

TRANSCRIPT OF THE BROADCAST ON AUGUST 13 AT 10.30 P.M.
OVER RADIO SINGAPORE -- BEING A SPEECH MADE BY THE
FINANCE MINISTER, DR. GOH KENG SWEE, ON JULY 26, BEFORE
THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON COLONIALISM,
AND A SUMMARY OF THE CASE OF THE SINGAPORE
GOVERNMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW,
DISPOSING OF POINTS MADE BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE 19 SINGAPORE ASSEMBLYMEN WHO APPEARED BEFORE
THE COMMITTEE EARLIER
IN THE MORNING OF THE SAME DAY.

I want to deal in some detail with the internal political situation in Singapore, particularly the developments in the last 12 months. I want to do this for two reasons. The first is a rather trivial one, in that one of the petitioners, Mr. Woodhull, has given his version of what happened with out State. My own opinion, and it is only my opinion, is that his version is lacking in objectivity. But there is a more important reason why some analysis of the internal political situation would be helpful to this Committee.

It is the view of the Singapore Government that the sole intention behind the memorandum submitted by the 19 petitioners is to involve the United Nations in the losing anti-merger struggle which they have been waging in Singapore over the last 12 months.

This petition is not a sudden or capricious move on the part of the petitioners. Behind it lies a record of a bitter political struggle that has been going on in Singapore during the last 12 months. It is the culmination of a fierce and prolonged political fight in Singapore. And the fight has been all the more bitter because the main contestants in it came from the same party, the People's Action Party, which is now holding office in Singapore. Members of the Committee may find it easier to understand the real issues and the pretensions of the petitioners if some factual background were given. It would then be apparent that the pretensions of this group of petitioners will not bear cross-examination.

But it will also be apparent that having failed in their fight in Singapore to prevent the merger and independence, they are trying to seek some consolation by bringing the issues into the international arena.

This Singapore Government is not obliged under the Constitution to carry out a Referendum as a preliminary to merger with the Federation of Malaya. Negotiations on the merger with the Government of the Federation of Malaya

took place in the latter half of 1961 and the agreed proposals had been embodied in Command Paper 33 of 1961. These proposals were adopted in the fully-elected Legislative Assembly of Singapore by 33 votes to none.

All the constitutional preliminaries had therefore been cleared. Why then did the Singapore Government decide to hold this Referendum and to pass the national Referendum law under which this Referendum is to be held? The reason lies in the internal political situation in Singapore over the last 12 months. Until negotiations commenced between the Governments of Singapore and the Federation of Malaya it had been the expressed wish of all political parties in Singapore and of all articulate public opinion that Singapore must merge with the Federation of Malaya.

But it is curious that until mid-1961, the Government of the Federation of Malaya was hesitant, if not hostile, to the policy of merger with Singapore. Until that time all sections of public opinion in Singapore supported the merger, if for no other reason than that of economic survival.

In May 1961, the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya, in an address to the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Southeast Asia, gave the first public intimation that his Government was prepared favourably to receive

the idea of merger with Singapore. He also mooted the idea of a larger federation of Singapore and Malaya and the three Borneo territories which were then and still are British colonies. This is the genesis of what has been termed the greater Malaysia plan. Under this proposal the four territories -- Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei -- all of whom are colonies of the United Kingdom Government, will achieve independence and nationhood through merger with the independent Federation of Malaya.

It would be reasonable to expect that a proposal such as this would be warmly acclaimed by all patriots and nationalists who wanted to see an end to colonial rule in that part of the world. Not only would the four colonies have achieved independence and come into a larger federation in a much shorter time than otherwise would be possible, but they would have emerged into a larger political and economic unit. The new nation would cover an area of 130,000 square miles with a population of 10-million. They would become a viable economic and political unit and, with their varied resources and hardworking population, it would be only a matter of time before rapidly rising standards of living would be achieved through appropriate measures of economic development.

However reasonable such expectations would appear to be, in the event they were not completely fulfilled. Instead, the greater Malaysia plan led to an immediate break in the Government and to dissension within our party. It is therefore significant to understand the reason for this political break, for it lies at the root of the matter at issue.

The People's Action Party was founded in November 1954. It encompassed all sections of the anti-colonial movement in Singapore. Its supporters included not only the broad spectrum of the middle-of-the-road nationalists and the left nationalists, but it also included a large section of the ultra-leftists, including those who had expressed open support and sympathy for the armed revolt that was being waged in the Federation of Malaya from 1948 onwards. This armed revolt in the Federation of Malaya continued on an increasing scale from 1948 to 1957, when the British were the supreme authority.

