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The Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, speaking on "The Coming of Age in Malaysia" at a dinner given by the Foreign Correspondents' Association at the Adelphi Hotel on October 25, 1963. The Malaysian Prime Minister, Tengku Abdul Rahman introduced the idea of Malaysia two years ago at a Foreign Correspondents' Association's luncheon.

MALAYSIA

Comes of Age

BY
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Perpustakaan Negara
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Introduction

This booklet consists of two speeches by the Singapore's Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. One of these delivered on May 24, 1963, before the formation of Malaysia at a luncheon of the Singapore National Union of journalists, outlines the problems that the new nation was expected to face.

The other address given at a dinner of the Foreign Correspondents Association at the Adelphi Hotel on Friday, October 25, 1963, dealt with the problem of Indonesian confrontation which developed into a critical phase immediately after the formation of Malaysia.

The two speeches present the wider perspectives of the internal and external problems of Malaysia and outline the Prime Minister's thinking on how they can be solved. The underlining note is one of buoyant optimism that Malaysia will succeed, whatever the price.



WILL MALAYSIA SUCCEED?

THE QUESTION which every thinking adult in the five territories of Malaysia must be asking himself is: Will Malaysia succeed?

Even before Malaysia is formed, there is so much acrimony with some of our immediate neighbours. There is also a great deal of haggling over money between states soon to be merged. Will Malaysia succeed? My answer is "Yes".

Malaysia is inevitable. The political, economic and military reasons are so compelling that we would be committing national suicide if we refuse to merge in Malaysia.

The Tunku has often said so, and not so long ago when he went on his tour of India and Pakistan, he said again that without merger and Malaysia, a situation will develop between Singapore and the Federation like that between North and South Korea, North and South Vietnam.

Tun Razak recently made the same analysis using a slightly different metaphor when he described Singapore without merger turning into a Cuban base to strike at the heartland of the Federation.

If there is no merger, then there must be independence for Singapore. It is not possible, as has been naively suggested in some quarters, that if there is no merger, then Singapore could remain indefinitely as a self-governing Crown colony.

If this were at all feasible, then the Tunku would never have contemplated and agreed to merger, or talked of North versus South and Tun Razak would never have had to tell Washington of his own potential Cuba.

Colonialism is on its way out. If there is no merger and Malaysia, then the inevitable alternative is an independent Singapore. If that happens there will be merger after one territory has

overcome the other, by political and economic subversion, or worse by force like North versus South Vietnam, as the Tunku predicted.

So we have all to do the sensible thing—have Malaysia by consent. But Malaysia having been set up as a nation, will it succeed? Will it be successful first in surviving as a national entity in comity of nations, second, economically, and third, politically?

Despite the fearful prospect of conflict with strong and powerful neighbours, it is fair to predict that Malaysia will survive. The integrity of the nation will endure although from time to time there may be some border problems, a malady which affects even bigger and stronger nations in Asia.

It is reasonably certain that whatever the trials and tribulations, in the final analysis when the chips are down, the world powers cannot afford to allow any part of the territories of Malaysia to be gobbled up without upsetting the whole policy of containment of the Communists which has already been embarked upon in this region.

The West are so heavily committed to preventing further Communist advance in South-east Asia, I cannot imagine the world powers sitting back disinterested if there should be a shift of power balance in this region.

I have said that Malaysia is inevitable. But no one can say that the success of Malaysia as an economic and a political unit is inevitable.

FOUR FACTORS

It is dependent upon what we the people and the leaders in Malaysia do in fulfilling the basic pre-conditions for success. I would list some of these pre-conditions:

National unity of all the races comprising Malaysia with undivided loyalty to the elected Central Government of Malaysia:

An effective, honest administration which can extend its writs throughout the length and breadth of Malaysia;

Stable, political leadership that will infuse confidence, bring about capital accumulation and investment in the country, and attract foreign loans and investment capital without political strings for development of industries;

The maintenance of a representative system of democratic government in which the interests of all racial and economic groups are fairly balanced by this leadership.

One factor is fundamental to make Malaysia successful economically and politically, and that is, a spirit of tolerance between all races in Malaysia with all their interests reasonably balanced.

Malaysia will begin with political and administrative power in the hands largely of the Malays and economic power in the hands of Chinese and Indians.

But it speaks volumes for the wisdom of the Tunku and his colleagues like Tun Razak, his deputy, that the power which the Malays have in the Federation is not being misused.

More and more non-Malays are being introduced into the higher echelons of the army, navy, air force, police and administration. Non-Malays may sometimes feel that the progress is too slow, but we must always remember the problem of the Malay leaders in not going faster than their own Malay opinion will allow them.

A LESSON

What happened when Dato Onn bin Jaffar left the U.M.N.O. to form the non-communal multi-racial Independence of Malaya Party (I.M.P.) is a lesson which no Malay leader will forget. He failed and tried to come back as a communalist.

