

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE STATE
DINNER GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR BY THE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
IN THE MALACANANG PALACE, MANILA ON
3 JANUARY , 1959

Mr. President, ¹ Madame Garcia, Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen.

If these walls of the Palace of Malacanang could speak tonight, they could tell us that they have looked down on many great moments in the history of the Philippines, moments of grandeur and tragedy, humility and heroism, achievement and glory.

Today and this evening they have witnessed new events in the history not only of the Philippines but of Southeast Asia. They have seen the living expression of firm friendship between two Eastern nations meeting together formally for the first time in a fellowship which springs from common racial origin and mutual pride in independence and democracy.

It has always been my wish and ambition to visit the Philippines, to see how the other part of the Malay world lives, and to bring to them greetings from their brothers in Malaya.

In the past, despite our similarities of origin, we have been divided, going along parallel courses, subject to separate influences, dominated by different powers. It was inevitable, therefore, that our contacts should be limited to those between individual Filipinos and Malaysians.

This division no longer exists, although there are still difficulties arising mainly from the fact that we operate in different currency areas. But we can meet now as independent peoples in our own right, coming closer together in amity and accord because it is the natural thing for us to as neighbours and kin in Southeast Asia.

¹ Mr. Carlos Garcia

Both our nations have remained close friends with the powers under whose dominance we were once. Both of us have Defence Agreements with the retiring powers, agreements entered into of our own free will, agreements which do not fetter our independence in any way but which ensure firm allies in the case of unexpected aggression.

Both of us have demonstrated that we are determined to defend ourselves if the need should ever arise, and both of us in war and peace have shown our capacity to prove our intentions.

Even more significant than these similarities are those in our internal affairs. Both of our countries have had to fight actively and intensively against the forces of evil which aim to destroy our democracy. You in the Philippines have met and annihilated the threat of militant Communism since you became a nation.

We in Malaya have had to face the same aggression for ten years past, not only from the time shortly after we became a Federation working towards the goal of nationhood, but also in the sixteen months since we have achieved our Merdeka — and we are still doing so.

The story of our Emergency is not yet over, but so great has been our success since we became a free nation that we can now claim with confidence that we have the mastery and that the final defeat of Communist aggression in our country is only a matter of time.

So the Philippines and Malaya have one most significant fact of life in common. Both of us know from bitter experience what the Communist threat really means, and both of us are determined to stand against this brutal ideological onslaught on our ways of life.

Both the Philippines and Malaya have dedicated themselves to the principles of democracy, the way of life which best fits the Malayan mind: but we go about it differently. You conduct your affairs broadly in the American tradition whereas our democratic ways spring mainly from the Parliamentary traditions of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The Philippines and Malaya also have two more factors in common, one economic, the other international. Both our countries are producers of primary commodities for the markets of the world and both of us value capital investment, either local or foreign, for the development of the industries we need.

And finally, both of us are strong supporters of the principles and purposes of the United Nations, convinced that this is the only possible organisation which can ensure and maintain peace and security in the world.

You were right, Mr. President, when you said:— "Experience has conclusively shown that Communism thrives in poverty, want and discontent, and loses strength in inverse proportion to economic progress". Therefore our duty should be to ensure that the conditions in Southeast Asia must improve considerably in order to clean up this enemy from our midst.

I am strongly of the opinion that with our affinity of race and interest there is much that we can do in this direction. If we could get together with a firm understanding that nations must be interdependent for the good of their countries and peoples — with this purpose between us we might well set something in motion which might be the beginning of a linking between nations within our ethonological and geographical group, naturally together in the same area, that could lead to economic and political stability for all countries in this region of Southeast Asia.

Mr. President, I have been deeply touched by your generous words of welcome, by your spontaneous hospitality and friendliness, and by the honour you have paid to my country tonight by conferring on me as Prime Minister a most distinguished award, Raja of the Order of Siketuna. In all sincerity I wish to say thank you on behalf of all Malaysians. I am sure your gesture will be received by our people in the Federation of Malaya with both gratitude and pride.

You have said most graciously that this honour is paid to me for extraordinary services in the field of foreign relations. It is most heartening to know that the efforts of my country to contribute to the betterment of mankind are genuinely appreciated and respected. Although we are the newest independent nation in Asia, and only a small one as populations go, we are proud of our freedom and democracy and of our right to stand up before the world to put our point of view.

That is why I am most grateful to you tonight, Mr. President, for the honour you have paid to me as the representative of my country. It has already been announced that our Paramount Ruler, His Majesty the

Yang di-Pertuan Agong has invited you, Mr. President, to pay an official visit to the Federation of Malaya this year.

This morning I also had the honour of bringing to you, Mr. President, from His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong of the Federation of Malaya the highest award in his Royal gift to bestow on Sovereign Rulers or Heads of States.

I had the honour of presenting to you in this Palace of Malacanang, the Collar, Star, Badge and Riband of the Most Exalted Order of the Crown, a distinction which is limited to a membership of thirty dignitaries only. In doing so I was offering to you on behalf of His Majesty a tangible proof of Malaya's friendship for the people of the Philippines, and my King's personal regard and esteem for you, Mr. President.

I hope and trust that my visit to the Philippines as Prime Minister of Malaya and your visit to our country as a Head of State will be the forerunners of growing friendship, stronger ties and lasting understanding between our two Malayan nations.

Confident of this, I take the greatest pride and pleasure in asking you, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen to rise and drink a toast to our gracious hosts, President and Madame Garcia, and to the happiness and prosperity of the people of the Philippines.