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Abstract	This article relates the evolution of Malaysia as a free nation and the spirit of national unity that inspires and guides the ideals and outlook of this country. With the growth of nationalism, the desire for independence had already developed in Malaya to such a pitch that unless this fervor was released and expressed in terms of democracy, Communism, with its strong anticolonial overtone, would triumph and all hopes for freedom and independence would be lost. Malaysia is a practical working democracy, and as such its very existence and success are a positive challenge to any further progress by Communism in Southeast Asia.

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MALAYSIA: KEY AREA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

By Tunku Abdul Rahman

IF one studies the map of Southeast Asia it is clear at once that Malaysia is the natural focus of the whole region. It is the only country that is both part of mainland Asia and at the same time part of the vast archipelago stretching westward from the Philippines and New Guinea to Sumatra. Thus Malaysia is not only a bridge between continental and island Asia but also the gateway between the China Sea and the Indian Ocean. By virtue of this position Malaysia is of vital importance to both Southeast Asia and the world. Add to this the fact that although Malaysia is a small nation of only 10,000,000 people, its economic significance is out of all proportion to its size and population. It is the world's leading producer of both natural rubber and tin. For this reason, if none other, the peace and prosperity, security and stability of Malaysia are of key concern both regionally and internationally.

To understand the evolution of Malaysia as a free nation and the spirit of national unity that inspires and guides the ideals and outlook of this country of many races, creeds and cultures, we must glance briefly at postwar history. The peoples of Malaya, Singapore and Borneo endured in common privation and suffering during the Japanese Occupation. When the war ended the nine states of mainland Malaya and Sarawak were British Protectorates; the islands of Singapore and Penang and the Malacca area were Crown Colonies; and North Borneo (as Sabah was then known) was the domain of a chartered company. Constitutional changes were inevitable, especially in view of the rising wave of liberation which began to sweep across Asia. Within three years the nine Malay states together with Penang and Malacca merged into the Federation of Malaya but still under the British rule. This was the first time in the history of the Malay peninsula that all these states had achieved a common central government. In the meantime, both Sabah and Sarawak became Crown Colonies, and Singapore began to take its first step towards internal self-government.

The Federation of Malaya Agreement was signed in February 1948 in Kuala Lumpur. Within four months the Malayan Communist Party launched an armed revolt to secure power. Com-

munist terrorism erupted all over Malaya; the country came under a state of national Emergency, which was destined to last for another 12 years. Communist terrorism reached its climax in 1951 with the assassination of the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney. Field-Marshal Sir Gerald Templer who succeeded him managed to make considerable inroads into the Communist strength. Much, however, remained to be done, the situation being so dangerous that it seemed the Communists would be able to hold out indefinitely.

With the growth of nationalism the desire for independence had already developed in Malaya to such a pitch that unless this fervor was released and expressed in terms of democracy, Communism, with its strong anticolonial overtone, would triumph and all hopes for freedom and independence would be lost.

The British Colonial Secretary, Mr. Lennox Boyd, visited Kuala Lumpur in 1955. As leader of the Alliance Party, I had talks with him and informed him that no amount of British arms would by itself ever rid Malaya of the menace of Communism. The solution could not come about by military means alone; it was essential to win the minds and hearts of the people, to satisfy their aspirations, and thus draw them away from the enticements of Communism, which uses freedom and independence as its battle cry. The people of Malaya, I said, wanted independence for their own country; if this could be achieved, they would be responsible for the fight against Communism, and they would win. Any delay in achieving independence could only benefit the Communists, as Communism thrived and flourished on colonialism.

In order to test the genuineness of the people's aspirations for independence, I said, we must have national elections on the issue; and if the Alliance Party won, immediate negotiations would be carried out with the British Government for Malaya's independence. We swept to victory, winning 51 out of 52 seats contested, and I became the Chief Minister and Minister for Home Affairs.

The first important thing I did was to arrange a talk with the Communist leader, Chin Peng, which was held on December 28, 1955. The result of that talk showed clearly that the intention of the Communists was not to liberate Malaya but to subject it completely to Communist domination. Therefore I did not hesitate to tell the people that independence could be achieved only by them and through democratic means.

It is worthy of note that from the time negotiations for inde-

pendence for Malaya were initiated, the support given by elements of the civilian population to the Communist terrorists rapidly began to decrease, with the result that the police and the security forces found their tasks of subduing the Communists made much easier. What had seemed to be overwhelmingly difficult for the British, the people of Malaya, inspired and encouraged by the prospect of independence, and later by its actual achievement, were able to accomplish. On July 31, 1960, the Emergency was declared over and ended. The Malayan people had now a free hand to concentrate their energies and resources on the task of nation-building.

