TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO MALAYSIAN STUDENTS AT MALAYSIA HOUSE, ADELAIDE ON 29TH MARCH, 1965.

The Hon'ble President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is not my intention this evening to go into a lengthy discourse off what is happening in Malaysia and to talk about the problems which, no doubt, are uppermost in the minds of all Malaysian students abroad: What they have got to go back to.

By and large, I would say that, unlike Australians, Malaysians have no need to go round looking for a great cause. I am told that the Australian student is so tranquil in his outlook on what is relatively a settled and a peaceful society that he has got to look around for great causes like trying to do the equivalent of an Alabama bus rider, be kind to people, try and create a better society.

National Archives of Singapore

Our problem is more acute, mainly whether we keep what we have got, and built on it; or, if we are foolish, or lack stamina and determination, lose all that you've got, less all that has been built even a hundred-odd years of recent history and allow what is today the most civilised community in Southeast Asia to sink back into chaos and perdition.

A lot depends upon whether we are able to provide that leadership. And I would like to believe that those Malaysians who have had the advantage of higher education at tremendous expense not only to their parents, often to their Governments, and often at the expense of governments abroad who make available university places, that they will live up to the expectations that are naturally placed on them because they are supposed to be the better disciplined, the more thinking, the more effective members of the community.

The problem, by and large, is quite simple. We have had 100-odd years of British rules. It has brought changes which are irreversible. It has brought in Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis, Ceylonese, Eurasians. It has brought about the situation in which the Malays, the Dayaks, the Dusuns, the Kadazans find themselves now in one society with Chinese, Indians and others, in which you've got the population nicely balanced: 40% more or less Malays, 40% Chinese, 7% indigenous peoples in the Borneo territories, and 13% -- making up with the 7, 20% -- the Indians and other.

National Archives of Singapore

The problem arises: What happens when you remove overriding British control, I mean peace, law and order was maintained because there was overriding authority in that if people didn't behave themselves, you get properly

and quickly put in place. And you've seen what has happened in British Guiana and you've seen what has happened in Cyprus: remove that authority and the problem of finding a new equilibrium is very real, and if you are not very careful becomes very acute. Either we learn to live with each other and accept the last 140 years as just part of our history -- and there is no turning the lock back and saying well, you knew, back to the day before Stamford Raffles arrived in Singapore when there were two fishing villages and there were no Chinese, or very few of them, no Indians and no others and only a few Malays, and no Indonesians because lots of them came over and settled in Malaysia or in the territories now in Malaysia during the 100-odd years of British rule because it gave them a better life than what the Dutch could give them in Indonesia.

That really is the nub of the problem: can we find among ourselves sufficient energy, sufficient understanding of the need for accomodation, the need to find a new balance, the need to find an authority which is acceptable to all positions of the people. If you can't and it has to be authority imposed by one sector of the country over the rest, then we are in for a very troublesome time, because unlike Cyprus, where one community completely outnumbers the other, this is a nicely balanced position. There is no community in the majority. And this is at the same time the strength and the weakness of Malaysia. The strength of Malaysia lies in this fact: that if you play communal politics, and you say, if I

National Archives of Singapore

were foolish enough, and if I felt that way, and I said: "Chinese unite", well, the reaction of the 60% non-Chinese will be, "Well, let's have none of this", and you consolidate the other side, which is the majority, against you and you cannot succeed.

Similarly, I've been pointing out to those who have been saying, "Malays, unite!" that it is not a very wise slogan, and certainly, in the long run, one which cannot bring them what they seek, namely, Malay hegemony it is not possible. You run it one man one vote, in the long run, another ten, 15 years, 60% are non-Malays, they will not stand for this. They will unite, just to protect the interests of all others in Malaysia.

So, the thesis I have propounded is: let us compete on the basis of all Malaysians unite; regardless of race, language and religion. Let us unite for different reasons. If people believe that the old structure of society is good, well, let them unite on that basis to preserve the ruling aristocracy, to preserve the wealthy communities, to make them richer, to have bigger and better schools for the scions of the wealthy families. And the other can unite on the basis which I propound; that all those who seek a more just and equal society, all those who wish to do something with freedom besides just taking the place of the privileged -- Europeans who used to govern us.

