

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE
KUAN YEW, WITH MALAY JOURNALISTS AT THE STUDIO OF TV
SINGAPURA ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH AUGUST, 1965.

(TRANSLATION)

Question: Mr. Prime Minister, up to now, how many countries have
recognised the sovereign and independent State of Singapore?

Prime Minister: Before I reply ... please do not address me as "Tuan Perdana
Mentri", but just as usual: "Saudara Lee." It is not necessary
... I am not a Syed, like Syed Jaafar Albar. I am a common
man, a small man.

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I haven't gone to the office this morning. But until 8 o'clock
last evening, I think there were 12 countries,... I believe the
whole world .. except some countries. And perhaps
Indonesia, because Indonesia has said that she wants to wait
and see Republic of China's attitude.

Question: Saudara Lee. With regard to Singapore's new, independent status: will it be proclaimed as a new Republic State? Or what is its character?

Prime Minister: It should be a Republic. We do not have a Sultan, nor a Raja. Singapore does not have a Malay Raja, nor a Chinese Raja nor an Indian Raja. Although Inche Khir Johari has insinuated that PAP has a Raja: Rajaratnam: No, Singapore is for Singaporeans. No one is higher than the other. Every one is equal.

Question: Saudara Lee, with the separation of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia, that is two of three days before that, while it was being discussed, you suggested one way that could save Singapore from breaking away from Malaysia. Can you please explain here, what are the (ways) that crossed your mind at that time?

Prime Minister: What I suggested when I met the Tengku on Saturday, that is on the 7th, which was the first time I met the Tengku, I said, "Couldn't we loosen a bit the ties between the State and the

Central Government, at the same time also the component States of Malaysia?" What I am concerned is about you and me. Are you a Singapore citizen? (Pressmen answer "NO"). You and I are foreigners now according to the present Constitution. Ghazalie and I and all the citizens of Singapore are brothers. Inche Tan Siew Sin and I are now separate: he holds a Federation of Malaysia passport, I hold the State of Singapore passport. When I met the Tengku, I said that we should not be driven out like this. It should be loosened a little.

As Singapore looks after its interests and it is not always necessary that we should clash. It is not that we should clash over the field of administration but in the political field. I

suggested: let us -- between governments and between parties -- have a truce: We can agree not to clash. Don't publish in the Utusan every day articles that cause trouble.

And we will be silent without saying a single word. But what can be done? It has happened.

Question: Mr. Lee, according to news from London in the papers today, Britain may move its bases away from Singapore. What is your opinion on this matter?

Prime Minister: This story is from the newspapers; not from the British Government. If the British Government does this, not only Singapore will be destroyed by Indonesia, I think the Federation of Malaysia will also be crushed. We will altogether be crushed.

Question: Saudara Lee, this question is related to your reply just now. Commenting on the wish of Singapore to open up diplomatic relations with foreign countries, including Communist China and Indonesia, a day after that, on the very relations on condition Singapore cleanses itself of its foreign bases. What he meant here were the English. So what is your opinion on this?

Prime Minister: I have explained this before. Right, we get rid of British bases. For instance, for the sake of friendliness with Indonesia -- Dr. Subandrio shakes hands with me. Personally

Dr. Subandrio and I have never quarrelled or made acid remarks. But this concerns the security of millions of people: eleven million people in Singapore and in Malaysia. For instance, we get rid of these bases. We shake hands with soldiers -- it is not necessary to send 400,000 it is sufficient to send 40,000 -- Singapore would be finished. So before we talk of British bases, and other matters, before now, only then will I co-operate with Indonesia and conclude a friendship treaty -- but the assurance should be given first. Today British bases are closed, tomorrow 40,000 soldiers will enter. You remember how the Japanese came in? The year '42? Although I was a small boy at the time 17,18 years of age. All of you have watches, haven't you? Every one has a pen. I do not believe that the soldiers have ballpoints, pens or watches. You remember what the Japanese soldiers did? They said, "Kore-kore". They slapped, kicked, watches were lost, pens lost and they also seized houses.

Question: So, is there any possibility of trade relationship between Indonesian and Singapore?

Prime Minister: Don't say that. Why should not there be such a possibility? There must be. Saudara Subandrio... in this personal capacity; the last time I met him was in Bangkok, one or two weeks before Malalyasia was proclaimed when I returned from London. We have been friends long; from the year '59. In January,'60, I visited Indonesia and met President Sukarno. I befriended Sukarno and I respect him because he represents more than 100 million people and also his ability. I think no one in the whole world can influence his people like President Sukarno. His ability lies in his dynamic personality. We only have two million in Singapore and I do not have the ability to inject this spirit into the people. But I can give an example. Our neighbour's house has a big compund. We have a small house only; 214 square miles. How can we be compared with? This is a realistic attitude. Don't deceive the people of Singapore, and don't deceive yourself. If we deceive the people of Singapore, and then deceive the world, in the end we shall deceive ourselves and we will lose heavily.