That revolt was then an anti-colonial fight, pure and simple and, as such, sustained its political support on a basis of anti-colonialism. But after the attainment of independence by the Federation of Malaya on August 31, 1957, the revolt continued, but it lost its main impetus as an anti-colonial fight. In fact, it became an anti-national revolt against the elected Government of the Federation, and as such, the popularly-elected Government was able to crush the revolt in less than three years.

The ideological and political sympathies between the former ultra-leftist element in the People's Action Party and the armed rebellion in the Federation is an important point to remember. Its significance lies in that after the merger a new Government of Malaysia would have full authority in Singapore, other than in matters reserved as local, State autonomous powers, such as labour, education, health and social welfare. It is therefore easy to see that a section of the anti-colonial movement in Singapore opposed independence through merger and preferred the status quo of a semi-colony because the Malayan Government, representing 11 out of 15 States in Malaysia, would have a decisive influence in the future government of Malaysia. They therefore feared that the Government, whom they derided openly as feudalistic and reactionary, would deal with them as expeditiously as they had crushed the armed revolt on the mainland.

Now, by a curious twist of fortune, one of the Government Assemblymen died in April 1961, and a by-election ensued. It was in the course of this by-election that the two groups in the People's Action Party, the left-wing nationalists and the ultra-leftists, parted company. In this by-election, the nationalists in the PAP maintained their firm purpose of achieving the independence of Singapore through a merger with the Federation of Malaya. The ultra-leftists, on the other hand, were thrown to utter confusion at the prospect of early independence through merger. In the succeeding few months, they took

conflicting and inconsistent stands on the issue of independence through merger. At the start of the by-election, when merger and Malaysia were uppermost in everybody's mind, they stated that they would support the PAP candidate provided we dropped our demand for complete independence through merger. They stated that the Singapore Government should negotiate with the British Colonial Office in 1963 for the continuation of Singapore as a British colony, as the next stage in its political evolution. This statement was made public and published in the Straits Times of June 3, and some extracts from this statement will be most revealing to members of this Committee.

The statement declared their belief that the PAP, as the left-wing anti-colonial party in power, would become the main active force fighting for the realization of a genuinely full internal self-government in Singapore. May I draw your attention to the words, "genuine internal self-government"; not

independence for Singapore. It went on to say:

"What we" -- that is, the ultra-left -- "are clamouring for this time is a genuinely full internal self-government. All sections of the present Constitution which run counter to the rights of full self-government must be revoked forthwith. A popularly-elected government must exercise all rights over matters of internal security. The Internal Security Council must

be abolished. We are confident that the fight for genuinely full internal self-government should and would certainly receive the support of all sections of the people and of patriotic and progressive forces. Provided the people remain united in their common fight, we are sure of victory at the constitutional talks. A genuinely self-governing Singapore will come to be.”

So the ultra-leftists, who have always deplored what they consider to be the soft policies of the left-wing nationalists, were and are still opposed to Singapore’s freedom through merger. They did not want us to discuss merger terms with the independent Government of the Federation of Malaya. They wanted us to re-open talks in 1963 with the British Colonial Office and discuss terms whereby Singapore would still remain a semi-colony.

The result of this was that the ultra-leftist movement in Singapore revealed its true colours as an anti-national and anti-freedom movement. When this accusation was levelled at them, then, with complete justification, they found themselves in an untenable position. They tried to escape from this in three ways. First, they mounted an attack against the PAP at the organizational level. They persuaded some members to defect. They also pressured the 13 Assemblymen to cross the floor in opposition, and these 13 Assemblymen --

petitioners one to 13 -- were elected on the PAP ticket in 1959 and joined the anti-national movement.

Secondly, they tried to bring the downfall of the Government both by their actions in the Assembly -- such as the defection of the 13 Assemblymen -- and by their actions outside the Assembly. They attempted to mount public unrest in various Government and semi-Government agencies, as well as among certain trade unions. In all these attempts they failed.