I am not saying that the Tunku and his colleagues are allowing free economic opportunities for all races and all groups out of charity. On the contrary, they know it is in everyone's interests to ensure that Malaya, and later Malaysia, benefit from the trading skills of the Chinese and Indians, their capacity for endurance and

hard work and their ability to accumulate capital, and invest in economic enterprise ranging from the kampong shop to the iron and steel mills and other industrial complexes now being set up throughout Malaya and Singapore.

Every community has a contribution to make. The Ceylonese and Indians help to run the railway administration quite efficiently, and the Tunku appreciating this has left them alone.

The Eurasians can make a special contribution to the administrative service and the army. And all are free to compete to become the professional and managerial elite in Malaysia from the traditional professions of lawyers and doctors to the modern technocrats, rubber research workers, scientists and engineers.

The art of successful government in the Federation and in Singapore is in part the art of balancing competing interests and not allowing the racial preponderance of any group to conscribe the economic opportunities of the others.

The Federation with a Malay-based political majority has allowed free Chinese and Indian enterprise, and employed Eurasians and Ceylonese in public office.

In the same spirit Singapore, with a Chinese-based political majority, accepts Malay as the national language and ensures that the Indians, Ceylonese, Eurasians and others, though they may not have the special privileges of the Malays in education, are in no way handicapped by the fact that they are racial minorities when competing for jobs and businesses.

This balance of competing interests is an essential pre-condition for an economically and politically successful Malaysia.

DANGER

Without it we shall degenerate and disintegrate. If Chinese and Indian contributions to economic prosperity are unduly hampered by restrictive licences and confiscatory taxation, their contribution to the economy will be inhibited, and all, including the Malay rural dwellers and the have-nots in the towns, will suffer as a result of lowered economic productivity.

SINGAPORE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS



The Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, speaking to about 250 local and foreign press representatives at the luncheon of the Singapore National Union of Journalists held at the Imperial Room on May 24, 1963.



A session of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee held on February 1, 1963, at the Library of the Legislative Assembly, Singapore

This has happened in some countries where leaders were not sufficiently resolute. Instead of seeking a remedy in national unity, accord and greater effort, they have sought the short-term remedy by finding a racial scapegoat, so leading to further racial discord and even greater economic dislocation, finally spiralling down to bankruptcy.

As unrest mounts, the people suffer, shops are looted and shopkeepers stoned. The end result is anarchy and bankruptcy leading to violent revolution.

The problems of Malaysia may be analysed into two phases — the short-term and the long-term. In the short-term, it is impossible for any political party in the Federation to govern without carrying the Malay mass base with them.

The Malay masses being apprehensive of the commercially and socially more advanced Chinese and Indians, have rallied around their traditional leaders — their Sultans, their Tunku, and Dato Razak, respected as one of the traditional ruling chiefs of Pahang even before he became a Tun.

It is fortunate for Malaya that the Malays should have thrown up traditional leaders to lead them who are also men of good judgment and ability.

They see in their solidarity the only protection against being overwhelmed by the more economically and socially advanced immigrants — mainly Chinese and Indians.

TENGKU'S STRENGTH

Nothing will change this in the immediate future, and they demand that their leaders should protect their interests in the Constitution, particularly their rights to land and executive positions in the Government to ensure that they have the State apparatus in their hands to prevent themselves from being overwhelmed.

The strength of the Tunku lies in the fact that recognising this, he has established confidence in the Malays who have rallied around him. They know that he will see that their interests are protected, and that they are not overwhelmed.

At the same time he allows the Chinese, Indians, Ceylonese, Eurasians and others to make their fullest contributions to Malaya's development in the commercial, professional and managerial spheres.

Of course, there is some chafing amongst the non-Malays in the administration at the four to one ratio in recruitment, and also some unhappiness at the lack of opportunities for promotions for some of the top-most positions.

But this is where Singapore provides the safety valve. We allow everyone to come from the rest of Malaysia, for here is a great city, a free port with free competition in buying and selling of goods and also free competition of human talent, ability and skills.

This is a happy circumstance of our past. The British were a pragmatic people, and for nearly 100 years while maintaining Malay supremacy in the administrative organs of Government in the Federated and Unfederated Malay States, they allowed free competition in the Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore, thus relieving any mounting pressure of discontent that would grow up as the result of the protective policy for Malays.

And so it is that so many of the high positions in Singapore are held by men of outstanding ability from the Federation. The Yang di-Pertuan Negara, the Chief Justice, six Ministers, three out of five Judges, six out of nine Permanent Secretaries, so many of our leaders in the professions and in commerce, not forgetting so many of the leaders of the Communist opposition, are of Federation origins.

We must continue with the policy of free competition in Singapore, to make it the safety valve for what would otherwise be frustrated talent, and also because it is in our own interests to have their talent here. The Tunku and Tun Razak have wisely agreed not to change this after merger.

