

22 OCT 1986

86-MCI-7

Release No: 35/OCT
03-0/86/10/15

GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

The Minister has declared TIME magazine as a gazetted publication within the meaning of Section 18A(1) of the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act. The Order, issued in the Gazette today will take effect on 19 Oct 86.

In the issue dated 8 September*, 1986, TIME magazine published an article on Singapore which contained several important errors of fact. It was written by a correspondent who had specially flown in from Bangkok for a short visit to write it up.

On 3 September, James Fu, Press Secretary to the Prime Minister, wrote to TIME magazine requesting that they publish his correction of these errors.

On 24 September, James Fu sent a further note reminding them of this letter. A telex was also sent to William Stewart, TIME's Bureau Chief in Hongkong on 25 September, requesting him to publish the letter after he called James Fu.

(* It is the practice of TIME magazine to postdate the issue by about 6 days.)

On 30 Sep, James Fu received a letter dated 23 Sep from Joan Walsh of TIME magazine, New York, explaining why despite the errors, TIME magazine will not publish the letter. She also wrongly claimed that a government official had confirmed the accuracy of one of the errors pointed out.

On 2 October, James Fu wrote again to TIME.

On 3 October, Leah Gordon of TIME called the Singapore's Permanent Representative at the United Nations to negotiate the printing of James Fu's letter. She wanted to edit the letter before publication. She was asked to publish the letter unaltered. On 10 Oct, Leah Gordon submitted another edited letter. She was again requested to publish James Fu's letter unaltered.

Despite repeated requests, TIME have refused to publish James Fu's letter of correction in full and unaltered. In view of this, the Government is restricting TIME's circulation to 9,000 copies as from 19 October and to 2,000 copies as from 1 January 1987.

It is the practice of the foreign correspondents to give each other cover and support. Some of them believe that the regional journals which depend on Singapore for a high percentage of their circulation need help in putting the Singapore Government in its place. The amendment to the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act is to discourage foreign publications from biased reporting on Singapore. Persistent refusal to publish corrections is an example of bias. Since TIME sell only 18,000 copies in Singapore each week, i.e. 0.3 per cent of their total worldwide circulation, they believe they can afford to ignore a letter from Singapore to correct misreporting.

The publisher has been notified and advised to nominate a distributor of authorisation in accordance with Section 18 (A)(2) of the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act. The restricted copies will be marked. The marked copies will be made available in public and other libraries listed in the "Directory of Libraries in Singapore".

Attached are copies of letters by James Fu to TIME and TIME's replies.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

15 OCTOBER 1986

Enclosures: 8

B1/PR/Pgs.23-25



Telegraphic Address:-
"PRIMIN, SINGAPORE"

Telephone No. ~~367842~~ 3307115

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
SINGAPORE

Your reference:

Please quote:

3 Sep 86

The Editor
Time Magazine
Time-Life News Service
P O Box 884
GPO
Hongkong

Dear Sir

Your article on Singapore of September 8 contains errors of fact.

Judge Michael Khoo did not "dismiss all the charges except for a minor technicality". He convicted Mr Jeyaretnam on one charge of disposing of assets to defraud creditors, an offence under Section 421 of the Penal Code which carries a maximum sentence of two years jail. He was fined \$1,000.

Next, the Chief Justice did not "overturn Judge Khoo's ruling and sentenced Mr Jeyaretnam to three months in jail". He reversed Judge Khoo's acquittals on two charges of defrauding creditors, and fined Mr Jeyaretnam \$1,000 on each charge. In the same judgment, Chief Justice ordered a retrial by a different Judge of the charge against Mr Jeyaretnam of giving false evidence in a statutory declaration, an offence under Sections 193 and 199 of the Penal Code punishable up to 7 years jail.

At the retrial, a different Judge found Mr Jeyaretnam guilty and sentenced him to three months.

Further, the Singapore Government did not introduce any Constitutional amendment which would deny counsel for an MP cited for contempt. There was no need to. British Parliamentary practice, which Singapore follows, does not allow counsel for MPs cited in Parliament for contempt of Parliament.

I would be grateful if you could publish the above.

Yours faithfully

JAMES FU CHIAO SIAN
Press Secretary to PM



Telegraphic Address:-
"PRIMIN, SINGAPORE"
Telephone No. ~~3307115~~ 3307115

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
SINGAPORE

Your reference:
Please quote:

24 Sep 86

The Editor
Time Magazine
Time-Life News Service
1011 Prince's Building
Central, Hongkong

Dear Sir

I sent you a letter on 3 Sep 86 pointing out some errors of fact in your article on Singapore of September 8. It has not been published. Neither have I heard any response from you. Is it your Magazine's policy to let errors of fact go uncorrected? Don't you agree with me that they are errors?

