

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER,MR. LEE KUAN YEW, AT THE MEETING WITH MALAYNON-POLITICAL BODIES AT THE VICTORIA THEATRE ONSUNDAY, JULY 19, 1964, AT 10.30 A.M.

First I would like to explain what made the Government arrange for today's meeting of 103 Malay cultural, sports, social and other non-political associations together with about 300 ketuas and penghulus from the various kampongs throughout Singapore and Malay members of all consultative committees. In the last nine months since Malaysia, there has been intensive propaganda by Indonesia directed at Malaysia intended to cause friction and conflict between the Malays and the Chinese, and Singapore as the largest city with the largest number of Chinese in South East Asia has formed the target of Indonesia fire in their anti-Chinese propaganda. They have tried to present their "confrontation" which is an aggression by Indonesia of Malaysia, as a policy by which they are trying to help the Malays take over the wealth and position of the Chinese as represented in Singapore. On the 5th of June Radio Indonesia in a broadcast directed to Malaysia said the Chinese Government of the Lee Kuan

Yew is deliberately forcing the Malays out of the city so that the Chinese can be in control.

Then in the last few weeks for diverse reasons, UMNO joined in this propaganda campaign. In the UMNO memorandum the UMNO charged that the Government was deliberately expelling Malays from the city, for example, the Malays in Crawford and not the Chinese in Chinatown. It started in earnest with the exploitation of the issues of resettlement of the Malays in Crawford who have to move out because of the urban redevelopment programme. The 200 Malay families there represent about 10 percent of the people who have to move. I thought that it was in the best interest of the country if we could divorce the genuine problems of education, social and economic development from complication by political rivalry. Hence I have left out all political parties in this gathering so that nobody can take political advantage of any policy which will result out of these discussions. I wish to make it clear that the policy is that of the Singapore Government's alone and the Singapore Government accepts full and sole responsibility for all policies it implements.

There are two aspects to the Malay problem now. First the propaganda aspect which the Government is confident it can wage successfully not only against other political parties but also against Indonesia. We have done nothing

which is dishonourable or wrong to the Malays and we are prepared to have our record put under the closest scrutiny. That is a battle which best left to the political parties to slug out.

But the other and more important aspect is the genuine difficulties caused in our society by unequal development between the Malays and the other non-Malay communities in Singapore. The Government has a responsibility not only because of the special position which is recognised in the Singapore Constitution but also because it will do harm to the unity and integrity of the nation if one section of the community is lagging behind. It is in the sincere effort to adjust and remove the imbalance in development that I have invited you all to give me your views.

You need not worry about it being said that you have compromised Malay rights in any way by making your views known. The Government's decisions will have to be based on a balance of all interests, that of the special position of the Malays and also the legitimate interests of the 90 per cent non-Malays in Singapore, which is also the duty of the Government to advance.

I would like to enumerate the three problems as I see them:

1. Education
2. Employment
3. Housing

In the opinion of the Government, education is the primary problem because if this is solved then all the other Malay problems are solved. Once the Malays are as well educated and qualified as the others, then their capacity to hold better jobs and have a better standard of living will automatically follow. Unfortunately, as a result of a different cultural development and many years of British colonial education policy, the Malays at present have not as yet got up to the same level of the other communities. The Government is prepared to consider all practical suggestions as to how the level of education of Malay youth can be increased in order that they can come out into the world as well equipped and trained as any of the other communities.

