

SPEECH BY
THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT A DINNER GIVEN
BY THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS
ON 26TH OCTOBER, 1966.

I am very happy to be your guest tonight. The last time I addressed a N.U.J. (National Union of Journalists) gathering was about a year ago and, of course, I shall be quite happy to accept another invitation from you all next year. I would like to thank you, Mr. President and members of your Committee for organising this Dinner and for providing me with an opportunity to talk and meet so many old friends and make new acquaintances.

According to a N.U.J. Press Release, I am supposed to give you all a comprehensive account about my recent American Trip and stop-over in London. I do not know what do you really mean by comprehensive, but I shall try to be as brief as it can be done and be comprehensive as well.

By and large, the three-week tour to the United Nations, Washington, Puerto Rico in the Carribean and London was happy and, if I may say so, quite rewarding as well.

Earlier this year, I was invited to be a speaker at the Far East America Council Conference in New York and since the Conference coincides with the 21st General Assembly of the United Nations, I accepted that invitation. The Prime Minister, our Tunku¹, asked me to lead our delegation to the United Nations. I welcomed this as it would give me some experience on the workings of the United Nations. I have never attended any United Nations General Assembly before.

I went to New York for two purposes: first, to address a rather important Economic Conference there and, secondly, to lead our delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. After these assignments, I took advantage of my present at the U.N. to go to

Washington on a private visit and also to Puerto Rico to observe the implementation of Rural Development in the American Commonwealth.

Although I was on a private visit to Washington, I was most fortunate to be received by President Johnson. I also met the Secretary of Defence, Mr. McNamara. One of the results of these meetings, as you all already know, is the American decision to restrict the sales of stockpile rubber to 120,000 tons a year and not 170,000 as previously agreed. This American gesture, for which we are grateful, has helped to maintain our economic stability. This is a splendid support from America and I hope the rubber market would now achieve some measure of stability. I hope there would be similar gesture on tin.

My sojourn at the United Nations gave me valuable experience, new vision and frontiers of understanding about international relations and power politics. At the United Nations, I had the pleasure of renewing acquaintances and friendship with many Afro-Asian leaders I met during my two journeys to Africa and those Commonwealth leaders, whom I have met in Malaysia or at Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. It also gave me an opportunity to make new acquaintances and friends, among whom was the Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, Mr. Nikezic Marko, the new Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, the President of the U.N. General Assembly, Mr. Rahman Pazhwak, the Foreign Minister of Turkey, Mr. Caglayangil and several Latin American leaders.

I discussed 'matters of common interest' with the Yugoslav Foreign Minister and as a result of the discussion I hope there would be greater contacts and economic ties between our two countries in the future.

I personally believe that the world has never before needed the United Nations more than it does today. It is thus a major policy of the Alliance Government to give all the support it can and contribute to the success of this Organisation. It is our wish to see that the United Nations will grow and prosper in the years to come.

Cynics have criticized the United Nations as being no more than

just an international debating forum, that it is ineffective and has failed in its job of policing world peace. To those cynics and critics, I need only say that while it is true that to some extent the United Nations suffers from certain limitations and imperfections, I feel that in its 21 years of existence the United Nations has grown from strength to strength and the peoples of the World have growing faith and confidence in the Organisation year by year. Twenty years ago, the United Nations had only 51 members but now it has 119 member States. One must not easily forget that it was the United Nations that save the world from the brink of global catastrophes in restoring peace and order in places like Korea, Suez, the Congo, Cyprus and Cuba. I hope the United Nations would also soon be able to resolve the Vietnamese War to every party's satisfaction and thus helps guarantee peace and stability in Vietnam and South East Asia.

While at the United Nations, I was able to observe closely its workings, its frustrations, its hopes and dreams, and I found that in spite of the tremendous problems that the world body faces, there was, significantly, amidst world tensions and controversies, an atmosphere of growing faith and hopes in the United Nations from all member-countries.

I had discussions with U Thant² and I found him to be a man of great dedication and he is trying his best to make the U.N. more effective to police world peace. I sympathize with him if he is meeting with a lot of obstacles and limitations in carrying out his arduous and thankless job. I appeal to all member States to continue to support U Thant and to give their faith and trust to contribute in every way to ensure the ultimate realisation of the objective for which the U.N. was formed - the evolution of a world order under conditions of peace, justice and prosperity.

Malaysia has a special faith in the United Nations because we believe that small countries like us and other newly emerging nations can rely on the United Nations for the safeguard of their independence and integrity, without which I am afraid, their independence and integrity will be constantly violated by bigger and predacious powers. It is only the United Nations that would ensure us to be left undisturbed to chart our own destiny.

At the American Far East Council Conference, there were altogether five speakers from South-east Asia. They were the Foreign Minister of Thailand, Tun Thanat Khoman, who spoke on "Problems and Hopes of South-east Asia"; the Minister of Economic and Financial Affairs of Indonesia, and a member of the Indonesian triumvirate, Sri Sultan Hamangku Buwono. he spoke on "Indonesia's New Order", and a speaker each from the Philippines and South Vietnam.