NO ESCAPE

In the short term there is no escape from this. There is no person who has yet emerged in Malaya as a completely Malayan national leader, in the sense that he enjoys support equally strong

from all the communities. For how can there be one when there is not yet a completely Malayan national opinion, from which such a leader can draw his strength.

The Tunku is the leader of the Malays. The Chinese in the Federation, realising that the Malays are in the majority, are relieved that they have a fair and non-communal minded leader. Of all the Malay leaders, there is no doubt that the Chinese and Indians, Ceylonese and Eurasians support the Tunku first.

Of course, if the Chinese were in the majority in Malaya, then we must be honest and say that as they are at present, before a new generation all born and educated here in the Malayan national spirit has grown up, they would probably choose a Chinese leader.

They have done this in the case of Singapore where the Chinese are in the majority. Only the English educated are completely Malayanised in their political outlook, but they are not the majority.

If the Malays were in the majority in Singapore, there is no doubt that they would choose a Malay as Prime Minister. This is the short term position one we must accept realistically and understand, for this is the basic communal political arithmetic of Malaysia.

This problem will continue for some time. Only the other day I read with interest that there is a French-speaking party in Canada that wants Quebec to break away from the rest of Canada. Race, tradition and culture die hard, but given resolution and moderation, we can build a nation out of our many races as the Swiss have done.

SHORT-TERM ANALYSIS

Any analysis of the short-term phase must take into account these communal factors. But in the long run the only way to a peaceful, democratic and successful Malaysia is to have political loyalties rallying around competing economic policies and competing political ideologies rather than striking a balance of communal forces.

After Malaysia as the years go on, more and more of those born in Malaysia will come of age and acquire the right to vote. Then no purely pro-Malay or pro-Chinese party can ever win power. In the Federation today, it is theoretically possible to appeal only to Malay votes and win the right to govern. Similarly in Singapore, theoretically one could appeal purely to Chinese votes and form a Government.

But in Malaysia with 44 per cent Malays and indigenous people, about 40 per cent Chinese, about 10 per cent Indians, and the rest Pakistanis, Ceylonese and Eurasians, to secure the right to govern, the appeal to the electorate must cut across communal barriers.

As a democratic, socialist, non-communal party, I consider the role of the P.A.P. to be in a small way a forerunner of this new order of things. We can set the pace for change and progress gradually through persuasion and example, provided in the next ten years of flux and change there is a strong Central Government with a leader like the Tunku or Tun Razak, whose national image can weld the people together.

In any case, the events of the last 15 years in Singapore since elections were first introduced, show clearly that only a party with a radical and non-communal programme can hold the loyalty of the people.

Any attempt to introduce communal politics would be a retrograde step which is unlikely to succeed. All it may succeed in doing is to arouse communal friction to the detriment of Singapore and of Malaysia.

For without a healthy, stable and prosperous Singapore, the centre of gravity of Malaysia would be severely rocked. The fight in Singapore for the hearts and minds of men is between the Communists on the one hand and the democratic socialists on the other. There is no third alternative.

It may be that there are other democratic socialist parties better than the P.A.P. which can give the Communists a better fight. But one can put the hands of the clock back in Singapore and try to reproduce a Federation pattern of political power checks and

balances, the pre-conditions of which had never existed here. In the long term we must build a more equal society with equal opportunities for all.

PRIVILEGES

Most important of these opportunities is that of education. Despite the special privileges and rights of the Malays in the Federation Constitution, Article 12 lays down the government cannot discriminate between races on the question of rights in respect of education.

This was an important undertaking on the part of the Malay leaders. It meant that they have accepted the principle that the other races should have free and equal opportunities in the most important field of education.

In Singapore we have gone out of our way to help the Malays by giving them free education from primary school to university level. The new Federation Constitution will have to make special provisions to allow Singapore to continue to favour Malays in the field of education.

What are the chances of success for Malaysia? I rate it reasonably good, provided racial extremism in any of the major races is kept down, and tolerance and amity preserved.

There is a sound administration throughout all these five territories and a sound economy, with confidence established both with home and foreign investors, and international credit high. Malaysia may not yet be a strong and powerful nation, nor do we really want to be a powerful menace to anybody.

Malaysia may not have a Navy, Army and Air Force that can put fear and terror into the hearts of its neighbours, but we can count our blessings that if we have no Field-Marschals, Air Marshals or Admirals, that is at least better than to have a Field-Marshal, an Air Marshal or an Admiral who smuggles liquor on his flagship to cheat his own customs.

But to have brought an admiral to trial alone showed there was sufficient integrity in the administration. How many other administrations must have turned the blind eye on the misdemeanours of those in high office?

RULE BY DECREE

But if racists and communalists take over, then we must be prepared for a sudden and dramatic change, for then I have no doubt that whoever succeeds the Tengku as leader of the Malays must, in order to retain supremacy, exercise his authority to govern through the strength of the army, the police and the symbol of the Agong as monarch.