While the Malayan people grew prosperous and happy with their nationhood, the fact could not be ignored that Communism remained the prime menace to the peace of Asia. We had successfully overcome the internal threat of Communism in Malaya, but we were only too well aware of its insidious growth in neighboring areas. I noticed particularly, with growing and grave concern, the increasing influence of Communism in the British territories of Singapore, Sabah, Brunei and Sarawak. The same pattern of Communist exploitation of anticolonial feelings that we had experienced in Malaya was taking place in those areas. I felt that time was running out, and that the Communist menace had to be swiftly met, otherwise free Malaya would once again be in danger. Therefore, in May 1961 I first announced my hope that the formation of Malaysia would enable the peoples of these states to achieve the independence they desired and at the same time put an end to colonialism in their part of the world.

The announcement had electrifying results. For the next two years the prospect of Malaysia was a daily subject of debate and discussion, and during this time negotiations took place among leaders of all the states concerned and with the British. With the exception of Brunei, all the states of Malaya joined Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak in a conviction that Malaysia was their future destiny. The achievement of union in September 1963 was an outstanding testimony to the will and wish of the peoples of the new nation to stand united, to achieve progress and prosperity, and to resist together the Communist bid for power.

II

In the past two years of Malaysian independence we have maintained and upheld the practice and principles of democracy. All

Malaysians have come to feel they have a part to play and a responsibility to share in the national well-being. The reasons for our success can be found in the Malaysian Constitution, in which all the fundamental freedoms—such as equality, freedom of speech and freedom of association—are protected. One typical section of the Constitution reads, "All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to the equal protection of the law." Another states, "There shall be no discrimination against citizens on the grounds only of religion, race, descent or place of birth in any law." Although Islam is the official religion of Malaysia, every Malaysian has the right to practice the creed of his own choice.

The Constitution also provides for parity among the various racial groups. It was obviously necessary in the general interest to do away with economic and educational handicaps affecting the Malays and other indigenous peoples. By common consent, scholarships and opportunities were made more readily available to the indigenous peoples, the least advanced group economically, to provide an incentive for personal achievement. They were also given easier access into government service. Our aim to establish a system of parity, not only politically but economically, would leave no one out or unable to compete in the forward march of the new Malaysia. The omissions of the past have to be rectified in the cause of future progress.

An American magazine recently stated that Malaysia was a democracy in all respects save one, meaning the "special privileges for the Malays." I must point out that although the Constitution provides for a special position for the indigenous peoples at present, it also provides for periodic review of the position when necessary. Ultimately the time will come when it will be possible by legislative action to amend the Constitution because this special position will no longer be needed.

There are still some persons, however, who wish to upset this carefully planned system of ensuring that all races have a fair share in economic progress. They are out of touch with general feeling and reveal a sorry lack of understanding of the importance of good will and coöperation in a multiracial nation. It would be foolish, however, to hasten the day of revision of these constitutional rights prematurely; to do so would defeat the whole purpose of this particular aspect of our economic planning.

Any nation which is an association of states with a federal structure has problems between the central and state governments.

One has only to look at the United States or Canada or Australia to realize that even after years of federation such problems do arise. Fortunately for Malaysia, our Constitution has drawn on the experience of other federated nations, and in addition the eleven states of the former Federation of Malaya had had six successful years of working under the federal system.

The Alliance Party is in power in all the states of Malaysia except Kelantan and Singapore. The Pan-Malayan Islamic Party is in control in Kelantan, and has been since 1959. For four years they showed reluctance to coöperate with the Federal Government, but in the past year or so they have come to realize that their state was falling behind in the general march of progress. Today they are coöperating closely with the Alliance Government and the results are already becoming evident.

The state of Singapore is under the control of another opposition group, the People's Action Party, led by its Premier, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. Singapore has had no previous experience of working in a federal nation, and due to the fact of being the "New York" of Malaysia it probably feels that its position is far more important than that of the rest of Malaysia. Some of the state's leaders do not realize the great benefit Singapore is already enjoying as a result of being part of Malaysia, and are rather inclined to attribute the successes to themselves. They are quick to criticize the central government at every opportunity, principally because their own state government is run by an opposition party. This seems to arouse undue apprehension in the minds of some foreign observers, who shake their heads and talk pessimistically about the future of Malaysia. Oddly enough, some of these critics come from federal nations themselves. I myself have no doubt that as Singapore continues to make further progress in Malaysia and adapts itself more readily through experience and understanding of the coöperation necessary in a federal structure, these pangs of local pride and wishes for dominance will slowly pass away. Federation cannot work on the basis of only taking but not giving. The national interest must be the prime over-all concern. The progress of Singapore is important to Malaysia, but by the same token, the progress of Malaysia is equally vital to Singapore. I am confident that whatever little differences exist at present between the central government and the state government will work out satisfactorily.