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The second problem, employment, is the direct result of the education policy in the past. Very few Malay students go on to secondary school and very, very few go on to universities and other institutions of higher learning. The great majority finish at primary education leaving them unqualified for any of the better jobs. Today we face a problem which we have inherited from past education policy. Somehow we must resolve this. Today the Works Brigade which started

off with only 30% Malays has become 80% Malays. Malays are finding it difficult to get openings in fields for which only skill and training can qualify them. Somehow we must provide them with a training that will qualify them for these jobs which are being created as a result of our industrial development. They must be trained in the building trade, they must be trained to be skilled technicians. There are just not enough jobs for primary school leavers as messengers, peons and other unskilled jobs. But there are openings as fitters, carpenters, masons and semi-skilled labourers in the factories and industries which are booming in Singapore and which can take in these people if they are prepared to undergo the training. If we can persuade them to take advantage of training facilities which we can set up to lift them for these jobs, the position can be improved. For instance, in two Works Brigade camps we are now specially training people to be carpenters and masons and teaching them the skill of the building trade which is booming in Singapore. So too we shall go on to train fitters, mechanics and other technicians.

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The third problem is housing. I understand the Malay desire to continue their old traditions and live in a traditional Malay "Rumah Kampong". But the problem arises because there is an acute shortage of land in Singapore, so much so that now we are forced to reclaim the foreshores from Bedok right up to

Tanjong Rhu and all the river estuaries in the Jurong area on the West Coast and at Kallang Basin.

Let me give an illustration of this problem. The undeveloped part of Kaki Bukit will cost half-a-million dollars to level because the ground is very hard. After leveling it will provide 200 lots for 200 Malay traditional homes. This is a fantastic sum of money to spend just in laying out 200 plots. But this same and because of its solid rock foundation can take between 3,000 and 4,000 flats with little piling required for foundation. The Government would be prepared to build these flats and give them at special subsidised rentals to the lower income groups if it were sure that the Malay community would adjust to accept these flats as mode of life in a modern city.

These are the three main problems. There are probably many more which I would like you to tell me about. I will also like you to suggest to me what can be done so that we can consider how best to tackle these problems. This is not a job which can be resolved in one, two or even a hundred meetings. It is a long and continuous process which will go on for years, for the imbalance in the speed of development in the different communities will take a whole generation to redress. But if we are always striving to provide solutions people will know that

things are getting better and will get even better. Then peace and stability in Malaysia will be assured.

We must be prepared to go on doing everything reasonable and practicable to solve these problems. But we must never forget whatever we do the Indonesians will never cease in their propaganda war against us, to break up Malaysia by making the Malays and the Chinese split apart, be jealous and suspicious of and finally hostile to each other.

There must be a limit to UMNO's political propaganda because they are in charge of whole country, as they are the Central Government. Therefore, if they go beyond the limit the country will break up and collapse. However, I am bewildered when I see that UMNO has formed a "Malay Action Committee" which includes P.M.I.P. extremists and racists. Worse it includes the acting secretary of the P.M.U., Isa Zain, who has been publicly identified by the Central Government in their document "Indonesian Intentions Towards Malaysia" issued in April this year as a close Indonesian agent :-

"In May 1962 the Indonesian Association in Kuala Lumpur asked Isa Zain, a former member of M.N.P. and P.M.U. and a close

Indonesian agent, to form a similar relief committee in Kuala Lumpur."

I am very concerned about the propaganda of the Indonesians and their agents. There is no limit to the lies and villainy that they are spreading, for their job is to break up Malaysia and destroy us. Our job is to prevent this and preserve our prosperity for the well-being and happiness of our 10 million people.

Finally, I would like to remind all that the Singapore Government has on its own the right and indeed the duty to solve the problems of all communities including the Malay community. We would like, before we make any decisions, to consult a wide range of representation in the Malay community. For any group to say that they exclusively represent all persons of a particular community is a claim as extravagant as it is unfounded. We have many Chinese members in the Assembly. We have many Chinese members in the Party. Yet we have never claimed that the P.A.P. represent all the Chinese in Singapore. For any other group to demand the right to represent all the members of a community and so demand the exclusive right to advise what the Government should do, is a challenge to the Constitutional rights and obligation of the Singapore Government. We do not intend to abdicate from our right to govern. It is the intention of this Government to do what is right and fair, and we will not be

intimidated from doing our best in looking after the interests of the people of Singapore including the Malays who have, under our Constitution, a special position.

19th July, 1964.

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