

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

MC.JN.15/64(PM)

TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER,

MR. LEE KUAN YEW, ON NATIONAL DAY AT CITY HALL

STEPS ON JUNE 3, 1964.

It is five years ago today that we started on a journey that has brought us to security and stability in independent Malaysia. Even five years ago, all could see that political stability can only come with economic expansion and all this can come only with a broader base through merger. We set out to achieve it. Achieved it we have. We have brought about internal political stability and economic expansion. But externally we have at the same time been plunged into the maelstrom of turbulence, and revolution in South-East Asia.

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The problem of national survival on our own has always been there. What could not be predicted was that when the British colonialism ended, we would be immediately faced with the ambitions of a power conscious neighbour. It was an accident of history that Indonesia should have disposed of the West Irian issue the very year when Malaysia was founded. Our first lesson in independence had

to learn quickly that unity was paramount in the face of a common danger to all the States and all the communities of Malaysia.

As Indonesia threatens the survival of not only of Sabah and Sarawak, but also of Singapore and Malaya, so all differences and rival interests between states have to be submerged to pull through together. As Indonesia threatens not only the Malays, but also the Chinese, Indians and other races, so the various communities have to get closer to overcome a common threat.

But we cannot always rely on external threats to generate internal unity. We must prepare for the future by integrating our many races. We must learn from the lessons of history. We are a plural society. There are others in the world. After nearly 100 years of existence, Canada with French and British descendants still faces the complexities of their different cultural and linguistic loyalties. Sinhalese and Tamils after decades of living together in Ceylon, still face the conflicts of a differing race, language and culture. We must begin to integrate our communities, to lessen the areas of difference between them, and broaden the areas of common interests and action. We must bring up the next generation more integrated in their emotional experience having shared common dangers and common joys. For we all face a common future. This will take

decades, may be centuries. But we must start now. It is within our power to forge our different communities into thinking, feeling and talking as one nation.

The other task that faces us is how to bring the various states in Malaysia closer together. Fortunate, this is the easier of the two problems. For there are less differences to slow down the coming together of the different states in Malaysia than between the different communities.

The one great political event for all of us in Malaysia is 31st August. 31st August was the day the eleven states of Malaya obtained her independence. It would also have been the day in which Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak would have joined the eleven states of Malaya. But we will always have a special place in our hearts for 3rd June, Singapore's National Day. On this day we can pause to reflect on the different paths that we had travelled to arrive together in Malaysia and to plan the common path ahead.

Every year on 3rd of June, about three months before we celebrate Malaysia Day, we should take stock of ourselves, our own progress in Singapore and define the targets we must achieve in the year ahead. We must also assess the contribution which it is our duty to make to the rest of Malaysia. There is no going back. The future is what we make of it. We owe it to ourselves to give of

our best to build the foundations of a harmonious and integrated nation, peaceful, prosperous and vigilant, a haven of tolerance, harmony and progress in the stormy seas of South-East Asia.

3rd June, 1964.

(Time issued: 1900 hours)

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