This would mean there will be a less balanced representation of competing economic and political interests. This in turn must lead to growing resentment by the Chinese, Indians, Ceylonese, Eurasians and others with all its incalculable effects on the politics, economy and prosperity of Malaysia.

The chain of consequences that such a course of events will set in motion are so gruesome as to make one flinch even to contemplate it.

It is one thing mounting an anti-Chinese campaign where the Chinese are a minority of three to four per cent of the population. It is another thing to mount an anti-Chinese campaign where they constitute nearly forty per cent of the population as they will in Malaysia.

The alternative to success, which is dependent primarily on communal harmony and firm but wise leadership on non-communal policies, is so terrifying that no government can afford to allow any communalist to get out of hand and trigger into motion communal passions the end result of which nobody can control.

But on the whole I am hopeful of the future of Malaysia as a developing nation, prosperous and stable with more and more equal opportunities for its people, regardless of race, language and religion.

Malaysia will succeed if we all know what are the dangerous issues and where the danger points. I believe the Federation leaders know them well. We in Singapore must also learn to watch out for these danger signals, movements like Artis or Hang Tuah, for they threaten the very basis of our survival.

No doubt many of us would like to know what our Federation leaders think of the future. If any newspaper man were to ask them, doubtless he will get a firm avowal of their confidence in the future. But I would like to narrate a little story from which the moral may be drawn.

HOPE OF PROGRESS

Recently I spent four days mostly golfing with the Tunku in Cameron Highlands. One day he couldn't play golf for he had gone off to see a three-acre plot of land near the new lake at the Hydro-electric Dam beyond Ringlet.

That evening at dinner I asked him what he wanted a small plot of land for, when the Federation Government had already a commanding site over the golf course on which a residential-cum-conference hall was to be built.

He said he and three other friends were buying the piece of land and dividing it to build houses of their own, so that when he retires he could fish near the lake or he could come up to Tanah Rata to play golf and have as congenial neighbours his three friends.

I cheered for Malaysia, for I know of quite a number of other countries where the Prime Minister has got a few suit-cases ready packed with bullion and bank notes for a quick get-away.

When the man in command thinks of a quiet and peaceful retirement in modest circumstances, there is hope of progress in the country.

As long as we keep our two feet on the ground and our national ambitions in proper perspective and maintain and keep on fulfilling the four pre-conditions I have referred to, Malaysia will succeed.

COMING OF AGE IN MALAYSIA

COUNTRIES like individuals have to grow up and face the facts of life. They have to learn how to live with their neighbours and fend for themselves in a harsh and predatory world.

For over three hundred years, European colonial domination reduced to near-perpetual tutelage large portions of Asia. And so it is, that we in Malaysia until recently did not have to take upon ourselves the harsh burden of finding our place in a turbulent part of the world in which we are not far from being the richest, whilst we are very far from being the strongest.

END OF AN ERA

But the end of an era has come. Sheltered from the perils of revolutions, civil wars, chaos and anarchy, Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah have been protected from the unpleasant realities of South-East Asia.

What made the change all the greater emotionally and psychologically, were the six placid and prosperous years Malaya enjoyed since independence in 1957. Good rubber and tin prices and a sound administration brought progress and prosperity with independence.

Then in a matter of months or almost weeks in 1963, with a slight turn of the kaleidoscope, the rosy hues of independence, pomp and glory turned into the sombre shades of grey and black, of power conflicts and the fight for dominance.

It will never be the same again. For like everybody else, there comes a time, when on assuming the privileges of being masters, we have to pay our way in this world and keep our place in the face of fierce challenge from others in this region.



Singapore's Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, speaking at the fourth meeting of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee held at Singapore in February, 1963.



Inche Mohd. Khir bin Johari (left) now Malaysian Minister for Agriculture and Co-operatives and Singapore's Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, (right) signing the Malaysia memorandum on February 3, 1963. Looking on is the Chairman of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee, Mr. Donald Stephens (now Chief Minister of Sabah).



The former British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold MacMillan (fourth from right) signing the Malaysia Agreement.



Singapore's Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, signs the Malaysia Agreement at Marlborough House in London on July 8, 1963.

FALSE EUPHORIA

What was deplorable about this inevitable process of growing up was the false euphoria of well-being and security which was generated in the last few months before confrontation with brutal facts.

The sensational headlines to catch the eye, to make news bigger news, create this constant habit of reducing complex truth to simple lies.

At the end of May this year, when the Tunku met Soekarno, all problems seemed to have been resolved by personal charm and camaraderie. The long and arduous process of big power diplomacy, behind the scenes in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and even Manila was hardly mentioned in the local press.

One can read of it only in English and American newspapers. The West, having a vested interest in keeping out the influence of the Eastern bloc in South East Asia, went to great lengths to bring about this superficial rapprochement by persuasion, and sometimes more than persuasion.

