**Prime Minister’s Draft Speech**

**Prepared by Manu Korovulavula**

The two books I will launch today is the autobiography of a very young soldier enlisted at the Nasese Camp in October 1951 at the age of 17 years 4 months. How he was accepted as a soldier, you will perhaps read in his books shortly.

In the passage of time, the world has experienced many hardships through wars. There were the two World Wars, the First World War (1914 to 1918) and the Second World War (1939 to 1945). Apart from Sino-Japanese War (between China and Japan from 1894 to 1895) and the Korean War (1950 to 1953), there was also the Malayan Campaign (or Emergency) of 1952 to 1956.

Malaya was the largest producer and exporter of natural rubber and second in tin production in the world, and was a member of the British Empire.

Malayan based guerrilla fighters who prior to the surrender of Japan, were fighting for Britain during the Second World War against the Japanese in Malaya were well-trained jungle fighters. Their activity as guerrilla fighters ended abruptly when Japan surrendered unconditionally.

Whatever Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding seemed to have been reached between the British and these guerrilla freedom fighters was not recognised by the British Government. The guerrillas thence began terrorist activities and these gained momentum and became a real threat to the British Government’s large investments in and the governance of Malaya. The Malayan government administration suffered and deteriorated rapidly.

The British Government was therefore considerably concerned when guerrilla insurgents killed three British rubber planters. The British Empire military might was deployed to combat the insurgencies in Malaya.

Fiji was also then a member of the British Empire.

The World War II jungle combats of the Solomon Islands had exposed the fighting skills of the Fijian soldier to the world. This was intelligently observed by the American military units, who greatly appreciated having the Fijian guerrilla force and other Fijian soldiers fighting with them against the Japanese.

The outstanding jungle fighting skills of the Fijian soldiers reached the ears of and was noted with pride by the British Government. Fiji being one of the Crown Colonies then was therefore invited to form a Battalion of volunteer soldiers to help the Allied Federated States of Malaya in combating the increasing acts of terrorisms by the insurgents.

In the olden days in Fiji, tribal wars were not uncommon and even included cannibalism. The advent of Christianity to the Fijians then eventually ended the tribal wars and cannibalism. Yet, the dire enthusiasm of war was ingrained in the “bati”

Having been recognised for acquiring such a trait and a hunter’s sense for combating the foe, it was inevitable that such jungle fighting skills would be called to the fore to help in the relevant time of need. The Malayan Emergency was indeed such a time.

The British having noted the jungle war skills of the Fijians which, could be put to good use in combating the insurgencies in Malaya, made a formal request to Fiji and this was forwarded to the Governor of Fiji who consulted with Ratu J L V Sukuna. Through Ratu Sukuna’s consultations with the Chiefs of all the Provinces in Fiji and Rotuma, the First Battalion Fiji Infantry Regiment (1FIR) was established.

The rest of the history of the Fijian engagement in the Malayan Campaign as seen by the author himself is told in these two books which are indeed eye-witness accounts of what transpired, written in the iTaukei and translated into English.

On this momentous occasion we should recognize with gratitude and admiration, the magnificent work of the author of the books “Vala Mai Maleya” and “Malayan Campaign”, who has brought to life once again the real sacrifices and achievements of a group of young men of Fiji - Soldiers of the 1st Fiji infantry Regiment, who performed in the best days of their lives outstanding feats whilst making the ultimate sacrifices that helped greatly in giving Malaya the Malaysia it so proudly is today.

The books are lovingly dedicated by the author in honour of his late gallant father, Major Isireli Qerea Korovulavula MC ED and his late younger brother WOII Nacani Naravoro Korovulavula MBE (Mill) who in the Malayan Campaign of 1952 to 1956 with him, put their lives and that of their complete family lineage in harm’s way for the sake of peace and humanity.

Now it is my pleasant duty, as requested by the author, to launch –

VALA MAI MALEYA and MALAYAN CAMPAIGN