National Archives of Singapore

We have a stake in uniting, in being sufficiently long-term in our thinking, to know that our interests lies in a more just and equal society. You see, the whole of Southeast Asia is now under intense pressure, more pressure than the Middle East. The two hot points of the world are Southeast Asia, the Middle East. The Middle East now for a diversity of reasons, presents a much more stable situation: one less likely to be exploited by outside powers. But not so Southeast Asia.

Everyday, South Vietnam is in either page one or page two or the centre page of any newspaper in Southeast Asia and in Australasia; and this concerns you and me, and concerns the Australians too, in a very important way. You see, it is not a simple thing of just Chinese troops marching down over the 17th Parallel to occupy South Vietnam and marching on to occupy Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, MAlaysia and then Indonesia, and then marching down into Australia.

National Archives of Singapore

If that were so, then the counter to it is very simple, because everybody can see it coming, Communism is equated with Chinese imperialism, everybody else unites! As I have said, exactly what I have said about Malaysia and the non-Malays, so the rest of Asia; if communism means Chinese imperialism, they will unite. But are they so silly? Are they so naive?

Our problem arises because they are dedicated Communists. They believe in revolution; they believe in exporting revolution; exporting ideas; exporting training; exporting guns then, having found local revolutionaries, proxies for their Commuism, the fight goes on. So they never cross your national boundaries, and your customs and immigration cannot stop ideas.

And this is the problem; and the process of erosion goes on. I don't know how long the position can be held, militarily in South Vietnam. It is something which is outside our province, our ability to influence depends upon whether the Chinese are able to put the Russians to a point where they either have to come in and back the Vietcong, the South Vietnames communists, or give up the leadership of all non-European communist parties. Because then, if they are not prepared to defend an indigenous Communist revolution, then obviously they are only interested in European Communists' future, keeping what they've got, where upon the leadership must go over to the more Marxist, the more Leninist, the more revolutionary parties led by China, Indonesia and others.

National Archives of Singapore

If the Russians do get committed because they can't afford to give up the leadership of the non-European Communist parties, then where do we go from there? First they move in anti-ground-to-air missiles with Russian troops; then what happens? American supersonic jets go in on tree-top bombing raids and blast the missiles, knocking off not only the missiles but also the Russians crews. Then what do the Russians do after that? So, the argument goes on; you know,

this move, counter move. Then, how far out can you go before you say, well, let's stop: otherwise nuclear war, world destruction. I don't know. We can only watch and hope that the Americans have carefully weighed all the factors and hope that the Russians stay out of it; and if they stay out of it, then the position is held. This is the simple logic of it.

But all this military effort, if you can't consolidate internally, it is valueless, because you have got no basis on which you build a people. For the rest of eternity, you have got to pump in men, arms, guns, economic aid, feed them, clothe them, You can't do that for the whole world. You might do that for South Vietnam because you consider that a prestige fight. So much is at stake that if you withdraw, American intentions will never be believed again, or anyway their protestations of their intentions will not be believed. Can you do that for the whole of Southeast Asia? For the whole of Asia: just pump in gifts, money, food, clothes, while the regime inside, the people, your proxies, are unable to govern, unable to galvanise the people, inspire them, give them an altenative which can mobilise their energies, a vision of a future that can make them stand up and fight for what they have got.

National Archives of Singapore

This is the problem. The failure of South Vietnam is the failure to find a leadership that will give this incentive, give this feeling that this is a South

Vietnamese fight, and it is worth the fight,. Thailand is facing that; and so is Malaysia. And it is difficult to say what is going to happen in the long run. All we can say is: we stand and fight for what we have got because what we have got is worth keeping.