They had to more than persuade the leaders in this region that South East Asia's interests were best served by being friends with one another and shutting off big powers of the Eastern bloc from becoming active protagonists and sponsors of the competing parties in South East Asia.

The Americans are anxious to be friends with Indonesia and also with Malaysia, and to reconcile all this with close support of the Philippines in spite of Filipino claims on North Borneo.

But all this was naively presented by a correspondent of one local English newspaper in Malaysia, as a simple triumph for personal diplomacy. Smiles and handshakes from the two leaders, the Tunku and President Soekarno exuding warmth and goodwill, was made by some of the local press to appear to have solved everything.

This picture of bonhomie makes the subsequent recriminations after Malaysia all the more acid and bitter. On August 5 at the Manila summit, the three leaders met and bestowed upon each other friendship, goodwill and praise.

"Soekarno is a great leader," said the Tunku. "The Tunku is a statesman," said Soekarno. And both were agreed that President Macapagal was an equally great leader and a statesman.

Very few newspapers presented the news in depth, spreading superficial euphoria again, to add to the deep and biting bitterness when the froth evaporated after September 16. Reading newspaper cuttings of the last few months of our relations with our neighbours, Indonesia and the Philippines, one cannot but be cynical over the ways by which the nations conducted their relations with each other.

SO QUICKLY

This coming of age has all happened so quickly for all of us in Afro-Asia. And we have had to learn quickly. In 1945 we cheered for the Indonesians when they proclaimed their independence before the Dutch returned. We cheered even harder for them when they fought the Dutch army to assert their right to freedom.

And through all the vicissitudes of battle to the final evacuation of the Dutch forces, our sympathies were with the Indonesians. By 1949 when Indonesia became *de jure* a sovereign nation, she was already a legend in the minds of the people in South East Asia. And their leaders become symbols of a people determined to be free, to be masters of their own destiny.

So in Malaya, Singapore, and even the Borneo territories, in many Malay homes will be found pictures of the Bung, President of the Republic, fighter for freedom—a legendary figure symbolising the greatness of the peoples in South East Asia and what they can do, given the will and the leadership.

It was not till six years later in 1955 that a comparable Malayan leadership emerged in the Tunku to lead Malaya's fight for freedom—a completely different leadership, but eminently suited to fill the role of gradual change and social revolution in Malaya.

In the same year, a few months after becoming Chief Minister, the Tunku paid a State visit to Indonesia and was received personally by President Soekarno. A treaty of friendship was subsequently signed.

In 1959, the First Minister of Indonesia, Dr. Djuanda, returned the visit. In January 1960 about four years ago I myself paid a visit to Indonesia and was received with warmth and courtesy.

How is it that in the space of some four to five years we find ourselves on non-speaking terms, and with radio stations based in Jakarta and in Malaysia, hurling abuse at each other, as if we had always been sworn enemies, when in fact only the day before yesterday we were still good neighbours and good friends, courteous, polite and friendly, contemplating economic and cultural co-operation in a loose confederation to be called Maphilindo?

THE DISENCHANTMENT

The disenchantment was in fact a slow and gradual process. Indonesia had always been regarded as the elder in this region and her independence was a symbol of anti-colonialism for the whole of the archipelago that consists of the islands of South East Asia.

UMNO's flag like Singapore's flag is the flag of Hang Tuah — Red and White — and for UMNO there is a yellow circle and a kris in the centre. But the prestige of Indonesia's revolution slowly tarnished as news percolated of her economic difficulties.

In the minds of the people of Asia and indeed of Africa, it used to be believed that independence was an automatic solution to all men's ills and that with independence would come prosperity and glory.

The need for a sound administration and an economy that ticks were never thought of by anyone than the few who had to govern.

The mass of the people did not understand that Dutch colonial policy and the depredations of the Japanese had wrought such damage on the economy of this once wealthy archipelago and brought it to near bankruptcy, and what was worse, left it with no Indonesian administrators once the Dutch left.

Without a sound administration, the economy could not easily be restarted. Without an economy restarted and a sound administration, they could not find the huge capital investment required to improve rapidly the lot of the people.

LACK OF APPRECIATION IN DEPTH

So it was that without the mass of the people in South East Asia knowing exactly the reason why, the artistic and talented Indonesian people found themselves in a morass of economic problems.

And the far less politically advanced Malaysians, because of 10 years of British postwar rehabilitation and the training of an administrative cadre of local officers, supported by expatriates in key positions to carry out faithfully the orders of locally elected Ministers, found themselves the beneficiaries of a sound and prosperous economy.

This disparity between the results of independence for Indonesia and for Malaya was to lead to false assumptions and misunderstanding, because the basic causes were not appreciated even by some in high authority in these newly independent nations.

The Tunku's practical and even courageous decision to leave key expatriate officers in the administration, until fully qualified local men were trained to take over, has been sneered at as neo-colonialism.