But a third and most important consequence for them was a change in their direct and open anti-merger political line. The anti-national left had always posed as the fiercest anti-colonial fighters. After the break with the party, they not only sought to destroy the party by organizational means and to bring down the Government by mounting public unrest, but they also tried to capture power by entering into some secret arrangements with the British High Commissioner in Singapore. Unfortunately for them, all these manoeuvres came to nothing. The revelations of the anti-national stand caused them to think up a new political line, and in this new line they denied that they were ever against merger. They said that the claim for internal self-government was merely a temporary and minimum demand, that the genuine wish was for full and complete merger with the Federation of Malaya as a constituency like Penang or Malacca.

The Committee has heard the petitioners this morning denying that alternative delegates would be presented for the choice of the electorate in the coming Referendum representing their policy. But quotations from the major policy statements which they made in 1961 are in direct contradiction to what they have said in this Committee. I quote from the Straits Times of August 30, 1961, page 18:

“The way for real unification falls in one of two directions: one, an immediate, full and complete merger, with Singapore joining the Federation as a constituent State like Penang or Malacca; two, an autonomous unit within a confederation, with the Borneo territories coming in when possible.”

This switch in the political line has been embodied not only in public statements, over the Radio and in the Press, but also clearly stated in the Singapore Legislative Assembly. I should like to confirm this by further quotations from what the Chairman of the Party said. On September 25, 1961, he said:

“We come out with our stand straightforward, once and all the time the same, namely, we are asking for full and complete merger with the

Federation, with Singapore coming in as the twelfth State of the Federation. Only then can you call it merger.”

This was said in a Radio discussion.

Again, in two letters to the leader of the Assembly, dated respectively September 1 and 11, 1961, he reiterated his position. In the second letter he even welcomed the Government’s willingness to consider complete merger. He wrote:

“We note with some satisfaction the proposal for the constitutional future. The PAP Government has shifted its stand and is now prepared to put complete merger as an alternative to his own proposal.”

Thus, until about September or October 1961, their political line was for complete and full merger with the Federation of Malaya. They made these remarks because they believed that the Federation Government was unwilling to accept Singapore on terms of complete equality with any of the 11 States constituting the Federation. But later they discovered that, under the Citizenship Law for the Federation of Malaya, large numbers of Singapore citizens might find it difficult to qualify for franchise rights. More than half of Singapore’s

electorate are immigrants and were born outside the territory and, consequently, full and complete merger on the basis of equality with any of the 11 States may be unacceptable to Singapore citizens who were not born there. The fact that they realised that they had made this mistake is beyond dispute. It is on the official records, both in the typed script and the recording tape, that Mr. David Marshall and Mr. Ong Eng Guan – petitioners. 17 and 14 -- reproved the Barisan Sosialis for this mistake in the course of a Radio Forum broadcast by Radio Singapore in June 1962. Mr. Marshall said that they -- that is, the Barisan Sosialis -- used Penang and Malacca because there were no citizens of Malaya in Malacca. They admitted their mistake and withdrew it.

Then Barisan Sosialis produced further provisions and conditions to their original proposal. They wanted Singapore citizens to convert automatically to Federal citizens. This demand was made in the full knowledge that it would be unacceptable to the Federation Government, for by then the Command Paper 33 and the exchange of letters between the two Prime Ministers had already been made public.

The anti-national left then began in Singapore a sustained campaign against merger with the Federation of Malaya. Their main line of attack was that under Command Paper 33 Singapore citizens would be relegated to second-class

status. We have already agreed with the Federal government that all Singapore citizens will retain all the present rights, including the rights of franchise. The Singapore citizens can be elected not only to the State Legislature but, after merger, to the Central Parliament. But because the first generation of immigrants to Singapore were granted citizenship on easier terms than in the Federation, two conditions were agreed to between the two governments. The first is that Singapore citizens will vote only in Singapore, both for the State and the Central Legislatures, in the same way that Federation citizens will exercise their franchise right in the Federation. Secondly, because Singapore citizens enjoy certain local autonomous powers which the other 11 States do not enjoy, representation in the Central Parliament will be reduced accordingly.

The political agitation mounted by the Barisan Sosialis at the ground level was not only scurrilous in the extreme, but dangerous to the racial harmony of which Singapore was justly proud. The majority of Singapore's population, about 70 per cent, is Chinese, a thrifty and hard-working people. To dissuade the Chinese from agreeing to merger in any form, their propaganda, through word of mouth at the ground level, represented merger to the Chinese as domination over them. And so the anti-nationalist left, which has always fancied itself to be skilful in dialectics in terms of class struggle and class contradictions, has been reduced to blatant racist propaganda in a desperate attempt to frustrate merger. In

these circumstances, for the Government to merge without giving the people an opportunity to reflect upon the possible alternatives that are open to them would be a great error. Large sections of the people might be persuaded, after merger, into the belief that they had missed something by not having complete and unconditional merger.

