted to come to Australia first of all to thank you for all your help to us in Malaysia- not only for your support, including the support of your soldiers, over the period of Indonesian Confrontation but also for your help over many years particularly in the field of technical assistance and in the facilities for training and education which you have provided for us. Your engineers, your technicians, your teachers, and other officials- and your soldiers during confrontation- have become familiar and welcomed figures in our society. In turn our students in Australia have become accepted as part of the ordinary life here. They now number over 5,000 and they are pursuing a wide variety of studies in your universities, in the arts, in science and medicine, in engineering and architecture, in law, in agriculture and other subjects, which will contribute directly to the progress of Malaysia. And so you see, Australia has become a part of our lives in Malaysia. And on behalf of the Malaysian people I want to tell you how much we appreciate the constructive contributions which you have made for the progress and welfare of our country.

Also, I have been anxious to come on a visit here because I want to see Australia for myself. Like many others I have read about Australia- of your history, of the beauty of your countryside, of your vast resources, of your energy and activity, and the richness and diversity of life in this country. I had formed the impression of a country which is young, lively, varied and existing- and since coming here my expectation has been confirmed. I have seen the bustle and activity of Sydney. I have seen the quite efficiency of Canberra, I have seen your wide, open land, your farms, your factories, your industrial projects, I have seen your beaches and your parks, your universities and your cultural centres and most of all I have seen and been greatly

touched by the warmth of the people of Australia. Your energy and enterprise and enthusiasm, your sense of history, and of your responsibility as a prosperous nation in a region of poverty and under-development, have impressed me.

Certainly by any standards, and particularly in comparison with Asian conditions, this is a rich and prosperous land. You are rightly concerned with providing your people with the good things of life. So, too, we in Malaysia. Compared to you here, we poor; but in the region of Southeast Asia, we are such richer than our neighbours. However, it is a precarious prosperity as it is dependent mainly on the export of two primary commodities, rubber and tin, whose prices fluctuate on the world market with consequent uncertainty for our economy. A drop of one cent per pound in the price of rubber means an annual loss of 22 million dollars in export receipts to us, and the price of rubber, as you are aware, has been showing a market downward trend. We are therefore constantly battling with the problem of development, to raise the living standards of our people and in particular to close the gap between the urban and the rural areas, between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', and between the states of Sabah and Sarawak in East Malaysia and the states in West Malaysia.

We are determined to succeed and to achieve that success within the framework of parliamentary democracy. That is of particular significance to you in Australia. Our failure would mean the failure of the parliamentary system which would only be to the advantage of the Communists in our midst who draw their inspiration and their support from outside the country. That is why in the present conditions of Malaysia, I prefer to regard the Communists not only as an enemy but also as competitor in the solution of the development problem. That is why if we solve the problems of development, we would largely solve the Communists problem. We in Malaysia believe that democracy is the best system of government ever devised. We believe in a free-enterprise economy as the most effective means of releasing the energy and ingenuity of men. We believe that a democratic, free-enterprise system will produce the best results-provided always that the people who operate the system are honest, efficient, tough and dedicated. But the Communists will always try to muddy the water, to distract our attention and dissipate our energies to non-productive enterprises so that we will fail to solve the development problem. They feed upon the remains of lost hopes and ideals. We are determined that the hopes and ideals of our people, for peace, for prosperity, and for progress, will never be disappointed, and that is why we are grateful to you for your assistance in that endeavour, the success or failure of which has so direct a bearing on your fortune and your future.

I would like to speak on one other aspect of the development problem: which is, that in a prosperous society, the edges of social conflicts are blunted. Malaysia is, as you know, a multiracial society composed of peoples of different races, languages, religions and cultures. For myself I find that this diversity of peoples is a great challenge and indeed I think you too know in Australia how much the contribution of the different ethnic groups has been to the rich variety of Australian life. But I would be less than frank if I say that we in Malaysia have completely solved the problem of welding together so many diverse people into one homogenous society. We have made enormous progress as evidence of the last ten years clearly shows - the national consciousness permeates over racial or sectional consciousness. But that success would be lost if we do not continue to make economic and social progress, if we do not ensure that the size of the national cake is sufficiently large so that it may be satisfactorily divided among all. So once again we come back to the development problem: solve that and you also solve the race problem. That is why we believe it is best solved not in 'loud debates and public confrontation but in tackling it at the roots through education and economic development.

I have taken a little of your time in talking about the problems and prospects of Malaysia. I do not think that I am being unduly boastful if I say that we have made good progress - the democratic system thrives in Malaysia, the economy and trobs with activity, the plans for rural development have had striking results, our people look to the future with confidence.

This, I know, is a matter of great satisfaction to you, as much as it is a matter of tremendous pride to us. For our future and our destiny are inevitably linked. We are united by the facts of geography and by the ties of history. We have a common faith in the democratic process and in a free-enterprise economy. Most of all we share a concern for and a pride in the individual, to overcome his fears and disabilities and to realise his hopes and dreams. We both believe profoundly that in the final analysis, it is the individual who counts. That is why I am so delighted at this opportunity to speak to you as one person to another. I have spoken directly and simply as I would if you were in my house. But instead I have come to yours and I do wish to thank you most warmly.