British investment capital which re-built Malaya's economy is even now being pointed out as evidence of neo-colonialism. Nothing could be further from the truth.

No one, other than the British, understands how much the continuance of their investment here depends upon the good faith and the good judgment of the independent government in authority, that with one proclamation, if the government were misguided enough so to do, all their assets could be requisitioned and compensation given on derisory terms.

But on the Malaysia side, there is misapprehension of equally huge proportions. Indonesia was in the economic doldrums, the people going through great hardships, not because they lacked leaders with talent or skill or the desire to build the country up into a prosperous and happy one, but because of the legacy of Dutch and Japanese imperialism, a legacy of loot and plunder not accompanied by restoration and rehabilitation after the war.

The Indonesians are a talented people, the Javanese in particular — great painters and artists, with a level of civilization which even today reflects the ancient Hindu empires of Sri Vijaya and Majapahit that extended across this region.

These Empires passed Malaya by and went on to the richer islands further south. The Malay language and culture find their mainsprings in the territories now comprised in the Republic of Indonesia. But instead of affection and regard, now have come disenchantment and disillusionment.

And the pictures of the Bung as the liberator are quietly coming down and in their place, is sorrow and bitterness. People feel let down.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Geography and history are the two factors that we have to delve into if we are to work out rationally our long term relations with our neighbours.

The first and most important factor is geography. Malaysia is unique in that its all-pervasive neighbour is Indonesia, Malaysia's only other immediate neighbour with whom it shares a short common frontier is Thailand.

But the Thai border presents no problem in spite of the difficulties of terrain and communication which have helped the remnants of the Communist guerilla forces for so long.

To the west and to the south are Sumatra and the Rhio islands. Over 700 miles of sea to the east lie Sabah and Sarawak with a long land frontier of a few hundred miles with Indonesia. Only Pakistan presents a comparable territorial pattern.

Hundreds of years ago, in the Sri Vijaya Empire from the 7th to the 13th century and in the Majapahit Empire from the 13th to 16th century, the suzerainty of the Hindu conquerors extended vaguely over this whole region. Even at the time Stamford Raffles first came and bought Singapore over 140 years ago from the Temmenggong, South Johore and Singapore together with the Rhio Islands constituted one little empire.

In a temporary decline of Dutch power, Stamford Raffles acquired authority over a large part of the Dutch East Indies. But when the final settlement was reached the demarcation lines were crisp and clear. Malaya including Penang, Singapore, Labuan and later North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak were British.

The rest was Netherlands East Indies except for East New Guinea and Portuguese Timor. Whatever disregard for geography or history, the colonialists showed in demarcating the boundary lines of their spheres of power, we are now the beneficiaries of something not easily alterable. We have to make sense of it, as best as we can. And there is no reason why we cannot.

DIFFICULTIES — PRESENT AND DORMANT

The ingredients of the impasse and conflict between Malaysia and Indonesia were present right from the beginning. Indonesia is a big power and not unnaturally expected to be respected and treated as such.

It had not ungenerously extended patronage and courtesies to the Tunku and even to Mr. David Marshall when they emerged as leaders after the elections in 1955.

But as I have earlier explained because of a lack of appreciation of the grave difficulties that the Indonesians faced, having been at the receiving end of a rapacious policy of the Dutch and later the Japanese, and with no help in rehabilitation after the war, Indonesia appeared to founder in poverty whilst the countries in Malaysia flourished and prospered.

Sound administration, the good fortune of the Korean War that sent rubber prices rocketing, rehabilitation and massive reinvestment to get the economy going—all these were intended for colonial profits. But it also rehabilitated an economy ruined by war.

When the leaders of Indonesia thought they did not receive from the leaders of Malaya the respect that they expected, problems began to loom. So long as West Irian preoccupied the effort and energies of Indonesian leaders, the army and its people, they had no time for anything else.

But once it was agreed that West Irian be returned to the Indonesian Republic in 1962, from May 1963 their leaders no longer brooked anything which could be considered as a slight on themselves from anyone else, let alone a smallish neighbour. And so the differences in personality and outlook between the leaders of Indonesia and Malaysia came sharply into focus.

ACCIDENTAL

But whilst the ingredients for the present impasse were there, the actual circumstance and timing in which the conflict occurred was in large measure accidental. Shortly after May 27, 1961 and before West Irian was resolved, the Tunku first announced his plans for Malaysia.

Dr. Subandrio, in response to questions by foreign correspondents, wished the territories in Malaysia well. Meanwhile Communist opposition in the Malaysian territories, vociferous and militant, mounted vicious campaigns in Singapore and Sarawak with a chorus echoing in Malaya and Brunei.

This opposition by an organised minority came from the Barisan Sosialis in Singapore, the S.U.P.P. in Sarawak linking up with Party Rakyat in Brunei, all under the aegis of the Socialist Front in the Federation.

