SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETING ON 22ND FEBRUARY, 1961.

In my opening, Sir, I have indicated that what we want to do today is to add one more voice in the world forum, albeit we are not in the United Nations; because in a position of no total war, the voices of groups of people, of nations, of Governments, add to the sum total of world opinion, which finally decides big and burning issues which are settled by the gods on this earth in Mount Olympia where they meet from time to time, either in Geneva or in the United Nations. Not that we believe, of course, that we are not fully aware of the difficult problems which lie in the path of all those who seek freedom, liberty and a better life for their people. In Algeria, it has meant downright shooting and killing of the French until the last blow has been delivered and the French side says: "We have had enough. Let us stop." In the Congo, a different situation prevails.

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True, riots persuaded the Belgians to give over political and theoretical independence, hoping by their controls on the administration to maintain their economic and military position there. That blew up in their faces, and the position has collapsed. And because political independence has been granted, the Belgians are now guilty of a heinous crime in meddling in the affairs of the Congo, either directly through their administrators or their soldiers, or indirectly

by supporting people like Tshombe, Mobutu and, it has even been said, Kasavubu, either through arms or finance, and to make the arms prevail over the politicians. The Member for Cairnhill found himself in the same company. "Let us," he said on the Algerian issue, "likewise do the same in Singapore, i.e. fight for freedom, relentlessly, manfully, and courageously to the bitter end." The Member for Aljunied says, "Let us do so by calling a mass meeting." Let me explain first. If you say that independence for Singapore by itself is a must and a necessary step forward, then I say you must be prepared to pay the price. And whatever our shortcomings, we are prepared to pay the price of the things we seek. But it has been our proposition from the very beginning -- and I would welcome an opportunity in this House or in Hong Lim if the Member for Cairnhill would send his representative there, to debate the proposition that Singapore can and must be independent by itself.

All right-thinking people in their right minds must be against colonialism.

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But a lot of not right-thinking people were talking wrongly and out of their minds in the days gone by, the Progressives, the Labour Fronters and so on. We are talking of colonialism, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and I am talking in abstracto, no longer of Singapore as independent, which is a bigger issue: whether you have independence through merger with Malaya or whether you have independence for Singapore by itself. But I am aghast at the number of phoney would-be

martyr who all want to be like Mr. Lumumba when they know full well that they are in no danger of liquidation. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to see fierce men in fierce situations. Then I admire them. When there is a danger of annihilation and liquidation, and then fierce words are spoken. Not just stones are thrown, but grenades and mortars -- hand-made ones -- are thrown; and in return a big bomb from an aircraft which comes down, as they do in Algeria, and smacks you out. Then I say, "Brave men", and -- that is the burden I have now to discharge, Mr. Speaker, Sir. If I had only to round up what I said at the opening, then my task would have been a simple and, I hope, a graceful one. I had already made those two points which I thought would have rounded up the argument nicely. But the task I am now confronted with is to embark altogether on another theme, the anti-colonial crusade which is going on all over the whole world but which, in our circumstances, has to be interpreted in an intelligent and courageous manner. Courage means not just taking a stone and throwing it; but courage means, firstly, having the intelligence not to throw a bomb when you know it is going to break your own window; and secondly, saying you are not going to throw a bomb when you are in the midst of phoney fierce men. I say I know I am in no danger of being liquidated. Therefore, I require no courage to invite people to liquidate me, people whom I know have not the slightest intention of doing so. Let me remind the Member for Aljunied that we would have held more than just a protest rally if anybody in a detention camp had been liquidated like Mr.

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Lumumba. But we are dealing with different people, Mr. Speaker, Sir. These people are more intelligent and, in their own interests, they are playing the game in a different way. What I would like to welcome is a thoughtful exposition by the Member for Cairnhill, in his long and tortuous career, on how to meet the present difficulties which lie in the way of the aspirations of the people of Singapore towards freedom, a democratic way of life, and a better and more equal society. That is the issue.