One thing I noticed about Australia and New Zealand, This is the kind of impression which I had when I saw the buildings, and ate the fruit and the lamb, and the mutton and the beef: that 300 years ago, 200 years ago, there wasn't Adelaide and there wasn't Singapore. This is important, you know, like us anyway, for the non-indigenous peoples of Malaysia, we share something in common with the Australians and the New Zealanders. We are migrants. They came here, found nothing. They brought in the pear, the apple, the wheat and the rabbits and the foxes and the gores and so on; but they built this. And so we built Malaysia. And so Singapore from two fishing villages is now the biggest city in South Asia with the highest standards of life outside Japan. That was built by man; his effort, his ingenuity, his stamina, his will to survive and build. And just like the Australians, I say, whoever wants to take that away from me, I will fight, and over my dead body. You see? So I understand the Australians.

National Archives of Singapore

When I see this, I think to myself there would be two reactions. One you could say, "What a wicked lot of white men", they came here, killed all the

aborigines and robbed the place". I don't think that is, you know, altogether a rational or constructive point of view. As a human being, you must have a lot of feeling, sympathy for the aboriginal people who were here. And I think the duty of the world is to see that if humanity is to survive, thee must be the compassion for fellow men, fellow human being. But at the same time, all that said and done, if the white man never came here, never brought the apples and the pears and the sheep and the cattle, I don't think there would have been flowers by the river just now I passed by, and I was struck by the beauty of the rock garden and the flowers.

I think, in a small way, I understand the Australians. He built this, you know, just as your forefathers and mine, we built Malaysia. And I say, we will stand up and fight for it. I don't care how many Indonesians come in, this is all we've got; we are going to keep it. That is the first lesson we learn. We've got to learn that very quickly.

National Archives of Singapore

Let us all be friends with all our neighbours. But in order that the friendship can be meaningful and worth anything, let it be early understood that in our own home, we order our own furniture and we arrange it the way we like. This is important; otherwise it is very difficult to be good neighbours. You see, we do not arrogate to ourselves the right to say that he Indonesians should not

have guided democracy, that they must have representative government, or they must not have the army in charge, the Communists in charge, or we don't like NASAKON. Our attitude is, we would like to be friends with Indonesia. It is their business what government they choose to have, and we hope it is always possible to be business with the, to be friends with them. That having been said, we hope they will reciporate the same feeling to us.

And all that I have said for Malaysia, I think can be said for Australia too. If I were an Australian, I would be able to say all these things with the same intensity of feeling because I think they have got more to lose per head of population than Malaysia has. So, therefore, they must feel more strongly about it. And, I hope that this cooperation will be more than just one of convenience.

Let us be quite frank. If we are no use to Australia, they won't be sending their troops to defend the borders of Borneo. They are not doing it just for human charity, just because they like you and me, and they would be the first to admit it. But I think we would be foolish if we did not at the same time see that this is a fairly sound basis for long-term cooperation between the nations in this part of the world with smaller populations. We have some interest in common to ensure that the big powers do not resolve the problems of the region at the expense of the less populous peoples. And they are one of the less populous

National Archives of Singapore

peoples, but not necessarily thereby a poorer people. And we may not have as many army guns as Sukarno, as the Indonesians have got, or so many submarines, but we have got more television sets, more cars, more clothes, more meat, rice and all the other things which make life worth living for, than any Indonesian, and Indian or any Chinese has got. And this is what we have got to always remember.

You see, it's the confluence of 3 big civilisations, Malaysia - the Indonesian, the Indian and the Chinese. In the end, if we succeed, we endure, we will be a separate and a distinct people. We will become Malaysians, like the Swiss, like the Belgians, The Belgians are half Dutch and half French, but they are Belgians, and so we will be Malaysians. But we've got to succeed before we become Malaysians; and the first thing we've got to do is to being to think in terms of the 11 million people in Malaysia.

National Archives of Singapore

And the first compelling interest is survival as a separate entity, not disintegration and absorption by others; not racial strife leading to segregation and partition; and certainly, not literally bloody warfare races in an attempt by one race to try and dominate the others.

So, you see, they are very grim things that I have to talk to you about, but not talking about grim things will not help to resolve them. I think that if we

understand what the stakes are, and know the price of failure, it is more likely that we make the effort to ensure its success.

Thank you.

National Archives of Singapore