The purpose of holding this Referendum is to present possible alternatives to the people for their choice. The issue before the country is not whether or not Singapore wants merger; the issue is what form of merger it should be. That is why the Government has decided to hold a Referendum in Singapore to find out the desire of the people as to the mode and manner of the merger. The anti-nationalist elements in Singapore see in this Referendum their last opportunity to frustrate Singapore's independence through merger. Their stand now is that the three alternatives proposed in the Referendum are unacceptable, although their own proposal of complete and unconditional merger is the second alternative.

They now argue that the electorate should be given the choice to reject any or all three alternatives, including their own choice.

The Referendum Bill was introduced by the Government in January 1962. On the insistence of the Opposition, the Government agreed to refer the question to a Select Committee of the Assembly. In the Select Committee, the views of

the public, including those of the trade unions and associations sympathetic to the anti-national left, were received and considered. The Select Committee reported to the Assembly on June 28, 1962. Discussions on the clauses of the Bill went on for nine days, with sittings continuing each night until midnight. On July 12, the Singapore National Referendum Bill received its third reading in the State Assembly. Three further days and nights were spent on the wording of the questions to be included in the Referendum. The objection of the anti-nationalist left to the proposed Referendum rests on two major points. First, they claim that the alternatives set out in the Referendum are unacceptable. These arguments of theirs have been completely disposed of by the Prime Minister. Their second objection is on the issue of blank votes. They claim that the provisions on blank votes are objectionable. Ordinarily, blank or spoiled votes amount to a very small proportion of votes cast in by-elections or in general elections in Singapore amount to no more than 0.01 per cent, or one vote in 10,000.

The original Referendum Bill introduced in the Assembly in January 1962 contained no provision for blank votes. It was after the Opposition introduced an amendment in February 1962, to make it legal for persons to destroy or deface ballot papers, that the Government considered it necessary to take special measures to prevent the anti-nationalist left from wrecking the democratic processes of the Referendum.. Further, the petitioning Opposition members in the Assembly moved another amendment to the original bill, whereby blank votes

would be counted in their favour as against merger. Their proposal was that Command Paper 33 should be put to the Referendum for acceptance or rejection, and that the referendum would not be carried unless 51 per cent of the total votes cast supported merger, that is to say, unless the result showed a 51 per cent affirmative answer. In effect, that would have meant that blank votes would have counted, together with negative votes, as being against merger.

The provisions in the Referendum Ordinance are designed to give the anti-nationalist left the minimum of inducement to confuse people in a Referendum campaign into casting blank votes. The expectation of the Government that the anti-nationalist left would campaign for people to cast blank votes was confirmed last week, when the parties involved in the petitioning opposition on July 15 publicly stated that they will ask people to cast blank votes.

In these circumstances, the Government of Singapore makes no apology for the provision in the Referendum Ordinance whereby blank votes are considered to indicate a state of uncertainty on the part of the electorate, and, therefore, in such circumstances the vote must be considered as acceptance of what the elected representatives in the Assembly have decided on the issue of merger.

Mr. LEE KUAN YEW:

Before I briefly summarise the case of the Singapore Government, I should like to dispose of certain points that were made by the petitioners this morning, points which were not conveniently taken in the presentation of the comment on the memorandum.

First, it was suggested by Dr. Lee Siew Choh, the petitioner who spoke first this morning, that this operation to which they objected would transfer sovereignty from the United Kingdom to the Federation of Malaya. This is factually and legally an inaccuracy. Sovereignty over Singapore and the Borneo territories, which now rest with the United Kingdom Government, will be transferred to the Government of the Federation of Malaysia, a Government which will come into being when the first Parliament of the Federation of Malaysia is convened with representatives of the 11 States of the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak.

Next, they claim that 15 was an inadequate representation in the centre. In the last two months we have had Radio discussions and forums broadcast over Radio Singapore of the principal participants in the political scene. I have it on the record that the petitioner, Mr. David Marshall, who will appear on Monday, has admitted in the forum in June of this year before an audience of students of the University of Singapore, that he would consider 15 acceptable. Further, that he considered the non-transferability of the vote -- Singapore citizens being kept in Singapore voting only in Singapore, and Federation citizens only in the Federation -- as "although" in his own words "regrettable, nevertheless it could be accepted in the circumstances."