Their vociferous and strident opposition contributed to a false impression abroad of the real desires of the people in the Malaysian territories, misleading some people into believing that Malaysia could be prevented by local opposition.

In December 1961, the P.K.I. came out in opposition, and for the first time Malaysia was denounced as a piece of neo-colonialism. Thereafter the cry was picked up by the Barisan Sosialis, the S.U.P.P., the Party Rakyat of Brunei and the Socialist Front of Malaya.

There were meetings, conferences, protests, rallies and demonstrations and even an appearance before the United Nations by the Barisan Sosialis. But still the Indonesian leaders were quiet. It was only the Communist leaders in Indonesia who plugged the line that Malaysia was neo-colonialist.

Then suddenly in September 1962 came the referendum in Singapore which settled the question as far as Singapore was concerned, and the big expectation of the Indonesian Communists to block Malaysia through opposition in Singapore collapsed.

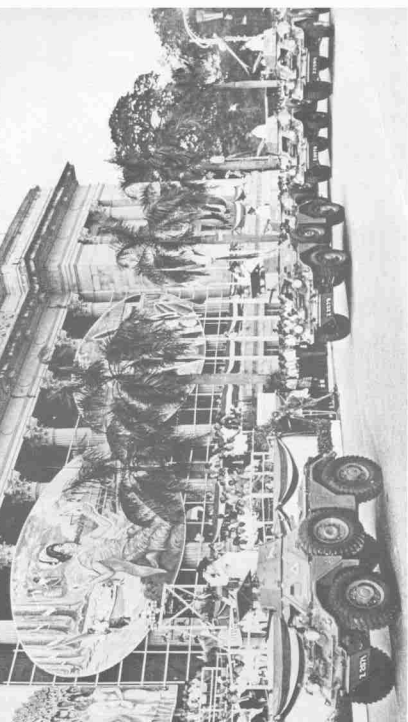
FILIPINO CLAIM AND AZAHARI REVOLT

More drastic measures were planned. By a strange coincidence, the Filipinos had also made a claim for North Borneo and by now it would appear that the Communist line of attacking Malaysia as neo-colonialism had found its impact on non-Communist circles in Indonesia.

Suddenly in December 1962 a revolt broke out in Brunei and Azahari fled to Manila. Apparently the Indonesians had nothing to do with the revolt, although security and intelligence reports showed that the training of these rebels had taken place in Indonesian Kalimantan — on the Indonesian side of Borneo.



A grand welcome was accorded the Prime Minister at the airport on his return from London after the signing of the Malaysia Agreement. Subsequently hundreds of thousands of people greeted him in the streets as he toured the city.



H.E. the Yang di-Pertuan Negara takes the salute from the armoured contingent during the rally and march past held on Malaysia Day—September 16, 1963.

But unfortunately for them the revolt failed. Swift military action snuffed out the revolt that found no response from either Sabah or Sarawak.

Azahari finally left Manila for Jakarta at the end of January 1963, and for the first time, Indonesia, by implication, was openly in a position of opposition and hostility to Malaysia.

But even as late as February 1963, when Dr. Subandrio passed through Singapore, he explained to me that it was not Malaysia as such that Indonesia was opposed to, but certain circumstances and attitudes in Malaysia. He felt they would pose Indonesia with a difficult problem since they would share a common land frontier in Borneo.

TOKYO AND MANILA

Then came weeks of feverish diplomatic activity leading to Tokyo where a great deal of euphoria was generated. Mad though it may seem, one English language newspaper believed it was really the efforts of an amiable woman politician in Singapore which brought about this apparent rapprochement.

But in June, there were still hopes abroad that Malaysia would founder, for great acrimony had arisen over our financial arrangements with Kuala Lumpur. We never had any doubts in our minds that these disagreements could be resolved in a fair and just manner, and when they were resolved on July 8, and Brunei opted out of Malaysia, the stage was set for a change of tactics and a change of line.

Then at Manila, at the beginning of August, the Tunku placed his signature on a document which was to postpone Malaysia and make its formation subject to a favourable assessment by the United Nations team.

The rest is recent history. Partly because of Communist propaganda, our neighbours were led to believe that perhaps the assessment in Sarawak might be unfavourable to Malaysia. So many demonstrations were mounted in Kuching, Sibu and Miri that, despite the initial difficulties, both Indonesian and Filipino observers finally appeared and took part in observing the assessment.

Also, the Tunku and his colleagues see in this a natural rallying point for the loyalties of all Malaysians, including the Malays, in particular that section of the Malays in Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan who have still family and other sentimental ties with Indonesia, mainly Sumatra, Rhio Islands, and Celebes.

Here was an issue on which loyalties can be undividedly Malaysia's. History has presented Malaysia with a catalyst to forge national unity, to rally everyone's undivided loyalty to Malaysia, and to cut anyone's sentimental, cultural, or other ties with those parts of Indonesia from whence their ancestors and their culture may have sprung.

