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TEXT OF PRIME MINISTER'S BROADCAST ON
27TH SEPTEMBER, 1961 AT 7.30 P.M.

Let me tell you how and why the British deliberately misled the
Communists and manoeuvred their open-front workers into a false position.

In the Legislative Assembly meeting of July 20th, I recounted how Lim
Chin Siong and his friends had been taken for a ride by the British. Over a
period of several months at luncheons, cocktail parties, dinner parties and other
social occasions, the UK Commission officials dropped hints to Lim Chin Siong
and his friends and even generally to businessmen and sharebrokers, both local
and British, giving everyone the impression that they considered Lim and his
friends reasonable and sensible people. Slowly Lim and his friends were led to
believe that if they were to obtain power by constitutional means, so long as the

military bases were left untouched, the British would be quite happy to let them run this island.

Lim was putting on his best act. He was pretending to Lord Selkirk and his officials, that he and his friends like Fong Swee Suan, were just like Toh Chin Chye and myself. They were also P.A.P. non-Communist Socialists, only that they were in the more radical wing of the P.A.P.

Selkirk and his officials had no doubts that Lim was the most important open-front Communist leader. But they pretended to believe Lim's act, that he was a genuine non-Communist Socialist. The British went out of their way to be nice to Lim and his friends, encouraging them to believe that there was no constitutional difficulty to their taking over the present Government or forming the next one.

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On the other hand, the British pressed us as the Singapore Government to curb and contain the subversive activities of Lim and his friends. We were therefore puzzled when we found that Lim and his friends were absolutely confident that they could take over and run the government.

We could not understand how they came to believe this when on the other hand we were being pressed to take action against these same people. It was only after the Anson by-election, two days before the motion of confidence in the Assembly, when we found that Lim Chin Siong and his friends were in conference with the UK Commissioner at Eden Hall, did it dawn on us that this was a deep ruse which had been going on for some time.

So long as Lim and his friends believed that they could not assume power without getting into trouble, they would play it quietly and not give trouble to the Singapore Government, particularly a PAP left-wing government. So long as they did not attack the Singapore government, the British could not get the government to go out of its way to suppress Lim and his Communist friends. So the British led Lim and the Communists to believe that they could take power. Once Lim and the Communists believed this they became bold. First they pressed us to change our policy, we refused, and then came the attack by the Communists on the PAP.

Lim and Fong said they went to tea at Lord Selkirk's residence for social friendliness. Unfortunately, Woodhull has later admitted that they went to see Lord Selkirk "to clarify the situation".

James Puthucheary in a letter to the Straits Times on 21st August, 1961, enlarged further on this. He wrote:-

"But it must be a very strange state of affairs when a great plot is nothing more than the stating of the correct constitutional position".

"Were the PAP leaders expecting the British to say the constitutional rights were reserved for PAP leaders only? If not, why all this sensationalism?"

"I am prepared to accept that this statement of the constitutional position was in reality a great plot if the PAP leaders would tell me what the British were trying to achieve by it".

We can. What the British wanted to achieve was to get the Communists to come out into the open on their own, attack the PAP and be purged in retaliation. Lim Chin Siong, the Communist open-front leader, was helped by Woodhull and James Puthucheary, and also by sympathisers like Francis Wong, editor of the Sunday Mail. Francis Wong was also testing the ground at the UK Commission and having confidential discussions over lunch with UK Commission officials. By June they all became convinced by the British that constitutional rights were open to them and that they could assume power. The green light had been given.

They could out-left the PAP. In this way, they blundered into their conflict with the PAP.

The British have more experience in dealing with such delicate situations. Whatever embarrassment our exposure caused them, they have said absolutely nothing, and thereby saved themselves further embarrassment.

Let me retrace the main events from May this year. When we are defeated in Hong Lim we wanted to resign. We had lost because there was discontent over unemployment, lack of cheap housing, lack of social welfare benefits, strictness in immigration controls and the issue of citizenship papers. All these problems can only be solved if we have political certainty, stability and industrial expansion. Political certainty and stability will encourage investment and bring industrial expansion. With industrial expansion we can give the people jobs, cheap housing, more social welfare benefits, unemployment and T.B. allowances, etc. We can also allow freer immigration because there will be more jobs.

But these economic and social problems cannot be solved until we got merger and common market with the Federation. Merger will bring political certainty and stability. And common market will provide a bigger market for

manufactured goods, in other words, a wider economic base for expansion. Then we can begin to solve the people's dissatisfaction.