I was asked to speak on "Democracy and Development in Malaysia". It was a good Conference attended by influential investors and people with a lot of say in American commerce, industry and finance. I was particularly pleased that the Conference honoured Malaysia by making its representative deliver what the Americans call "Keynote" address at the Convention. That really was not important to me personally, but I did have a really good opportunity to sell Malaysia as the best place for American investment in South-east Asia, and from the response, I think, Malaysia can now look forward to greater American investment and greater economic cooperation between us and Americans. I gathered from talking to American leaders and ordinary people in the streets that while they (Americans) understood we have many problems facing us, to them Malaysia, was the "best bet" of all in South-east Asia to continue developing a viable and stable political system, and perhaps, this is one of the reasons why President Johnson decided to pay us a call-really this is an honour and a tribute to our good Government and political stability.

After New York I visited Harvard and Yale Universities to meet Malaysian students and Americans studying the National Language or Bahasa Malaysia. I discovered of all the South-east Asian languages that are being taught at Yale University, Bahasa Malaysia is the most popular. It has more students than any other single South-east Asian language.

At Harvard, I discussed, I asked and received assurances of greater cooperation from the University in assisting us with experts and advisers in our development work. Harvard University has now adopted the Administrative and Development Unit in the Prime Minister's Department. Harvard would help us from time to time to train our officers and provide us with specialists. I also had

discussions with Mr. MacGeorge Bundy, a former Kennedy and Johnson adviser, and now President of the Ford Foundation; the President of World Bank and many other people interested in our Economic Development. All these discussions centred around how best these institutions could help our Development Plan, especially the implementation of our First Malaysia Plan. I am quite happy with the results of these discussions.

In Puerto Rico, I managed to find some time to play golf and relaxed a little in between inspection of Puerto Rican Rural Development projects and held discussions with Puerto Rican officials concerned with Economic Development of the Island. One needs to play golf - especially after 'pressured living' in New York - even just for a week it was pretty bad.

It was in Puerto Rico that I got the idea of Rural Housing Scheme. This is a new concept and I have instructed MARA to initiate and coordinate a Rural Housing Scheme to be financed and implemented through MARA.

As you know, the Government already has a housing programme for the urban areas, but none for the rural areas. The Rural Housing Programme will begin next year.

There is a slight difference between the Urban Housing Scheme and the Rural Housing Scheme. The different lies in the element of self-help or 'Gotong Royong'. The 'Gotong Royong' spirit is going to be the most important element in this rural housing scheme.

In the rural areas, many people have their own land. They may wish to build their own houses. The Ministry, through MARA, will assist them in doing so by providing a house structure consisting of the floor, the framework and the roof. All the other parts of the house (external walls, internal partitions and ceiling) will have to be provided or built by the owner himself. We shall provide the essential structure, the owner will have to do the rest.

This type of rural housing has tremendous flexibility to meet individual requirements over time. A man has the chance of finishing the house at his own convenience and to his own liking. He will feel a sense of participation in a project sponsored by the Government.

In Washington, the most important thing was my talks with President Johnson, Mr. McNamara and Mr. William Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. One result of these discussions was the phased out and reduction of amount in America Rubber Stockpile releases. We also exchanged views on pressing international problems, especially about the war in Vietnam. I found the Americans have high regards for Malaysia's ability to defeat militant communism. They are studying and re-studying our patterns of victory against the Reds. Then, of course, I discussed with Mr. Bundy, the outline of programme of President Johnson's visit to our country during the week-end.

London, to be frank with you, had not been a scheduled stopo. I was about to leave Washington for home via Madrid and Rome, when I suddenly received on invitation from the British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, Mr. Bowden requesting me to visit London for discussions with himself and Mr. Denis Healey, the British Defence Minister.

We discussed British troops withdrawal from East Malaysia, British logistic and air support for Malaysian troops for the interim period until Malaysia could look after himself. I hope this would be very soon. We cannot indefinitely be dependent on others for the defence of our country. In the last analysis, the defence of our nation - even from external aggression - must be our own responsibility.

The British Press, unfortunately largely hostile towards Malaysia, kept on asking me - an obsession with them really a whether British Defence Aid to Malaysia was discussed. I just told them that it was not the habit of Malaysia to go begging. Malaysia needs 20 helicopters and we are going to buy them. We do not expect people to give us free.

All in all, my visit to America and Britain has been very useful and rewarding. My Washington trip has brought the frontiers of cooperation between Malaysia and the United States in many fields, especially in the economic sphere, closer and the friendship between the two peoples would be greatly strengthened by the visit of President Johnson to our country during the weekend. It is yet another demonstration of ever growing close-relationship between

Washington and Kuala Lumpur and I hope our relationship with Britain too will be just as close.

Thank you.

¹ Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj

² Secretary-General of the United Nations