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'F. C. Sian'.

JAMES FU CHIAO SIAN
Press Secretary to PM

Enc - photocopy of
letter dd 3.9.86

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

JOAN D. WALSH
EDITORIAL OFFICES

September 23, 1986

Dear Mr. Fu:

Thank you very much for your recent letter in response to our September 8 story, "Silencing the Dissenters." We appreciate being given the opportunity to discuss the points you raised.

It is our understanding that a bill was introduced in Parliament on August 25 that would deny the right to counsel for an MP cited for contempt. This information was confirmed before publication in TIME. The same facts were later reported in an article in the August 29, 1986 issue of The Straits Times which began: "Any person who is committed for contempt of Parliament will lose his right to be represented by a lawyer under changes to be made to the Constitution." TIME believes that articles in The Straits Times are normally reliable reflections of the government's views. An officer of the government press office confirmed the accuracy of TIME's report on this point.

Similarly, in the context of the complexities of this case, we felt it was not inaccurate to report the dismissal of all charges "except for a minor technicality" against J.B. Jeyaretnam. TIME chose this language in an attempt to place the conviction, which was part of a highly complicated legal proceeding, in context for TIME's readers. When Judge Khoo chose to convict Jeyaretnam of one of the charges, he fined him the equivalent of only 465.11 in U.S. dollars. We would suggest that if Judge Khoo had decided there had been a blatant violation of the statute, he would have chosen a more serious penalty. We have, however, noted your opposition to our usage.

On your final point, we accept your correction that we were in error when we directly linked Court Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin with Jeyaretnam's three month sentence. As you say, he ordered a retrial and a different judge imposed the sentence. We very much regret the error and have adjusted our story files.

We regret that we could not publish your letter, but we thank you again for taking the time to write. We value your interest in our reporting, and hope that we have addressed your criticism of our article. Should you wish to reply or raise any other points, please be assured that your letter will be given every consideration.

Sincerely,

Joan D. Walsh

Joan D. Walsh

Mr. James Fu Chiao Sian
Press Secretary to PM
Prime Minister's Office
2nd Floor, City Hall
St. Andrew's Road
Singapore 0817
Singapore
JDW:sf



Telegraphic Address:-
"PRIMIN, SINGAPORE"

Telephone No. ~~3307115~~ 3307115

Your reference:

Please quote:

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
SINGAPORE

2 Oct 86

Ms Joan D Walsh
Editorial Offices
Time Magazine
Time & Life Building
Rockefeller Center
New York 10020
USA

Dear Ms Walsh

Thank you for your letter of 23 Sep 86.

I still think you should publish my letter dated 3 Sep 86 though we may differ in opinion on whether or not your report of 8 Sep 86 is factual. You could publish your rebuttal to my letter if you so desire but not publishing my letter will only lead the Government to draw certain conclusions.

Yours faithfully

JAMES FU CHIAO SIAN
Press Secretary to PM

DATE: 3 OCT 86

NY/M/016/86 - FOR JAMES FU, PRESS SECRETARY TO PM
FROM PERM REP

Proposed Letter (edited by TIME)

Your article on J.B. Jeyaretnam [Sept. 8], who is a member of the opposition in Singapore's parliament, contains a errors and misinterpretations. Jeyaretnam and others in his party were prosecuted for alleged improper use of party funds and making false declarations. But contrary to what you reported, Judge Michael Khoo did not dismiss "all the charges except for a minor technicality." He convicted Jeyaretnam on the charge of disposing of assets to defraud creditors and fined him \$1,000 Singapore dollars (\$465 U.S. dollars). I do not consider that a minor technicality.

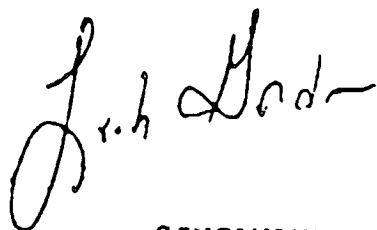
Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin did not overturn Judge Khoo's ruling and sentence Jeyaretnam to three months in jail, as you say. Instead, the Chief Justice reversed Judge Khoo's acquittals on two charges of defrauding creditors and fined Jeyaretnam \$1,000 Singapore dollars on each charge. In the same judgment the Chief Justice ordered a retrial by a different judge. The charge against Jeyaretnam in this case was for giving false evidence in a statutory declaration. At the retrial, the new judge found Jeyaretnam guilty and sentenced him to three months in jail.

