

Tunku Abdul Rahman's Speech on Malaysia Day 16th September 1963

MERDEKA MALAYSIA!

THE great day we have long awaited has come at last -- the birth of Malaysia. In a warm spirit of joy and hope 10 million people of many races in all the States of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah now join hands in freedom and unity.

Brotherhood

We do so because we know that we have come together through our own free will and desire in the true spirit of brotherhood and love of freedom.

We have made our decision after much care and thought, finally arriving at mutual consent by debate and discussion, inquiries and elections held over 2½ years.

We can feel proud indeed of the way we have created Malaysia through friendly argument and compromise. The spirit of co-operation and concord is living proof of the desire we share for a common destiny.

What better basis for Malaysia can there be, what finer augury for the future?

The road to nationhood has not been an easy journey. Surprises and disappointments, tension and crisis, have marred the way.

Tribulations

The peoples of Malaysia, however, have endured all trials and tribulations with confidence and patience, calmness and forbearance, with faith in our final goal -- Malaysia.

In the first eighteen months of political and constitutional discussions, beginning from May 1961, things went ahead favourably, because the ideal of Malaysia caught the imagination of all the peoples concerned.

We can all recall the remarkable enthusiasm and interest aroused then in the evolution of Malaysia.

Step by step the concept came to life. The activities of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee, the merger talks between the Federation of Malaya and Singapore, the broad agreement reached in London to establish Malaysia, the appointment of the Cobbold Commission and its exhaustive inquiries in the Borneo

Territories, and the subsequent establishment of the Inter-Governmental Committee -- all these steps were taken in internal harmony and in full public view.

Suddenly towards the end of 1962 the situation changed. Communist China committed unjustifiable aggression against India. I stood up for democracy and condemned China's attack.

Communists

One immediate reaction was that Communists throughout South-east Asia retaliated by an indirect assault upon me by opposing my idea of Malaysia, and they set about creating every possible difficulty to baulk Malaysia.

Other external complications occurred -- the Philippines' claim to North Borneo, the sudden and abortive revolt in Brunei, and the startling adoption by Indonesia of a policy of [confrontation](#) against Malaya.

All these events projected an international crisis in South-east Asia this year, the climax coming in June. The successful meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines, followed by my own conference with President Soekarno in Tokyo eased tension considerably and brought new hopes for harmony and peace.

Prospects for a Summit Conference were good, confrontation from Indonesia subsided, so we went ahead with arrangements for the final talks in London on Malaysia.

Confrontation

The Malaysia Agreement was duly signed in early July. Unexpectedly Indonesia reacted most strongly, renewing its policy of confrontation with the result that the Summit conference of leaders of Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines at the end of July began in an atmosphere of doubt.

The Summit conference ended in an agreement by the three countries to form an Association of States of Malay origin to be known as Maphilindo.

It was agreed that in order that the partners in Maphilindo could welcome Malaysia the United Nations Secretary-General should be asked to ascertain anew the wishes of the peoples of Sarawak and Sabah. That request has not been implemented.

Now finally the peoples of Malaysia are celebrating the establishment of Malaysia. This is the time to think earnestly and hopefully on the future of Malaysia as the whole country resounds with joy.

So I pray that God may bless the nation of Malaysia with eternal peace and happiness for our people.

Into HISTORY

The Federation of Malaya now passes into history. Let us always remember that the Malayan Nation was formed after many difficulties during a long period of national Emergency, yet its multi-racial society emerged, endured and survived as a successful and progressive nation, a true democracy and an example to the world of harmony and tolerance.

As it was with Malaya, so it can be with Malaysia. With trust in Almighty God, unity of purpose and faith in ourselves, we can make Malaysia a land of prosperity and peace.

In doing so let every Malaysian in all the States of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah ensure that our Malaysia is truly worthy of the aims and hopes we have shared, the trials and stress, we have endured, in working together to achieve our common destiny.

MERDEKA MALAYSIA!

Source: National Archives, Singapore