Every developing nation has its problems, but few have tackled them more constructively than has Malaysia. Great developments have occurred in the rural sector of our economy. Industrialization is making rapid progress. New construction can be seen everywhere—roads, dams, schools, hospitals, universities, office buildings, national institutions, housing, mosques, churches and temples, and, most strikingly, new industrial estates. Development of electric power already exceeds requirements, with practical plans already being made for years ahead. New wharves are going up in the ports, new airports are being completed. Malaysia possesses one of the finest systems of telecommunications this side of Europe. In every field—industrial, commercial, agricultural, educational, social—striking progress is visible.

Malaysia has the second highest standard of living in the East, following only that of Japan. Its economy is sound and stable. Its foreign exchange and reserves total \$1 billion. New investment, both local and foreign, is pouring in. Hardly a day goes by without the opening of some new factory or the announcement of some new company. The total volume of trade expands with every passing year. All these achievements are due to a healthy spirit of free enterprise and the successful working of our democracy owing to the tolerance, good will and efforts of our people of many racial origins.

III

However, Malaysia is not an introspective country. We have opened our doors and windows wide to observe and share in the affairs of the world. In fact, Malaysia was one of the first states in Southeast Asia to do so. Having experienced the menace of international Communism and overcome it, we are particularly sensitive to its threats elsewhere and have never hesitated to take a positive stand when necessary.

Malaya was among the first to condemn Communist China's blatant invasion of Tibet and the subjugation of that ill-fated nation. Again, when the Communist Chinese pressed on further and treacherously attacked their sympathetic neighbor, India, I was the first to condemn their aggression unreservedly, as I happened to arrive in Calcutta the day it began; and during my tour of India in that month of October 1962, I exposed the Chinese motives behind aggression. On my return to Singapore in November, I stated that in the event of a declaration of war between

India and China, Malaya would give India "all-out support." Soon afterwards I launched a public campaign, the "Save Democracy Fund," which raised more than one million dollars to help India defend herself against Chinese aggression.

Malaysia has been a member of the United Nations since 1957, and in all that time a major plank of her foreign policy platform has been, and is still, unwavering support for the world body. We place great value on the spirit of the Charter and understand that acceptance of it entails both duties and responsibilities. Our armed forces were among the first to reach the Congo, and their conduct there won high praise for the United Nations as well as the lasting friendship of the people of the area.

Malaysia has also made constructive efforts in regional co-operation. Although we did not participate in the Bandung Conference, as we were not then independent, we have expressed the spirit of Bandung in the conduct of our foreign policy. We are very conscious of brotherhood with the Afro-Asian nations. We feel at one with them in campaigning against colonialism, apartheid, disease, hunger and human misery. As far as apartheid is concerned, I have actively condemned this evil violation of human rights. Like our brothers in Afro-Asia we have always stressed the imperative need for a world where laws prevail against racial or religious discrimination. We also championed Algeria's right to freedom. We expressed our belief that Southern Rhodesia should be independent only when African peoples have the unrestricted right to vote and we have deplored Portuguese colonialism in both Africa and Asia.

Our special interest in economic progress and development of the region of Southeast Asia is particularly illustrated by the founding of the Association of Southeast Asia (A.S.A.) which I first projected in Manila in 1960. The founder members—the Philippines, Thailand and Malaya—established A.S.A. in 1961 to promote economic, social and cultural coöperation. Indonesia was invited also but rejected A.S.A. as being a tool of American imperialism, ignoring the fact that all the work, effort, ideas and goals of A.S.A. had sprung entirely from the energies and beliefs of the three countries concerned. In declining to join, Indonesia broke the solemn undertaking given at the Bandung Conference to create an organization for intraregional economic coöperation. Nevertheless, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaya went right ahead, meeting in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur and Manila in

1961, 1962 and 1963, laying the groundwork for A.S.A. However, with the unfortunate decision of the Philippines to defer recognition of Malaysia after its formation in 1963, A.S.A. suffered a temporary setback. We nevertheless have strong hopes that A.S.A. will be revived, as its secretariats still survive. Our faith in A.S.A. reflects our belief that we can come to terms with the Philippines, which we have always regarded as a country that has done much for the cause of democracy in this part of the world. I feel that the present impasse between the Philippines and Malaysia can be resolved. Although we have no formal diplomatic relations at present, it is our objective to hasten the day when the friendly ties we still feel for one another can be resumed and enhanced.

