

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT A RECEPTION  
GIVEN IN HONOUR OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND  
PUAN SHARIFAH RODZIAH BY THE PHILIPPINE  
SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR. FELIXBERTO  
M.SERRANO, AND MADAME SERRANO AT  
PINES HOTEL, BAGUIO CITY ON THE  
4 JANUARY, 1959

Mr. Foreign Secretary, Madame Serrano, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

This up-country City of Baguio, with its towering pine-trees and invigorating air, is obviously a place for leisure and relaxation away from the heat and the bustle of Manila and the other cities and posts of the Philippines. This mountain land is designed for holiday and not for problems of the world.

I dare say that in these surroundings learned philosophers might attempt lofty excursions into the inner meanings of life and the future of mankind. Statesmen, politicians, and diplomats, however may be called upon at any time to deal with more mundane affairs. Even if they do not find solutions here, at least they will return refreshed to tackle the calls of office.

It is a sobering fact that men in high places must always come down to ground level when they consider the important issues of the day. Therefore I trust you will forgive me if, instead of talking about the lighter side of life which Baguio induces and invites one to do, I speak instead about more weighty matters.

The world in which we live has become an arena of conflict between Great Powers, a struggle we all know as the "cold war". It is a battle of words and wits, of competition in research and economics in endless rivalry for dominance over the hearts of men, a clash of opposing beliefs on the nature of man and on the shaping of human destiny.

It will be a very sad day indeed if in this vital struggle of ideas and amid this welter of propaganda the small nations of the world have no voice. We in Malaya, as I am sure you also in the Philippines, feel most earnestly that it is the privilege and the duty of small countries to speak up in the interests of all men to prevent the "cold war" becoming "hot". No man of sense wants the world to blow up in his face by the flash of sudden anger or the magnification of a minor incident.

Only by persistence, patience and principle can peace be kept in the world, and we should never cease to insist on the paramount importance of peace. War like disease can be contagious, but war like disease can be prevented if the proper precautions are taken.

We in the small nations know that without peace there can be no progress. We know, too, that we do not want to waste our substance in profitless expenditure on arms. And all of us in Asia know that the wave of liberation which has swept our continent in these stirring years is fundamentally due to a flood of protest in the hearts of millions against inequality and injustice, against domination on account of race and colour.

If the small nations speak up — and speech is the only weapon we have — if we speak up and act constructively then only we can be sure that all men everywhere will be told of our needs, our fears and our aspirations.

Even if others choose to exert their sense of power, and there are some who exult in doing so, let us, the small nations, set an example and do everything we can to ensure that the world in which we all must live moves only in the orbit of peace and progress. Let others compete for the the future of outer space; but for us — let us concentrate on the inner needs of men, whose fate hangs on us.

We in Malaya believe in stability at home and abroad, economically and politically, and believe that peace, security and happiness are essential for all men. That is what we have been trying to do in the brief time of our independence, and that is the path we intend to pursue, speaking up without fear or favour to both friend and foe.

However, in our pursuit of peace, security and happiness our duty first of all is to concentrate all our efforts on settling matters at home, on providing political stability and economic betterment.

Malaya, as distinct from other countries in Southeast Asia, has people of different races who have been living together in peace and harmony for many generations. Before our independence Malaya was disturbed by the uprising of Communists who claimed to fight for Malaya's liberation from the rule of colonialism. But the other people of Malaya were all fighting for freedom in a constitutional way; we did not believe that violence should be used as a means to obtain our ends. Nor did we believe that the purpose and the methods used and the aims professed by the Communists were sincere.

There was also the fact that the Communists in Malaya were made up from people who were entirely immigrant stock of alien origin. Ever since independence we have been harassed by the same foe. The communists have shown us that they are not in fact striving for Malaya's independence but for communist domination of Malaya.

As you rightly said, Mr. Foreign Secretary, "Southeast Asia lies in the path of communist expansion". And our country is considered as a gateway for that expansion, or as a focal point for the complete domination of the whole of Asia.