I therefore cannot agree with the petitioner this morning, Dr. Lee Siew Choh, who said that he had two objections to the proposals for merger under Alternative 'A', under the White Paper arrangement, because he said that first there was no full integration and second there was no common citizenship. Full integration was what we had all hoped should be the case. But after 17 years of separation, since 1945, it is not a political possibility now to reduce Singapore and its Legislative Chamber to the same status of that of the other 11 States in the Federation. It has become too large a city state to be so disposed of. For that reason we are confident that given the choice of Alternative 'A' of the White Paper, integration with large powers of local autonomy, putting Singapore in the position of a Northern Ireland to the United Kingdom, and Alternative 'B',

complete and unconditional integration, as one of the 11 States, the people would choose Alternative 'A'. The petitioners know that and hope to avoid the public rebuke that will be administered to them in this Referendum, by asking the people to cast a blank ballot. They know that in the ultimate choice of whether the people would like Singapore to go in as one of the States or to go in with large powers of local autonomy, they would choose Alternative 'A'.

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I cannot agree with the proposition that the Referendum Bill will deny the people the opportunity of expressing their will in respect of Singapore's constitutional future. In the course of the last 17 years since 1945, no one has ever suggested that Singapore should be independent by itself. It is a political, economic and geographical absurdity. The only person who has suggested that Singapore might find separate independence, is Mr. David Marshall, the petitioner who will appear on Monday. But he is also the petitioner, you will recall, Mr. Chairman, who brought out that copy of his party's platform and said proudly that he had always wanted merger as an equal state in the Federation. However, from time to time, he has these aberrations, and one of his aberrations is to reduce Singapore to a state of apoplectic paralysis when he suggested that we should be independent, guaranteed by the United Nations, and such guarantee should be underwritten by the United Nations moving its headquarters to Singapore. I have not heard this proposal endorsed by anybody else. The very fact that Mr. Marshall has never repeated it, has not been encouraged to reopen this, is an indication of the realization from all sides that we are part of one entity.

It was the perfidy of the British in their desire to hold on to a military base at the tip of the Malayan Peninsula, which would give them a command of the whole area, that decided them on this cruel political amputation, one which the

logic of geography, economics and military necessity compels them now to withdraw from. Unlike the Portuguese, the French and the Dutch, the British are the people who most gracefully withdraw from an already untenable position. For that reason I have not had difficulty in the midst of my negotiations with the Federation Prime Minister in getting the British to agree that on our agreement with the Federation of Malaya Government, sovereignty over these bases and over the whole island will pass into the hands of the Parliament and the Government of the new Federation of Malaya.

Since nobody denies that we must be together, then I say that there is no denial of an expression of free will in asking the people to choose the form of the merger they like: Alternative 'A' -- what we have agreed with local autonomy; Alternative 'B' -- complete and unconditional, as a State; Alternative 'C' -- on terms no less favourable than that of the Borneo territories, terms which will be published.

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My last point on the same subject is that we have already a complete mandate to carry out this merger without a reference back to the people. It is ridiculous to suggest that there is a denial of the free expression of their will.

Two minor points. Some play was made about the penalties for tearing or defacing ballot papers. That is a provision which has always existed in our election laws for the last 10 years. It is a provision which was imported from the pattern of legislation in Great Britain itself. No one can tear or deface a ballot paper. But the Opposition attempted to make it lawful to tear and deface ballot papers as a means of perverting a democratic process, by which they would be found out, by which their lie would be nailed.

As for compulsory voting and the penalties, I have mentioned in my written reply that there has always been compulsory voting in Singapore. It is nothing new. The penalty for not voting is US \$1.75 to restore one's name on the electoral register. But if one were to read the memorandum of the 19 petitioners, the innuendo is that one is liable to the most severe and abhorrent penalties. However, they say they seek only an honest Referendum. And this is what they will get. They asked from this United Nations Committee an observer to go to Singapore. The purpose and the function of the observer they have not defined, but obviously they have admitted this morning that his duty is not to define the issues to be posed. That is a matter for the internal Government of Singapore to decide and an internal matter for the Singapore people. What, therefore, is the function that the observer can fulfil? To report on fraudulent practices and irregularities, murder, arson, in the course of the Referendum? We

have made no such accusation, and I should therefore like to ask the representative here to bear this in mind. All they have sought from this Committee is the presence of an observer from your Committee who may deter major active perfidy being perpetrated against our people. The presence of an observer, in that case, for the Singapore Government can be summed up as follows:

(1) The Singapore Government is one that has been properly elected in the general election with universal franchise, with a mandate up to August 1964. It has complete authority in the State of Singapore except in matters of defence, external affairs and internal security.

