



# PRIME MINISTER

## VISIT TO INDONESIA, SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA

### STATE DINNER

### KUALA LUMPUR

Speech by the Prime Minister, The Rt Hon.  
William McMahon, C.H., M.P.

12 JUNE 1972

Mr Prime Minister, Mr Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests :

I want, immediately, to say how pleased I am to be here again. And to express my appreciation of the welcome you have given me. I have been here before and I have a vivid recollection of my visit during the emergency in the early fifties. It is good to be back. And thank you, Sir, for your generous hospitality tonight.

In such an atmosphere we find a happy combination of dignity and informality, and that kind of open-hearted friendship we associate with Malaysia and its people.

Prime Minister, Australia and Malaysia are old friends. You mentioned this as the basis of our close and continuing co-operation in important fields of activity. I endorse most strongly what you have said.

We have had many years of shared experience in both war and peace, and our association has solid foundations because of our membership of the Commonwealth, the similarity of our institutions, and our common security, economic and social interests.

But there is more to our relations than past history. It is commonplace to say that we are facing an uncertain world. The future is always unpredictable - not the least in South-East Asia, in the centre of which Malaysia lives and to which Australia is so closely bound.

I believe we have the same objectives as we face these uncertainties. We are independent countries, each following policies which seem to us best adapted to securing our national objectives. Both of us want the countries of the region to be free and independent, sturdily based, stable and self-reliant, and socially progressive. Both of us wish to see them free from external threat and interference. We want them to live in harmony, and to grow in prosperity.

Against this background, Prime Minister, I am glad the opportunity has been presented to discuss these matters of common interest with you. I valued our private talks this morning, which I found refreshing, informative and helpful.

For Australia, Sir, our national interest is clear and easily understood. We are not a great power, though not a small one : We pose no threat to our neighbours and have neither the aspiration nor the capacity to impose our views on them.

We in Australia believe, Sir, that peace in Asia is indivisible. We look to a negotiated settlement in Vietnam which will permit the people of the South to determine their own future. Beyond that we look towards an accommodation with China based on mutual respect and without preconditions.

And we look to the day when internal subversion and insurgency will not be supported by external powers - a situation in which a stable, tolerant, outward-looking Australia can continue to play a co-operative and helpful role in the South-East Asian region.

Our desire, our logical and permanent interest is to have stable, reliable and prosperous neighbours with whom we may maintain close relations of mutual understanding, respect and friendship. We want our association with each other to reflect the deep community of interest between ourselves and our friends.

In seeking these things I believe we can build an even closer relationship between Australia and Malaysia. It is also well recognised that, to achieve freedom, security, social justice and sustained progress in the region, will be a long and difficult task.

The first requirement will be national strength in all its forms for that is the best deterrent to external interference. The second requirement will be to develop co-operation between regional states. Malaysia has made a significant contribution to regional co-operation especially through its initiative in launching ASEAN,

It has shown leadership in working for closer contacts between South-East Asian countries, and helping to develop an enlightened community of interest. We in Australia welcome these developments and wish your success.

At this point, Prime Minister, I want to pay tribute to your own personal leadership in the imaginative policies which Malaysia has been pursuing, not only in the international field, but also in domestic affairs, notably through the Second Malaysia Plan.

Among statesmen your name stands high. We respect you, Sir, and Malaysia for the vigorous independent spirit you show.

Your country is master of its own house and destiny, progressive in its ideas and resolute in its performance.

Your proposal for the neutralisation of South-East Asia under effective international guarantees is an important initiative. We see this proposal as clear evidence of your desire to work towards a free and independent South-East Asia, undeterred by the complexities which inevitably are involved in such an under-taking.

Time will show the best way to secure stability and peace, and Australia is always ready to discuss measures to help achieve those objectives.

I am gratified that in our talks this morning we agreed that there are no problems between us. Defence co-operation between Australia and Malaysia is on a sound footing. We agreed that the Five Power Defence Arrangements are the framework within which we co-operate closely and are of value to us both.

I was delighted to have your assurance, Prime Minister, that the presence of Australian forces, both land and air is welcome. The arrangements are working smoothly and we are happy about them. We also agreed that the presence of Australian air force units continues to be of value to us both.

It goes without saying that Australia will at all times honour its obligations.

Prime Minister, there are other significant links between Australia and Malaysia which are forged by mutual national interests. The trade between our two countries has grown over recent years and we look forward to steady progress in the future, and Australian companies are learning more about Malaysia as a field of investment especially through joint ventures.

You said, Prime Minister, that Malaysia would "welcome Australia as partners in your development efforts". This idea of partnership is very close to our hearts in our own development where foreign investment is concerned. And so, Sir, we hope to see increased activity in Malaysia by Australian companies in partnership with yours. There is, I know, considerable and growing interest by Australian companies in this prospect.

In the area of Government-to-Government economic co-operation we have, of course, longstanding and active programmes through the Colombo Plan and through direct bilateral arrangements.

We are ready to contribute, according to your own wishes, and our own capacity, towards the success of the Second Malaysia Plan. We have always been willing to do what we can to assist Malaysia in technical expertise.

To these specific links we add other associations, which may in time prove to be the most important of all. I refer to the education of the young people of both countries on the ways, history and culture of each other's homeland, and to the development of cultural relations.

This reflects the great interest Australians are now showing in their neighbours. There are many facets of this interest.

But certainly a strong and stimulating influence has been the large number, now over 5,000 of Malaysians students in Australia.

To this I add the increasing number of businessmen and tourists moving between our countries. This helps to promote understanding between our people and yours in human terms and has, of course, direct practical benefit.

For it is when the friendships of Government are backed by friendships among the people that we get a relationship of enduring value, and rich in the benefits it conveys to all.

I believe, Sir, Malaysia and Australia should always walk the ways of peace together.

I believe that the ideals we share are those that unite. And that in giving them free expression, each according to our national responsibilities and resources, we can help to build a better world.

I thank you, Prime Minister, for the honour you do my country tonight.

And now I should like to propose a toast - to your health and to the friendship of our two countries.

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