Malaysia is a practical working democracy, and as such its very existence and success are a positive challenge to any further progress by Communism in Southeast Asia. The Communists consider us an obstacle to be reckoned with in their grand design to subject all Asia to their influence. Obviously Malaysia from their point of view has to be "crushed." The Communists were quick to seize the opportunity to implement this "crushing" vicariously through Indonesia, a country with which we had always felt close fraternity and whose own bid for independence earned our sympathy and support.

Unfortunately, neither President Sukarno nor the Indonesian Army, the only two forces capable of asserting themselves against the Communists, did anything effective to check the rapid expansion of Communism in Indonesia. In fact, President Sukarno seems to have encouraged the dramatic growth of Communism there, and this has been augmented by the widespread starvation, corruption and administrative incompetence, combining to create a mood of cynicism and despair. Meanwhile, the Communists champion causes which they can represent to the people as nationalist and revolutionary. Each day brings evidence of their further entrenchment, as their leaders assume leading positions and their policies are allowed free expression. We cannot ignore the fact that the Indonesian Communist Party is the third largest in the world and closely collaborates with Peking. We in Malaysia have been made well aware by actual aggression, infiltration, subversion and sabotage of the Communist determination to bring about the extinction of our country. However, with the help of our allies and the sympathy and support of nations

which deplore aggression and espouse peace, we are confident of our ability to contain this threat to our existence which emanates from Indonesia.

We look northward in Asia with equal anxiety. We see the unscrupulous advantage the Communists have taken of small and weak states, most of whom have shaken off the burden of colonialism only to fall under the spell of Communism. Viet Nam, in particular, has caused us great concern, as we have watched the familiar Communist pattern being re-enacted by the Hanoi Government, using the usual methods of infiltration, subversion and open aggression against South Viet Nam, making a mockery of the Geneva Agreement of 1954. I recall that the very first foreign country I visited after becoming Prime Minister of newly independent Malaya was South Viet Nam in January 1958. I declared then that the Communist aggression taking place both in Malaya and in South Viet Nam was rightly the concern of the whole free world, and that our two countries were fighting in the front line of the battle for freedom. In 1960, I did what I could to help South Viet Nam in its struggle against Communism. All the guns and ammunition and vehicles which had become surplus to us as the result of the ending of our own emergency I had shipped to Saigon. We started our own aid program, quietly and without publicity, to train some thousands of Vietnamese in either jungle warfare or police administration; and we are continuing to do so today.

The long history of aggressive action by North Viet Nam and its intensifications of hostilities in recent months more than justify the firm stand taken by the United States. We in Malaysia fully support Washington's actions. Past experience has clearly shown that the Communists will back down whenever they are faced with determined and definite opposition. Cuba, the Berlin Blockade and the incidents in the Tongkin Gulf, each of which Malaysia completely supported at the time, are testimony to this. We cannot, however, ignore the fear felt by many nations that the war in Viet Nam may escalate into such proportions that an ultimate peaceful solution becomes impossible. We therefore welcome President Johnson's statement that the United States is ready to negotiate without any precondition. His proposal for a massive aid program to Southeast Asia clearly shows that the United States is seeking neither political nor military conquest, but desires only an honorable settlement of the Vietnamese problem.

From our own experience it is our belief, however, that the final answer in Viet Nam does not lie in either arms or economic aid but in the hearts and minds of the people. The present state of affairs in South Viet Nam is due to a lack of ideological response to an ideological challenge. Political instability in Saigon has drawn attention away from the basic principles of freedom for which South Viet Nam has been fighting. The Republic of Viet Nam must be given time to reconsolidate itself on these principles and its people must have an opportunity to understand that democracy is worth fighting and dying for. In the long run, the present military involvement by the United States can only be temporary; but it will provide that essential time. In our view it is imperative that the United States does not retire from the scene; such action would create an ideological vacuum which only the Communists would exploit.

To me the United States does not represent merely a power as such, even though she is undoubtedly the most powerful nation in the world. Rather the United States represents the living ideal of democracy. I remember that Madame Pandit, who was then President of the U.N. General Assembly, said during a visit to Singapore that what the free world most needed were thousands and thousands of people willing to preach and practice democracy with fervor and faith and when necessary to fight for it. In other words, democracy must be an ideology. It is worth noting that the Communist states never represent themselves so much as powers but as proponents of an ideology, although it is true that the current dispute between the Soviet Union and China has done much to dispel this image.