Both of us know from bitter experience what the Communist threat really means. Therefore both of us are determined to block the path of communist expansion. We realise that if their purpose succeeds then there is no life left for any of us, not in the way we appreciate and understand. We have both been at grips with them and we know what a struggle with the Communists means in terms of blood and terror. We cannot afford to sit in armchairs and dream, or think about legalising Communism as a party within our borders. It is like deliberately taking an injection of the virus of cancer, which will slowly but surely destroy us.

We must not deceive ourselves that Communism is merely local. Communism we know is an intrinsic part of an international conspiracy for world domination, and so all countries which believe in democracy and human rights and liberty must rally together and fight it. We have to face up to the threat of Communism and not wait for the time to come when we may wake up and find ourselves in mortal danger. That is why we in Malaya who value our freedom cannot be neutral about Communism. And so it is, I am glad to say, with you in the Philippines.

Therefore, there are solid reasons for us to get closer together. It is easy for both of us to do so because we have much in common; we are

of the same racial origin and have an affinity of interest. If we can achieve something together, there is hope that we can win others who live within our region to our way of thought. It sounds easy, but it is not.

I hope that my coming here will be the first of many visits and personal contacts to be made between the Asian leaders within this region, because we should all get together to discuss our common problems and seek ways and means of solving them. It is sheer folly to think that we can just sit back and do nothing.

We in Malaya consider that independence and sovereignty imply a duty and responsibility in any nation, whether large or small, that it is no use being a spectator of events, but that we must act together.

I think it is fair to say that for a small nation we have made a good start in helping to solve some of the problems which beset the world, and that we have suggested ways and means which can be of lasting benefit to Southeast Asia. I referred earlier to our belief in economic stability. This is of particular importance, not only to Malaya but to the whole of Southeast Asia, because in our view the only way to combat infiltration by the communists is to ensure that the conditions in Southeast Asia are very much better than in fact they are today.

Then communism will have no appeal, because there will be nothing it can offer which successful democracy cannot already provide. There is the fact also that all of us need to develop more rounded economies, if we are to improve our standard of living.

At the ECAFE Conference held in Kuala Lumpur only ten months ago I proposed an Economic Charter for Southeast Asia, a general agreement which would guarantee to investors from overseas security of tenure, and an assured part in the development of natural and essential industries. This is the policy we have adopted in Malaya, and already it has met with a promising response. This is the policy which you are following in the Philippines, and I understand there has been a big influx of investment into this country.

So firmly do I believe that an Economic Charter as a guarantee for investors is the only sound answer for the future development of Southeast Asia that we in Malaya decided it was necessary to go even further. You all know that our proposal in the United Nations for special

studies to be made of all the possibilities of development in all the under-developed countries met with resounding approval.

Except for the Communist bloc, who preach a lot about the plight of under-developed areas but who, when it comes to voting point, are not prepared to do anything about it, although the rest of the world welcomes the action we have initiated. I am confident that when the final reports are made to the General Assembly of the United Nations the result will be a recommendation for an Economic Charter for all under-developed nations.

We in Malaya, too, have faced up to economic threats of immediate and direct importance. I mean the recent practices adopted by the Communist bloc, unquestionably as a weapon in the "cold war", of dumping goods on the world markets to upset fair prices in both primary commodities and secondary goods.

We spoke out forcefully against the dumping of tin by the Soviet Union, and we took action recently to ban the import of certain goods from Communist China because theirs were being supplied far below cost, undermining even the low-cost goods coming into Malaya from such Asian countries as India and Japan.

You may say that this was done in the course of self-interest! Of course, it was, but nevertheless the fact remains that unless this economic aggression was countered the results throughout the whole of Southeast Asia might well have been chaotic.

But we in Malaya did not stop there. We realised that again, as with the Economic Charter, it was important to take the larger view. As a result we were among the enthusiastic sponsors of a move in the United Nations to tackle the whole problem of stability in commodity prices everywhere in the interests of all primary-producing countries.

These are examples of what we have been doing recently in Malaya to play our part in making the world a richer and happier place to live in, and these examples provide the basic reason why I have stressed tonight the need for stability, the need to think and act together with a larger view. If we all work for stability, each for our own nation, and each for the whole region of Southeast Asia, then I am confident we can make this area of the world as rich in human betterment as we are already in our natural resources.