Although our house is small, in our house, how we arrange the tables and the chairs, and the beds is our own affair. Not

our friends' or our neighbour's affairs. No one has the right to say that the bed should be moved over there, the chair should be moved over here. This is our house. Although it is small, It is our property. It is the right of the people of Singapore to manage Singapore as the people of Singapore want it to be. So if Indonesia, its Government, its leaders who are famous throughout the world, are willing, we surely can be friends as we have a little right in our own house. Why shouldn't we be friends?

Question: Saudara Lee, suppose Indonesia recognises Singapore, and after that sets up diplomatic relations, and later it surely will have commercial relations in Singapore, will the Government of Singapore impose conditions on the Indonesian

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Government?

Prime Minister: No. No. big country wants to be friend a small country where the small country imposes conditions.

Question: I said conditions because Indonesia and Malaysia are now at confrontation. So it is feared....

Prime Minister: But Indonesia and Singapore now are, as has been announced by Antara which published Dr. Subandrio's speech: that there is no confrontation of Singapore by Indonesia

Question: So, we are anxious as to how that relationship will affect the situation in Malaysia

Prime Minister: That is what I have explained in my interview in English. If Singapore is a big country and has sufficient water, sufficient men without any relationship with Malaysia, I think the confrontation of Malaysia by Indonesia would not affect us at all. But you know, should some one put poison in our pipeline, if Malaya is under a country which is our enemy, won't we suffer? or if they are not that mean, and do not put poison but just blow up the pipe line and then say that this was done by the communist guerillas, won't we be in trouble when we have to drink water drawn from the wells? So, in spite of everything, we must uphold Singapore's interests and part of that interest is its water in Johore. And if we want water as usual from Johore, we cannot destroy the source or water will be affected and we ourselves will suffer.

Question: Saudara Lee, coming back to the local situation, that is, when Singapore was in Malaysia and also before it achieved the status of self-government, Singapore had its own national language. So what is the position of the Malay language as now? Does Singapore still recognise the Malay language as the national language here?

Prime Minister: The Singapore Government does not alter its agreements every day. Before we talked of Malaysia, we had already announced in the year 1959 that the Malay language would be Singapore's national language. After that, Malaysia in 1963. Why should we alter it? It is the easiest language that can be understood by all: the Indians and also the Chinese, Eurasians, Ceylonese and Pakistanis. You enter a shop, go to market, travel by bus, what language do people use? The national language, isn't it? Although its grammar is a bit flexible. But slowly, in 10 years time if we implement our policy, our plans that are ready, I believe our people will be more fluent in Malay than the neighbouring states whose people are not that fluent now. But if you want non-Malays

to learn the national language, that is, the Malay language, we cannot get rid of their mother tongue. If you have read the Chinese newspapers, you will know that the question of language is being heatedly debated in Malaysia. Why? Not because the Chinese do not want to accept the Malay language. But when they accepted the national policy, the national schools, it became what they are is now. Confucian High School in Kuala Lumpur: accepts the grant-in-aid or support from the Government, must follow the Government conditions. So Confucian High School -- you know Confucius, the philosopher, whose books although more than a thousand years old even now have a meaning, deep meaning ... Now the Confucian High School accepts the policy or the national school plan. But there are some classes which do not accept such a policy, so the students have to pay school fees, perhaps as much as \$20/- because the Government does not want to support them. They are punished and they are told classes which do not accept the national plan or the National School system must be moved. They cannot be together in one building. In my opinion, it is now not my affair. But I am worried because should

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disorder prevail in the Federation of Malaysia, we will be in trouble. Many people will want to enter Singapore; where will we have the place? So I believe, if you want the non-Malays to learn the national language, let them at the same time learn their mother tongue. What is wrong with that? It is ridiculous if I were to speak in Malay with my children at home. Let us say I go to school and learn the national language. It does not mean that I am not loyal if I speak in my mother tongue to my children at home.

I don't believe. Several people who do not understand a single word of the Malay language, are loyal to Malaysia before the break of the separation. Many farmers in Jurong who caught Indonesian infiltrators do not understand Malay, but they are loyal to the country. Many people who cannot

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speak Malay gave information to the Government concerning the movements of the Chinese communists in the schools.

So we got rid of the communist influence in the Chinese middle schools. If the loyal students of Nanyang University did not give information to the Government, could we cleanse the Nanyang University? So, I hope - the Government of the Federation of Malaysia has nothing to do with me, it is not

fair for me to comment on what they are doing ... the people of Singapore understand that there should be one language. If all understand one language, all will understand at once if I speak in that language.

You know that two weeks ago, there was an M.P. from India, Mr. Annadurai, who was very fluent in Tamil. This language has existed in the world for thousands of years. Mr.

Annadurai is a poet; he writes poetry. When he went to the Jalan Besar Stadium -- he arrived in the evening -- Tamil-speaking people waited for him from 2 p.m. and they told me that it was a very hot day. I arrived there at 8.30 or 9. After I had spoken, I excused myself as I had much work to do.

