

CONFIDENTIAL

**MALAYSIAN MISSION
TO
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
APRIL, 1967**



CONFIDENTIAL

PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT

ON THE

VISIT TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

BY

THE HONOURABLE TUN ABDUL RAZAK
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

AND

TOH PUAN RAHAH

APRIL 9 - 23, 1967

PREPARED BY:

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The fourteen-day goodwill tour of Australia and New Zealand by the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak, was extremely successful and an excellent example of good international public relations.

There were important reasons why the tour by the Malaysian Delegation was such a success :

. Tun Abdul Razak, although under exacting pressure from a programme that was too concentrated, and which allowed practically nothing of the countries, except cities, to be seen, was able to project himself as a well-informed completely sincere political leader and friend of Australia and New Zealand who was willing to speak and comment frankly.

. He was supported by a well-briefed, extremely able staff who operated efficiently under the difficult conditions of a fast-moving tour and who were glad at times to be guided, as Tun Razak was, by our advice.

. The general friendliness in both countries towards Malaysia and a growing awareness that our futures are closely linked politically and economically were features of the tour.

. Although Tun Razak and members of the Delegation were a little worried at the start of the tour that at least some sections of the press might be critical or even hostile, this fear proved unfounded and a nervousness shown at early press conferences disappeared as the tour progressed and as Tun Razak gained in confidence.

The press was sympathetic, though passive and dull, and the publicity given to what proved to be an almost non-controversial tour was exceptionally good and widespread in the mass circulation dailies, on radio and television and in provincial news sources throughout both countries.

Interviews at press conferences, statements at official receptions and functions, and appearances in New Zealand and on Meet the Press in Melbourne took Tun Razak on television into countless homes in all Australian States and New Zealand.

Press publicity before the tour began was limited. This was normal in Australia and New Zealand where newspapers report briefly on a coming Delegation but do not give extensive space to a visitor -- even a VIP like Tun Razak -- before he arrives.

. One of the highlights of the tour from a publicity point of view was the Deputy Prime Minister's wife, Toh Puan Rahah, who through her charm and willingness to be interviewed by the female press - although she had no experience in this side of public life - received almost as much publicity for the Delegation and for Malaysia as her husband. From a public relations point of view Toh Puan Rahah was a great asset to the Delegation.

Through our consultant we were able to achieve close contact with the Delegation, although his instructions were to remain as much as possible in the background and under no circumstances to be identified in any way with our own public relations firm. He was not a member of the Delegation, did not generally travel with it and sometimes did not stay in the same hotel.

These restrictions in some ways complicated our contact and work with the Delegation, but they had their advantages since we were able to achieve a reasonably objective picture of the Delegation's progress and to assess public, Government and press reaction to the tour.

Through contacts with External Affairs officers in Australia and New Zealand we learnt that both Governments were extremely pleased with their frank talks with Tun Razak and with the overall success of the tour which they regarded as the most harmonious ever conducted by an Asian country.

ACTIVITY

Although time was limited between our engagement as public relations consultants and the start of the tour on April 9, we prepared a 27-page background to Australia and New Zealand and air-mailed copies to Tun Abdul Razak in Kuala Lumpur for study before his departure for New Zealand and Australia.

This background included political, economic and social information on both countries, advice on relations with the press, and questions, including controversial questions, that might be asked during press conferences and interviews.

We also briefed Eric White Associates' office Managers in Wellington, Canberra, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth on the Delegation and obtained from them before the tour began confidential information on the major political and other personalities Tun Razak was programmed to meet during the tour.

This was prepared so that the biographical and other information was available to Tun Razak before his arrival in each city he visited in Australia and New Zealand.

On April 6, we met Mr. Ahmad Nordin, Head, External Information, Information Services Malaysia, on arrival in Sydney, and next morning conferred with him and with Mr. Mokhtar, Information Attache, Malaysian High Commission, Canberra, on final details of the tour and particularly on four speeches already prepared for Tun Razak.

We felt that a small section in the most important of these four -- the speech to the National Press Club in Canberra on April 14 -- was politically dangerous in its present form and strongly recommended that it be altered.

Our advice was that, although separation from Singapore would have to be mentioned in the speech, the doubtful section would produce controversial questions

from the press and possible editorial comment and an immediate reply from Lee Kuan Yew and that Malaysia-Singapore relations could be further damaged.

Two proposed new versions of this section were drafted, and several other changes recommended.

We also requested there should be daily briefings with Tun Razak during the tour to study possible problems in advance and to discuss press reaction and the day to day progress.

Mr. Nordin agreed with these points.

Upon arrival in Christchurch on April 8 we again discussed the speeches, including improvements proposed to the main Wellington speech at Victoria University.

The following day the Delegation was met at Christchurch Airport and a brief press conference held before Tun Razak left for the city.

There was a favourable reaction to this conference, the reporters regarding him as "quick and informal and easy to interview if a bit nervous and on his guard."

As Tun Razak was particularly interested in the results of the elections in Sabah, we obtained for him through contacts on the Christchurch Press a news cable containing the latest figures.

We flew on April 10 to Wellington where, at a speech conference with Mr. Nordin, it was strongly recommended that Tun Razak's speech to the Parliamentary luncheon should be strengthened.

The next morning the Dominion newspaper published a highly critical special article on Tun Razak by Dr. R. K. Vasil of the Political Science Department of Victoria University, Wellington.

Dr. Vasil -- not a Malaysian subject but an Indian who had studied in Kuala Lumpur for a short period -- was so biased against Tun Razak and so inaccurate in some of his facts, that we recommended to Mr. Nordin that a Malaysian student should be found who would reply to the article in a letter to the Dominion.

As an additional counter to this highly unfavourable article contact was made, through Eric White Associates' Wellington Manager, with the Diplomatic Correspondent of the Wellington Post. He regarded the article as so one-sided and unfair that he accepted an article by the Professor of History at the University of Malaya, Wang Gungwu, and published it in the Post the following afternoon. This article gave an objective picture of Tun Razak and his abilities as a political leader.

Copies of this favourable article were also airmailed to the magazine editors of the Auckland Herald and Star so that they would have it in advance of Tun Razak's arrival, and Mr. Nordin was given a copy of that morning's extremely favourable leading article on Tun Razak in the Auckland Herald.

The New Zealand tour was so short, hurried and over-crowded and Tun Razak was already so tired, that by the time we reached Auckland on April 12 Mr. Nordin had been able to snatch only a few moments with the Tun, and we had not yet been able to talk to him.

In Auckland Tun Razak decided to replace the prepared speech to the National Press Club in Canberra with another speech. This caused concern as the new speech was not considered suitable. After reading the speech we advised Mr. Nordin and Mr. Rama Lyer, Under Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, that its delivery in Canberra could be catastrophic.

It was amateurish, dull, patronising to Australians, and it even implied through the use of a Mark Twain quotation that the Australian press twisted the news

During the flight to Sydney on April 13 we told Tun Razak of our reasons for