It is true that as a result of these activities, Singapore, and to a lesser extent Penang, have to pay a price. Some cynics think that the demonstrations of solidarity in Malaya are being kept up for the purpose of inflicting financial loss on the P.A.P. in Singapore and the Socialist Front in Penang.

But I believe the Tunku's main objective is to rally loyalty and undivided support for Malaysia from all Malaysians, including those of Indonesian descent. And it is in all our interests, whatever our short-term difficulties, to help him achieve this.

No doubt the sooner this phase is over the better, although political observers see no end to this campaign until the general elections.

The mass reaction in Singapore is completely different. Not having been party to the Manila accord, people in Singapore do not feel that they have been let down. The mass of the people are sophisticated urban dwellers of Chinese and Indian origin and have never had any sentimental ties with Indonesia.

However, among the Malays, who have always looked upon Indonesia as a friendly elder brother, there is a sense of having been let down.

The fact that we have not burned effigies in Singapore does not mean that Singapore is less loyal to Malaysia or that the Malay population, particularly those whose ancestors came from Rhio, feel less strongly patriotic than people in Malaya.

In Singapore some 2,000 people are unemployed or under-employed, and if it goes on indefinitely, we shall make adjustments and provide alternative employment for some 10,000 to 15,000 engaged in the entrepot trade with Indonesia.

We have arrangements to ensure that all workers laid off as a result of confrontation will receive, for at least six months, two-thirds of their normal pay. This will cushion off the worst effects of confrontation.

Plans are being made to re-deploy the unemployed to new jobs and it is within our capacity to ride economic confrontation indefinitely if necessary.

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

But whatever our differences and approach to this problem, our long term objectives are the same — to build a cohesive, strong and united nation with undivided loyalties to Malaysia, and all loyalties to neighbouring countries severed. Our paramount duty is to preserve the integrity of Malaysia. On this there can be no division of objectives.

Things having gone this far, it is imperative that any solution should be just and permanent. A temporary patch-up, leading to more false euphoria and subsequent disappointment, would do more harm in the long run.

We desire a permanent settlement in our relations with our neighbours. Trade, however valuable, requires political stability first and foremost.

After the next general elections, once the Indonesians are convinced that the Tunku and his colleagues do represent Malaysia, a solution can be found. By then men's minds would have settled and their loyalties fixed.

The rapidity with which events precipitated, leading to confrontation, indicates that an unravelling can take place with equal swiftness, provided the conditions are right. We have to respect Indonesian susceptibilities.

Exhortation of the people of Indonesia to spurn their leaders is the surest way to ensure that they rally around them. No people like to be told by their neighbours, particularly a smaller one, what they should do about their leaders.

The Indonesian leaders also have their own internal problems. Once the P.K.I. have taken a strong nationalist line and worked up Malaysia as an anti-colonial issue and spread these sentiments amongst the masses, the army cannot lag behind.

So it is that Indonesian generals, who are known to be anti-Communist and who make no secret of their dislike for Communism, have also taken up the Malaysia issue. The leaders of Indonesia have their own internal problems to take into account and they must be allowed to resolve them in their own way.

SETTLEMENT OR BALKANISATION

But in the end a lasting solution must be found, for the alternative is the Balkanisation of South East Asia. Like the Balkans before the Second World War or the Middle East of today, the alternative to peaceful co-existence is for every small power in South East Asia to have the backing of a big power.

South East Asia then becomes the cockpit for vicious big-power conflicts. It would mean that willy-nilly, whatever our wishes, we in Malaysia must enter into military alliances either openly or secretly with those who are prepared to help us, because our size makes the fight unequal. In other words, the cold war in a very acute form will come right into the heart of South East Asia.

AFTER FIRMNESS, FRIENDLINESS

A nation of 10 million people cannot encircle a nation of 90 million. But a nation of 90 million people can easily encircle a nation of 10 million. Once the heat and dust on both sides have settled in the coming year, our positions can be re-considered.

We have shown, by proceeding with Malaysia and standing firm together with the Central Government, that whatever our differences of approach and differences of methods, we are all firm on our right to be allowed to live in peace, unmolested by others.

Once feeling have settled and solidarity rallies ended, we can afford to show more friendliness and fairness to our neighbours. In this way, we can open the door to a resumption of relations, diplomatic or otherwise.

But at least we must talk civilly to each other. For the terrible alternative is the Balkanisation of South East Asia and our commitment in military alliances to ensure our survival.

Whatever the price, Malaysia cannot buckle under, to be corroded at the edges before finally succumbing in the centre. Once our neighbours are convinced of this, the door should be opened for friendly ties on a fair basis.

The alternative is not that Malaysia will disappear, but that big powers will be invited to maintain military bases indefinitely in this region.

And military alliances are never as satisfactory, nor as advantageous, as the general economic prosperity of this region which friendship and co-operation among non-Communist countries can bring to us all.