There is only one point of material substance which the Member for Cairnhill has made, namely, that we should contribute $10,000 to the Congo Cheer Fund. Sir, let me straightaway say that I think it is a courageous thing for the Federation Government to have sent their troops to the Congo, and an even more courageous thing in the circumstances, in extremely perilous circumstances, to keep some 600 Federation troops in provinces where, I am told, some three or four battalions of well-armed and well-equipped Congolese officered by Belgians are confronting them. We would welcome an opportunity to give expression of some cheer to the Malayan contingent in the Congo. But let it never be suggested to this Government that we should boost up a colonialist newspaper which has been attacked by the Member for Thomson in what I thought was a mild, moderate and restrained tone, and which you felt was somewhat out of place in this motion. The Berita Harian Congo Cheer Fund, besides having the

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purpose of cheering up the troops in the Congo, has also to cheer up the people who read Berita Harian, and cheer up the owners of Berita Harian by putting up their sales. The Congo Cheer Fund by no stretch of the imagination can be said to be disinterested. We are prepared to cheer the troops in the Congo, and we will do so. But we are not prepared to cheer the owners of Berita Harian who happen to be the same owners of the Straits Times.

Now, Sir, may I just wind up by saying that this motion is nonetheless sound and deserves the full-hearted support of the whole of the people of Singapore, despite the very embarrassing fact that the Member for Cairnhill wholeheartedly agrees with it? Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Member for Cairnhill is in such a position that when he wholeheartedly agrees with anything, it becomes suspect! I would like to mention to the people of Singapore that, in spite of the fact that he agrees with it, it is a sound resolution in keeping with the proposal put forward by the three members of the Afro-Asian group in the Security Council, namely, Ceylon, the U.A.R. and Liberia. It is an attempt by countries which have not the wherewithal to influence, subvert or extract any benefit from the Congo, or any other State for that matter. It is a proposal put forward by countries whose only interest is peace and justice. Peace to be maintained by the Big Powers staying out of this and not turning the Congo into a hot war or a cold war arena. Justice by ensuring that those who have committed this crime should

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be brought to book, that a properly constituted government should be allowed to emerge from the Congolese Parliament, and that the wherewithal of an effective government should be granted to the people of the Congo through the assistance of the United Nations.

One last word on the United Nations, Sir. One of the most curious things about the ploy and play of propaganda in the Press and in the radio is an often informed and tremendously solid and firm conclusion on the basis of third or fourth-hand information reported in the Press. Therefore, the only basis on which people who have not got representatives in the Congo can work in the formulation and pronouncement of policy made by people in authority who have representatives there.

I will say this: that Mr. Dayal, the United Nations representative in the Congo (he happens to be an Indian, but he is the United Nations representative who represents the Secretary-General in the Congo) is a man of integrity, acknowledged all round. He has never been attacked by Mr. Khrushchev. He has never been attacked by the Americans, or even by the Belgians. Sir, he has never been attacked by any Afro-Asian powers. Presumably, we must conclude that he is a man of some considerable integrity. He has published reports from time to time and I think it is a pity that such reports have not been read more by

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Members of this Assembly, particularly if they have to make speeches on the matter. I hope through you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, such valuable material should be made available in the Library. What is clear is this. Mr. Nehru undoubtedly is well-informed, and whatever else he may or may not know, in his formulation of policy he has made clear that to abolish the Secretary-Generalship of the United Nations or to withdraw United Nations operations in the Congo must mean chaos, disaster and civil war; a civil war leading to international intervention on a big scale in the Congo. I know nothing about the Congo, Sir. All I know is Mr. Dayal's credentials and what Mr. Nehru has publicly said. I would say that Mr. Nehru is not a man likely to mislead other people, nor India. And the odds are that if he is prepared, on behalf of his Government and the nearly 400 million people of India, to commit them to what he thinks is right, despite what other countries are shouting and wishing to have happen in the Congo, then I say that is a point of view worth thinking about. I would like to see a great deal of evidence to the contrary before I discard that point of view on the ground that he has been ill-informed, or that it is erroneous or misguided. Sir, on the authority of the credentials of those people who have not been challenged by any side, I ask this Assembly, without a dissenting voice, to give approval to a resolution which is in the same terms and spirit as that presented by three small nations, with no Big Power interests in the Congo, or anywhere else in the world, and which is put

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forward for the sake of the peace of the world and the happiness of the small nations, as well as those of the big ones.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

FEBRUARY, 22, 1961.

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