Further, the Singapore Government did not introduce any constitutional amendment which would deny counsel for an MP cited for contempt. There was no need to., British Parliamentary practice, which Singapore follows does not allow counsel for MPs cited in Parliament for contempt of Parliament.

*James Fu Chiao Sian
Press Secretary to the Prime Minister
Government of Singapore
Singapore*

Dear Mr. Mahbubani: The last paragraph is in contention, as you will see from Mrs. Walsh's letter to Mr. Fu. Our statement regarding this matter was confirmed by an official of your government. I would like to discuss this matter further with you.

Sincerely,



SINGAWAKIL NEW YORK

Total: 1 pg

Telex: 421283 SGWU UI

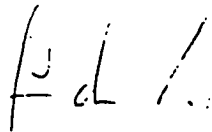
4 Oct 86

Mr Kishore Mahbubani
Singapore Permanent Representative
to the United Nations
New York

Please convey the following to Ms Leah Gordon:

" This has reference to your proposed letter sent to our Permanent Representative in New York. I do not see the need to have my letter altered. Please let me know whether or not you are going to publish it."

2 Kindly let us have the telex and telefax numbers of Time Magazine. Thank you.



JAMES FU CHIAO SIAN
Press Secretary to PM

cc PS (Foreign Affairs)
Attn: Mr Raymond H T Wong

October 10, 1986

Dear Mr. Fu:

If at all possible, TIME would like to run your letter in response to the article on Singapore opposition leader J. B. Jeyaretnam in our November 3rd issue going to press October 16. In order to correspond with our background research and reporting on the trial and to fit into the space we will be allotted, we have revised the letter as follows. We will not, however, run this letter without your approval.

Sincerely,



Nancy M. Chase
Reporter-Researcher
for

Leah Shanks Gordon
Administrative Editor

Mr. James Fu Ciao Sian
Press Secretary to the Prime Minister
Government of Singapore
2nd Floor, City Hall
St. Andrew's Road
Singapore

LETTERS: Singapore

Your article on Singapore opposition leader J. B. Jeyaretnam contains errors and misinterpretations (Sept. 8). Judge Michael Khoo did not dismiss all the charges against Jeyaretnam "except for a minor technicality." He did convict Jeyaretnam on one charge of disposing of assets to defraud creditors, and which carries a maximum sentence of two years in jail. The Chief Justice fined him \$1,000 (\$465 U.S.).

The Chief Justice did not overturn Judge Khoo's ruling and sentence Mr. Jeyaretnam to three months in jail. The Chief Justice reversed Judge Khoo's acquittals on two charges of defrauding creditors, and fined Mr. Jeyaretnam \$1,000 on each charge. In the same judgement, the Chief Justice ordered a retrial by a different Judge of the charge against Mr. Jeyaretnam of giving false evidence in a statutory declaration, an offence under Sections 193 and 199 of the Penal Code punishable up to 7 years jail.

At the retrial, a different Judge found Jeyaretnam guilty and sentenced him to three months.

James Fu Ciao Sian
Press Secretary to the Prime Minister
Government of Singapore



PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
SINGAPORE

Telegraphic Address:
"PRIMIN, SINGAPORE"

Telephone No. ~~3307115~~ 3307115
Tlx: RS22428, Telefax: 3307118

Your reference:

Please quote:

11 Oct 86

Ms Nancy M Chase
Reporter-Researcher
For Administrative Editor
Time Magazine
Time & Life Building
Rockefeller Center
New York 10020

Dear Ms Chase

Please refer to your letter dated 10 Oct 86 which you faxed to me.
I do not agree with your revised letter. I do not see why you cannot
publish my letter dated 3 Sep 86 unaltered.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'f. d. sian'.

JAMES FU CHIAO SIAN
Press Secretary to PM

7771-2



REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE
EXTRAORDINARY

Published by Authority

VOL. XXVIII] SINGAPORE, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1986 [NO. 68

No. 3545 — THE NEWSPAPER AND PRINTING PRESSES ACT 1974 (ACT 12 OF 1974).

ORDER UNDER SECTION 18A (1)

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 18A (1) of the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act 1974, the Minister for Communications and Information hereby declares TIME magazine to be a newspaper engaging in the domestic politics of Singapore.

This Order shall take effect from 19th October 1986.

Dated this 15th day of October 1986.

LAM CHUAN LEONG,
Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Communications and Information,
Singapore.

[MCI./INFO. 004/2; AG./SL./11/83]