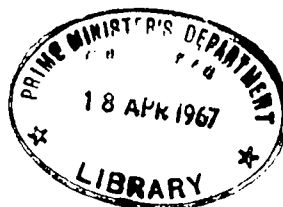


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STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE MEETING BETWEEN
AUSTRALIAN MINISTERS AND THE MALAYSIAN
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

The Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak, who is visiting Australia as a guest of the Australian Government, today attended a meeting of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of Cabinet. The meeting followed a Ministerial luncheon hosted by the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Holt.

The discussions reflected the wide range of common interests and the close association which have developed between Australia and Malaysia over a number of years. The two countries enjoy mutual co-operation a sense of warm friendship and understanding, and a deep respect for each other's achievements and progress.

Tun Razak said he was glad on this visit to express in person the appreciation of the Malaysian Government and people for the contribution which Australia had made with the other Commonwealth partners, Britain and New Zealand, to Malaysia's security. He said that the continuing presence of Australian, British and New Zealand forces, under arrangements which had the full consent and co-operation of his Government, remained a valuable factor in the stability of the region. At the same time, it was Malaysia's intention to continue to strengthen its own national capacity for defence. The substantial programme of Australia's defence aid had been of great value in the expansion of Malaysia's defence forces.

Australian Ministers informed Tun Razak that they believed that the provision of defence aid - in the form of giving equipment for Malaysia's newly-formed military units, the temporary secondment of Australian personnel, and the training of Malaysian personnel in Australia - was a particularly valuable form of co-operation in the security field. They welcomed the considerable progress which Malaysia had already achieved in building its own defence capacity.

An agreement was reached in the discussion that an Australian technical mission should visit Malaysia in the near future to examine Malaysia's future requirements. Australian Ministers gave an assurance to Tun Razak that they were aware of Malaysia's need for continuing assistance in this field and, within the limits imposed by competing demands on resources, would extend the defence aid programme until the end of 1970, the termination date for Malaysia's present expansion programme.

Tun Razak referred to the great difficulties created for Malaysia by the low prices for rubber and also to their large requirements for external finance to implement the first Malaysia Plan for social and economic development. He expressed appreciation of the developmental aid already given by Australia and hoped that this could be continued and if possible expanded in the future.

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The discussion noted that the increasing and widening contacts between the two countries extended into many fields, including growing trade and business connections and tourism. Ministers noted that there were at the present moment in Australia some 500 Colombo Plan students from Malaysia studying in Australia as well as several thousands of private students. These, with the many thousands of Malaysian students who had received training and education in Australia over the years, added an important chapter of their own to the story of the relations between the two countries.

The discussions included a general review of political and strategical developments in South East Asia. Tun Razak reviewed the progress that had been made in restoring Malaysian/Indonesian relations and the possibilities of a wider framework for co-operation. Malaysia and Australia are both members of two new organizations in the region, the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) and the Asian Development Bank and there was a useful exchange of views on developments in these organizations.

With respect to Viet Nam, it was agreed that South Viet Nam had the right to maintain its independence and to self-determination and to invite its allies to assist in its defence. Tun Razak pointed out that because of her own internal security problems, Malaysia could not help with troops. However, Malaysia had extended support to South Viet Nam in other ways and in particular provided training of officers in development and administration. Tun Razak drew attention to the white papers issued by the Malaysian Government which described the close relationship between communist activity in Sarawak and West Malaysia and similar activity in South Viet Nam and North East Thailand. It was agreed that there was a need for constant vigilance if the stability of the region was to be preserved and if the countries of the region were to be able to press on with the great tasks of national construction with better and widening opportunities for their peoples.

CANBERRA,
13th April, 1967.