SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE MALAYSIA SOLIDARITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITEE ON MONDAY, 18TH DECEMBER, 1961.

First, may I thank the Sarawak branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for playing host to this Second Meeting of Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee and for their generous hospitality. The first meeting at Jesselton last August not only give greater definition to the concept of Malaysia but also resulted in unanimous acceptance in principle of the creation of Malaysia. One of the decisions approved at that meeting was "to foster activities that would promote and expedite the realisation of Malaysia."

Since that meeting events have moved with a rapidity that many of us did not anticipate. The Heads of Agreement setting out the terms of merger between Singapore and the Federation of Malaya published in a White Paper have given a concreteness to the concept of Malaysia which it did not possess when the first meeting of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee met in Jesselton four months ago.

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Since then, there have been discussions between the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Government and the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya, resulting in an agreement to set up a Commission to find out the views of the people in Sarawak and North Borneo and to make recommendations on Malaysia.

This rapid development of events within the course of four months is the result of a complex of internal and international forces thrusting us in the direction of Malaysia. Each of us has his own ideas of the form and content Malaysia should take for our respective component parts, but all of us acknowledge that the only logical course is to come together for our stability and survival, in the midst of the shifting balance of forces in South East Asia.

So long as we accept the necessity and inevitability of Malaysia, the differences of view we may have as to the form and content of Malaysia can be resolved. We all recognise that before a period of rapid and far-reaching changes, there must be some hesitations, doubts and anxieties. These are the natural reactions to swift changes. It is right and all to the good that all of us should speak our minds freely and frankly, for only by understanding each other can we help to resolve our mutual problems.

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What is wrong is to allow anxieties for local interests and ambitions to become excuses for resisting changes which are inevitable, or to stall solutions which in the long run are to the benefit of all of us.

This second meeting of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee will, I hope, carry the decisions reached at the first meeting at Jesselton a step forward.

Having enunciated the principle of Malaysia we should now find ways and means of expediting the realisation of Malaysia. The pattern of Malaysia cannot be dictated by any one of the five partners to the exclusion of the others. It cannot be fashioned to fit the exclusive interests of any one partner. We must all uphold the essential interests of Malaysia, the basic and fundamental interests of all of us collectively, whilst at the same time we must take into account the special local interests and conditions of our respective territories. Malaysia is our creation. It is our own nationalist answer to our problems of viability and survival in one of the most contested for regions of the world.

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I was happy that the leader of the Sarawak delegation has made a frank and pointed reference to the confusion felt by the people in Sarawak after the debates on Malaysia in the Legislative Chambers of the Federation of Malaya

and of Singapore. This conference will give us an opportunity to explain and clarify what has transpired, and to show which portions of the debates that caused confusion were motivated by the internal political party conflicts and internal political party interests of Singapore and the Federation of Malaya and what parts were sincere expressions of anxiety over the sufficiency of the constitutional protection for local interests.

I hope that all of us will state the specific local interests which need to be protected and reserved. So long as the reservation of these local interests do not retard the development of a strong, stable and prosperous Malaysia, we must make accommodation for each other's problems.

Each of us must discharge the burden of allaying the doubts that sections of our people in the respective territories have over their future position in Malaysia and the protection of their vital interests after Malaysia. The problem is made more difficult when sectional interests are based not just on political and economic differences but also on racial, religions, cultural and linguistic differences.

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But the test of leadership lies not merely in echoing fears and doubts, especially when these fears and doubts, however real, are capable of solution

and be rendered irrational and unfounded. As leaders of our various communities, we recognise the existence of these anxieties, but we have to give the lead to exercising them. We cannot afford to passively let things drift. We have to give the lead to public thinking. After having drawn attention to the interests of our communities that require special protection, we must formulate solutions which will safeguard these interests and advance the common good. It is up to us to transmit to our people our faith in our future together in a Federation of Malaysia.

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