(2) The merger of Singapore into a larger political entity of the

Federation of Malaysia is an inevitable historical development, and the formation of the Federation of Malaysia, comprising the

Federation of Malaya, Singapore and the three Borneo territories of Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo follows the logical sequence of events in the liquidation of colonialism in that part of the world.

The Federation of Malaysia will be the successor State to the former

British territories which were up to 1945 directed and governed from Singapore.

- (3) In mid-1961, when the merger of Singapore into a larger entity became not only practical but imminent, a section of the Government party, the People's Action Party, broke away to join the anti-national left movement. Their reasons for doing so are apparent to everyone in Malaysia, namely, they wish to avoid being conscribed and contrained by the Central Government of the Federation of Malaysia which would be no longer tainted as the present Singapore Government is of being in a state of semi-tutelage. The first thought, the first move of the anti-national left was to oppose merger on Malaysian any terms and to press for the retention of Singapore's colonial status, with the proviso that internal security should no longer be controlled by the Internal Security Council, in other words, that it should not be controlled by the deciding vote of the Federation of Malaya Government.

- (4) When they found this political line untenable because they were forced into isolation from the broad anti-colonial nationalist movement, they switched their political line and claimed that they

wanted more merger than what the Singapore Government had offered in Command Paper 33 of 1961. They wanted complete and unconditional merger.

- (5) They subsequently discovered that complete and unconditional merger would be unacceptable to the majority of the people of Singapore because more than half of the citizens of Singapore were not born in Singapore. They then added the condition that their claim for complete and unconditional merger should be for complete and conditional merger, and the condition is automatic conversion of Singapore citizens into Federation citizens. This was done in the full knowledge and after publication of the exchange of letters of November 11 and 13 between myself and the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya in which he categorically stated that such a condition was unacceptable to his Government.

- (6) Because of the campaign of misrepresentation which the anti-national left had launched in Singapore, the Singapore Government has decided to hold a Referendum which it is not obliged to do under the law of the Constitution, to decide which of the alternative

possible forms of merger the electorate would wish to have. It was because there was no constitutional requirement for a plebiscite or a referendum that a special Referendum Bill had to be introduced in the Singapore Legislative Assembly and was debated at considerable length and discussed publicly over the Singapore Radio.

- (7) The questions to be submitted in the Referendum -- perhaps the issues to be submitted in the Referendum -- more accurately describe the three alternatives, and this was also debated and approved by the Assembly. The three alternatives to be proposed in the Referendum represent: (a) What the Singapore Government had negotiated with the Federation Government; (b) complete and unconditional merger as proposed by the petitioning Opposition; (c) equality with any of the Borneo States on terms no less favourable, proposed by another section of the Opposition which is not with the petitioning Opposition.

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- (8) The attempt of the national left to wreck the Referendum was foreseen by the Government and some adequate safeguards have been introduced in the Referendum Ordinance to prevent the wrecking of the democratic processes of this Referendum.
- (9) The objection of the petitioning Opposition on citizenship is without substance. Complete equality of status between Singapore citizens and those of the Federation who will both become Federation nationals will be written into and guaranteed by the Constitution.
- (10) The anti-national left, having failed in their attempts to oppose merger and subvert the National Referendum, have now submitted a petition to the United Nations Committee over an internal issue in the hope that somehow, first, they can boost the morale of their followers after their internal defeat in Singapore through international intervention of some sort and secondly, to prolong and delay the inevitable reunification.

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(11) The supreme humiliation of the petitioners came last week when they went cap in hand to the Office of the British High Commissioner in Singapore to petition the United Kingdom Government not to transfer sovereignty over Singapore to the Government of an independent Federation of Malaysia. They do not allege that the coming Referendum will be carried out other than in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance. They do not, for instance, express any fear that the Government will resort to illegal and unfair manipulations. Our general elections and by-elections have been conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner, and there have never been any instances of kidnapping, murder, violence or any of the other forms of irregular conduct which are not altogether unknown in some parts of the world. The coming Referendum will be conducted scrupulously and in accordance with the law; and the petitioning Opposition has never questioned this.