The whole history of our years of independence, leading into the creation of Malaysia, is living evidence that democracy can succeed in molding an Asian nation along lines of economic achievement and stability. It is true that we have been forced to ensure our security against Indonesia's present hostility by an alliance with such friendly nations as the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. That alliance is made of our own choice. All free nations have the sovereign right to choose their friends and to enter into any agreement which they feel may be necessary for their security. Further, our defense agreement with the United Kingdom which dates back to 1957 has enabled us to make far more rapid progress in every field of development because we have not had to spend vast sums on our armed forces.

Communist-inspired propaganda from Indonesia cries out hysterically that our defense agreement represents neo-colonialism. Any nation which has suffered the threat of aggression knows that protection is a matter of necessity and that immediate help is welcome from whichever quarter it comes. We in Malaysia have always had faith in our friends; and now that our need is critical they have rallied to our side as true friends should. In spite of Indonesia's endeavors to obscure the truth with a screen of groundless accusations, Afro-Asia has come to understand that we in Malaysia have no choice but to turn to the friends we trust to help us when we are being not only threatened but actually invaded by a neighbor nation possessing armed forces 20 times the size of ours. To ask us to give up the British bases is tantamount to asking us to disarm in the face of a strong enemy buildup. It would be sheer folly for us to give up the bases. To do so would be to commit suicide. Needless to say, we shall welcome defense assistance from African, Asian or other countries.

It is with some satisfaction that we can say that except for one minor attack, every Indonesian assault against us has been defeated. We have seen to it that the complete record of Indonesian incursions is in the hands of the Security Council. The whole world knows that Indonesia is guilty of aggression and that Malaysia has not fired one bullet outside its borders.

Malaysia is in a unique position in many ways, belonging as it does to the brotherhood of Afro-Asian nations as well as being a member of the Commonwealth. As a mainly Muslim country we have intimate links and understanding with the Arab world. We are friends with all nations in Asia, Indonesia and the Communist countries excepted. Last but not least, we have proven that the principles of democracy have valid application to the problems that face developing countries. We cannot and do not aspire to rely on the might of arms to promote our future hopes, preferring to live in peace and friendship with all, especially our neighbors. We have not received or requested any part of the vast quantities of aid which the United States has so freely and generously given to most of the free world. We have always preferred to pay our own way, and we continue to do so. We believe that by making a success of our own democracy, relying on our own efforts, combined with the advantages of our strategic position and economic importance, we are able to exercise influence, even as a small nation, that is far-reaching and effective.

China's emergence as a powerful military force, expressing the most militant form of Communism, has made the problem of survival for all the countries of Southeast Asia extremely acute. So far, pro-Peking forces are militarily active only in Viet Nam, Laos and Indonesia; but knowing the nature of Communism, we can expect further aggression to take place. In this situation we have no time for philosophical resignation, nor do we have any respect for attitudes of despair shown by some countries that it is only a matter of time before this region of Southeast Asia becomes enveloped in the embrace of Red China. Our role, we feel, is not only to dispel unwarranted pessimism but to reaffirm by our own example and policy that democracy is a better answer to the social and economic problems of this vital region than Communism can ever be.

In Russia, the most advanced nation in the Communist world, economic well-being has provoked a search for the liberties which had been lost because the leaders believed them to be incompatible with rapid development. Why should Asian nations allow themselves to be attracted to the alluring prospects of economic advancement claimed by Communists when it means the unnecessary surrender of their liberties? Asian nations can see for themselves the remarkable resurgence of Japan through the spirit of free enterprise and democracy. Even a small country like ours has been able, under the aegis of democracy, to achieve success without the sacrifices which Communism demands. By comparison, North Viet Nam and North Korea expose the myth of supposing that Communism is a guaranteed solution to the problems presented by economic immaturity.

The achievement of Asian unity is a challenge. If affairs continue to deteriorate as at present we face the specter of another world war. Europe has been the source of past world wars; I hope Asia will never have this hateful privilege. Obviously all the Asian countries cannot come together now, but those which are sincere Asians at heart can respond to proper leadership when it appears. I feel that such leadership may well be provided by Japan.

We in Malaysia see our role as one of contributing to the stability of Southeast Asia through social and economic progress, by carrying out a policy of good will and coöperation and by firmly adhering to the free world and strongly supporting the United Nations. We shall continue doing everything we can to promote the cause of democracy and the achievement of peace.

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