The next day, Mr. Rajaratnam informed me that the rally

had ended at nearly 12 midnight. So, if we want to suppress Tamil, and say that it should not be studied, there will be big trouble. Do you want to study Tamil? Carry on. But if you want to work, we will ask: have you passed the national language? If you have not, it will be difficult for you. How could I speak to you otherwise? If anyone were to join my

Ministry and become a clerk, and he were to write in Tamil and I cannot read it, what is going to happen?

Question: Inche Lee, I would like to ask -- and it is fair that you should explain it a little -- it cannot be denied that the people of Singapore in general and the Malays in particular, were shocked by Singapore's separation from Malaysia. So, some of them felt anxious when this separation happened. I ask you to give an assurance in order to allay such anxiety among the Malays.

Prime Minister: The last time, I spoke in English because at that Press Conference, no reporter asked me any questions in the national language. The pledge given by the PAP is not for the purposes of getting votes. We will earnestly carry it out. I make this promise: this is not a Chinese country. Singapore is not a Chinese country nor a Malay country nor an Indian country. That is why we said before that a Malaysian Malaysia is not a Malay country; that was why I was not satisfied. This is not a Chinese country. And after this, in the

Chinese language I am going to say this is not a Chinese country. And my friendas are not people who have come from China - they are the sons of the soil.

Regarding my pledge: UMNO people have said that they want to do this and that. Tun Razak visited the Southern Islands, and said that I hindered his plans. After that, when I asked when I had done so, he said that he had been misinterpreted; it actually concerned Kelantan.

I feel sad. Why should we say such a thing? It will make the Malays feel anxious and worried.

What I have promised when we're part of Malaysia, we shall carry out now: such as housing, education and training.

Those of you who are here, how many have got Singapore citizenship besides Inche Ghazali?

I cannot be responsible for Malaysian citizenship now. But regarding Singapore citizenship, I made this promise: you will

be of equal status with me. And I promise you your special position.

The PAP Government is not seeking for votes only. We do our calculations for a long period of time, not for the immediate future. We calculate for 100 years, for 1,000 years. Gradually, we will cement the ties among all our citizens.

Now, I give this warning to extremists who make use of religious or other sentiments. I shall not arrest them under the Emergency Regulations or under the preservation of Public Security Ordinance. They will be brought to court. Evidence will be produced. Let the judge decide. Let the people know and understand in what way these people have sinned... have sinned against the citizens of Singapore.

Question: With regard to new elections in Singapore: If I am not mistaken, UMNO yesterday urged that the Singapore Government should hold fresh elections in Singapore. What is your opinion on this?

Prime Minister: I think the UMNO leaders in Singapore, the "big shots" like the Dato's, Syeds, should make use of their brains. If tomorrow there was a general election. .. We obtained 60% of the votes in Hong Lim, didn't we? If we have an election tomorrow, I think 75% of the electorate will support the Government.

If I were to follow this suggestion, it would be a big matter. There would be a loss, wouldn't it? Let the country be peaceful. .. and everyone understand that although this country now stands alone and is sovereign, it belongs to Singaporeans and not to the Malays, the Chinese, the Indians or others. When all it peaceful, let them, work hard. Come the 1968 General Election according to the Constitution, I do not have to break any law. .. But it is not necessary to speak in a boastful way.

I feel ashamed when I read the newspapers. They boasted they wanted to compete in the Hong Lim by election; that

candidates were chosen. When nomination day arrived, they turned tail.

Finally, I appeal to the Malays in Singapore: don't worry. Don't be anxious. The PAP Government will not alter its stand. I was the one who worked hard to get Singapore into Malaysia. And I did not want to get out of Malaysia. We were forced. Tengku informed me that if Singapore did not want to get out of Malaysia, there would be trouble. What could I do? But don't worry. I look after the interests of all the various communities in Malaysia. ... I am sorry

I am not used to it yet: I have always said "Malaysia"; now, it is difficult to say "Singapura".

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I say: have confidence. Anyone who is unjust -- be it

Government officers or people who think they can suppress the minority -- report to me. I shall take action. The

Singapore Government is impartial to all citizens: it does not discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, language or culture. And the special position of the Malays who are

backward in the field of education will be the same as before. We will improve their lot. What I have promised with regard to housing -- the subsidy of 20% for rent -- we will carry out. And I say to UNMO leaders, the "big shots", the Syeds and the Dato: if you want to have a meeting, go ahead. Work hard. Produce plans for improving the lot, the life of the Malays, and not arouse feeling.

Utusan Melayu says I am anti-Islam. When have I been anti-Islam? They said I am anti-Jawi. Because I am anti-Jawi, they said I am anti-Islam. It is a sin, you know, if trouble arises from it. When was I anti-Jawi? My son learns Jawi. Every day, he reads the newspapers and tells me what they scold me. But if it happens once again, they will go to court

... and answer....
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So I say: don't worry. We all unite, uphold our rights and the integrity of our country, Singapore.

11th AUGUST, 1965