The Federation Government had all along been reluctant to agree on common market or on merger. They know that the P.A.P. Ministers are sincere Malayan nationalists and sincere in their desire to achieve independence through merger. But they feared that the P.A.P. was giving shelter to the Communists like Lim Chin Siong, and others - and they were not going to accommodate these countries.

We saw no resolution to our economic problems after the defeat in Hong Lim because then the Federation were not eager either for merger or common market. We wanted to resign and have fresh elections rather than carry on without a visible solution to our basic problems. There were cries of protest from the Communists and their supporters in the unions, cultural associations and other open front organisations. They did not want us to resign not because it would have been bad for Singapore, but because they feared that if we resigned they the Communists would suffer. They feared there might be no single political party who could win the elections and form the government. In such an event, a coalition would be formed which would eventually be manipulated by the British into an anti-Communist front and the Communist would be purged and

suppressed. So from all their quarters came the cry that the people were behind the P.A.P and that it was our duty to carry on.

You will remember my May Day speech at the Jalan Besar Stadium. I clearly explained that the government was not there just to be made use of by all and sundry, including the Communists. We were in office for the purpose of resolving the basic economic and social problems of the people. If we could not do this then it was our duty to resign.

But some time after the Hong Lim by-election, Lim and his friends became confident as a result of conversations with the UK Commission officials that if we resigned they the Communists could make a bid for power. So they planned to persuade a majority of the P.A.P. Assemblymen not to resign, but to carry on under new ministers with Dr. Lee Siew Choh as Prime Minister, and Dr. Sheng as Deputy Prime Minister. They still did not want to face general elections.

Instead they hoped to persuade at least 26 Assemblymen to carry on under the same P.A.P. symbol but with them the C.P. leading Dr. Lee and Dr. Sheng. They started working feverishly to try and win over as many Assemblymen as possible.

On June 2nd Lim issued a statement supporting the P.A.P. in the Anson by-election on condition that we agreed to demand the abolition of the Internal

Security Council in the 1963 Constitutional talks. This you will remember was exactly the line taken by the Plen. Lim pressed us for our stand.

On June 9th, Dr. Toh, Chairman of the P.A.P. announced that the Government would demand complete independence through merger with the Federation. Then on 12th June, in an angry statement they demanded the immediate release of the detainees, immediate implementation of the reunification of trade unions, granting of citizenship rights to anti-colonialists, i.e. to Communists and their supporters who have had their citizenship papers withheld, and more freedom of speech, press, and organisation for the advancement of the anti-colonial i.e. Communist struggle. All these demands were made only after we stated our stand on independence through merger in the 1963 Constitutional talks, and refused to support the Communist demand for the abolition of the Internal Security Council.

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Had we agreed to the Communist demand, then the course of history would have been completely different. There would have been no open conflict between the PAP and the Communists. But we would have agreed to a United Front on Communist terms, and for the advancement of the interests of the Communists and not for the advancement of the interests of the people.

Meanwhile, two Governors and one High Commissioner flew in from Borneo. The Tunku went to Brunei for a visit. Mr. MacMillan, the Prime Minister of Britain said that the Tunku's Malaysia plan was a striking proposal.

Lim and his friends got excited. They believed that we had come to some secret arrangement for merger and they would be in a fix.

The Plen must have thought that I had lied to him on May 11th when in answer to his question of whether merger was likely soon, I had said that it was not. That was May 11th and I then believed that earlier merger was not on the horizon. But the Tunku changed the whole perspective by his speech on May 27th to the Foreign Correspondents Association in Singapore when he for the first time mooted merger and Malaysia.

The Plen must have believed that I had concealed this from him and wanted to take the Communists by surprise. The thing they fear most is that security will be in the hands of a Pan-Malayan government which they will not be able to intimidate or control. Lim issued fierce statements and threatened us with dire consequences about the anger of the people at our selling-out Singapore to the Federation. At that time there was no agreement even on principle with the Federation government on merger. Lim knows however that whatever the

terms and conditions, if Singapore is merged with the Federation, security must be in the hands of the Central Government. He feared that he and his Communist supporters would be in trouble. So although there were no terms or conditions then agreed or known, he in a statement published in the press on 9th July, that they, Lim and his friends, "were clear that socialists must ensure that the principle upon which unification of the territories were to be brought about must advance the interests of Malayan socialism." What he meant was merger conditions must advance the interests of the Malayan communists. They are not concerned about the interests of the people.

In my next talk I shall explain this paradox, why the Communists prefer a British controlled Singapore without the Internal Security Council to a Singapore independent together with the rest of Malaya.

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