What then can an observer from the United Nations Committee of 17 do?

I suggest that by this move they have demonstrated that their case is weak, hollow and empty. If they request an observer and if an observer were granted, he could do no more than observe and eventually he must report that the Referendum was carried out strictly in accordance with the laws. What is the

purpose of this request? I repeat: it is that they are now so thoroughly demoralized at their defeats in Singapore and at their repeated failures in their attempts to unseat the Government through various anti-democratic campaigns that they have waged in the last 12 months. If the United Nations were to take notice of this petition, that would of course boost their sagging morale, for this means that an international organization would have been dragged in on their side in an internal inter-party quarrel waged between the Government party of Singapore and the anti-national left, the elements which deserted the governing party because they feared independence for Singapore through a merger in the Federation of Malaysia.

It is my understanding that appeals are made to this United Nations Committee by colonial subjects who desire freedom and who fight for freedom but who are denied that freedom by a colonial power. If my understanding is correct then this petition before the Committee must stand unique in the annals of this Committee, as it comes from a group of politicians in Singapore who do not want to see the country free and independent. Their sole purpose in fighting merger in Malaysia is to retain Singapore's semi-colonial status for political reasons of their own. This is the paradox on which these persons have claimed the assistance of an observer from the United Nations Committee of 17 and this is the position in which they find themselves today through their own follies.

MR. SONN (Cambodia) (interpretation from French):

I should like to raise some questions about the representative character of the population of Singapore. First, the Legislative Assembly was elected according to universal suffrage. What does this legislation consist of?

MR. LEE KUAN YEW:

In 1957, the present Constitution, which grants Singapore internal self-government in all matters other than internal security, which comes under the surveillance of an Internal Security Council, at the same time provided for adult suffrage of all Singapore citizens on the basis of 51 constituencies, each constituency having on the average 12,000 voters. In the year 1957, after this agreement was arrived at in London, in preparation for the elections in 1959, the Singapore Citizenship Ordinance was passed, allowing the 340,000 non-Singapore born persons to register as Singapore citizens. At that time the total number was probably not 340,000 because some registered subsequent to the elections in June 1959, but around 300,000 registered before that. Therefore, the elections can be said to have been held on universal suffrage of all adults who were either born in Singapore or who had resided there for a period of two years,

in the case of India and some other Commonwealth countries or eight out of 10 years in the case of China, Indonesia, and other non-Commonwealth countries.

MR. SONN (Cambodia) (interpretation from French):

My second question relates to the Legislative Assembly. Is the party which has the majority the party that provides the Prime Minister?

MR. LEE KUAN YEW:

In accordance with the pattern of all former British possessions on the road to self-government, legislation was introduced to enable a majority party to govern in the form of a cabinet. The person who commands the majority of the House of 51 forms the government as Prime Minister. He is primus inter pares among a number of persons, as the ministers in the cabinet. In June 1959, I was invited by the last Governor of Singapore, as one of the leaders of the People's Action Party, the party that won the elections, to form the Government, which I did; I have remained in office since then. In the last attempt by the petitioning Opposition to unseat my Government they were only able to master 16 votes.

MR. SONN (Cambodia) (interpretation from French):

We have spoken of minority government. Some indications were given a while ago by the Prime Minister concerning the composition of the Legislative Assembly. Can this change the legal Government of Singapore?

MR. LEE KUAN YEW:

No Sir. As long as the Government is not defeated on a motion of confidence, the Government continues. And I have every reason to believe that my Government will continue until after merger and Malaysia. There are large sections in the House, both on my side and on the Opposition's side, that want to see merger and Malaysia too.

THE CHAIRMAN:

National Archives of Singapore

Since it would seem no other member desires to put questions to the petitioners at this stage, and in view of the lateness of the hour, I should like to say on behalf of the Committee that we are deeply appreciative for the appearance of the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister before this Committee in order to give information on the situation obtaining in Singapore. I wish to thank the distinguished Prime Minister for the able and very serene manner in which he has presented his case, and similarly I wish to thank the distinguished Minister for Finance.

I shall now ask them to withdraw and assure them that should they wish to appear once again before this Committee they will be welcome to do so.

MR. LEE KUAN YEW:

Mr. Chairman, may I express the gratitude of my colleague and myself for the patience with which we have been heard and for the courtesy which has been extended to us. We are most grateful for all of this.

News Division,

Ministry of Culture.

August 13, 1962.