TRANSCRIPT OF PM's SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF SERANGOON GARDEN SECONDARY TECHNICAL INTEGRATED SCHOOL ON SATURDAY, 18TH JULY, 1964.

Mr. Principal, Ladies and Gentlemen, Students of the Serangoon Garden Technical Integrated School:

It gives me particular pleasure to come this evening to perform the opening ceremony, because to me, Serangoon Gardens and this school represent the kind of Singapore we would like to have more of. If we can get more such schools to succeed, we get Jurong and our industrial programme to flourish, then we will have more beautiful housing estates like Serangoon Gardens -- better, bigger, more affluent.

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I'm reasonably confident that there is sufficient impetus, sufficient momentum to keep out industrialisation and our social and education programmes going over the next five years. There is a momentum in these things, and the speed that we have gathered over the last five years will carry us through.

But, as you can see in the newspapers, new problems have arisen. But that is in the nature of life, you know. We have just finished the Communists three years ago, you wouldn't imagine that one could do a reorganisation of Nanyang University with so much peace and tranquillity, and public understanding. There would have been real riots, real trouble and it's not the force of authority that prevented a riot. It was the absence of anger, an abiding understanding that this was inimical to our society, and must be put right. And Chinese education and culture cannot be exploited for Communist ends. Hence, the tranquillity with which the reorganisation have gone through.

But just as we put down the Chinese chauvinists using Chinese sentiments for Communist ends, now we have rearing on the other side, the Malay chauvinists playing on Malay sentiments for equally dangerous ends. I say we must be prepared to fight both extremes, or Malaysia will perish.

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You know, the Constitution of Malaysia, the concept: it was conceived as a Malaysian nation, not as a Malay nation. I say this to bring home the point that although in the Constitution there are safeguards for Federation Malays, special rights for Federation Malays, all the basics articles of the Constitution underlined the fact that there will be no discrimination according to race, religion, sect, class or other divisional attributes. That is basic.

The point I'd like to make is, that whilst we conceive, even in Singapore, without any special rights in the Constitution to Malays, with just a general clause reminding the government of the obligations to the special position to the Malays as the indigenous population of Singapore, we are prepared to go out of our way to correct the imbalance in the development of our society. As I was saying just now in Chinese, today, when I came in the I was talking to Mr. Rahim Ishak, the Parliamentary Secretary, I said, "Are there Malays in this hall?". He said, "No probably none". And he is right, because I only see a few Malay faces.

When I went round Serangoon Gardens last year, on my tour of this constituency, the Malays were only not in the main estate, but in the kampong near an English school here. I don't believe it's not because they don't want to live in the estate. It's just that they are not earning the incomes. They haven't got the educational and professional qualifications that give them this better life. Therefore, we must be prepared to go out of our way to redress this imbalance. Otherwise, there will always be severe stresses and strains in our society.

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But that having been said, I think we make it clear and the sooner we make it clear the better it is understood before this thing drifts too far: that whilst

we are prepared to do everything right, proper, just, we cannot be brow-beaten and intimidated. What has been conceived as a multi-racial society in a harmonious nation, must not be abandoned.

Today, one UMNO official, I don't know why sometimes the English newspapers don't carry this -- I think they ought to, because we must know what people are thinking and saying publicly. It's reported in the Malay press. It's not reported in the Chinese press; it's not reported in the English press. The UMNO Secretary-General landed in Kuala Lumpur Airport and said, "If Mr. Lee Kuan Yew is not a Chinese chauvinist, then he will abolish Singapore's education policy and accept the national education policy of the Federation". Now, you know we spent three years, two years, before the people of Singapore were convinced that merger was right: merger on terms which afforded us local autonomy on finance, education, labour. These are basic fundamental things. People feel strongly about it. People must know that there are men in high positions, holding high political office, saying these things.

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I was in the Parliament over these last few days. Sabah and Sarawak MPs were saying, "Why not implement free primary education for Sabah and Sarawak as in Malaya?" Because their education is a federal subject. And the reply was, "If you accept the national education policy, which included Malay as the

medium of instruction". But, you know, the constitutional documents which were agreed stated quite clearly and they felt strongly about this before merger and Malaysia that they should be allowed to continue their education policy which used English as the medium of instruction, because the majority of the people there are Dayaks, Dusuns, Muruts, who prefer English, because they think that is the avenue to the sciences, to the technical knowledge, and advancement that they see.

There are provisions whereby we can adjust and make uniform policies that will unify our nation. But making use of the highly-changed, highly emotional subjects like language, culture, education, as political gambits, is a highly dangerous form of political exercise.

I believe that in the end, the vast majority of Malays are not represented by these extremist sentiments. I have been around Malays in Singapore. I found no hatred even after this campaign has been mounted. If there was basis, if there was truth, that we are in fact twisting the Malays by the arm and pushing them out of towns, I don't think it needed a Malay newspaper campaign to work up a Bertha Hertogh situation. You know, what happened, 14 years ago, one night suddenly reason left, the primitive instincts took over, and for three days, this place, Singapore, was bedlam. Chaps went around in lorries and beat everybody

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who was white, that they could lay their hands on. Why? Because a Dutch Eurasian girl who was considered white was adopted by a Malay family, there was a court case and the Malay girl, that this girl, converted into a Muslim, was put in a Catholic convent. So, reason left, the passions took over.

I don't believe it will happen in Singapore, not if we keep calm in the face even of provocation, and not if we keep everybody down. I would like the Press to leave this part out. But because of the sustained campaigning meant really for Malay-wise consumption, now you have had the first racial clash in Bukit Mertajam. Isn't it? People have slaughtered each other. Houses have been burnt. A curfew has had to be imposed. You keep on pumping it up, there are lots of places where there are irritations, frictions of people of two different cultures and civilisations coming together and not having completely adjusted. The result is: if it goes on, it must be perdition.

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And I say there is no advantage in pretending that these things are not dangerous. We better say publicly how dangerous it is, but in a very calculated way, because we don't want to add more fuel to the fire. My regret is this: that whilst we can deal firmly with the Chinese chauvinists because the majority of my colleagues are Chinese and therefore there is no accusation that we are keeping the Chinese down, I cannot deal as swiftly with the Malay chauvinist as

I can with the Chinese chauvinist. I have got to let him expose himself first. Otherwise, they'll say, "There you are: he is keeping the Malays down" But I do suggest that Malay leaders in authority can do that, and if they don't: I say we may well perish by default.

Well, these are some of the new problems we face. As I have said, there is enough momentum to see us through the next five years. But we have got to put all these other bits and pieces into place so that we give it another push for momentum over the text five years. Otherwise, we will have endless troubles.

I would like to end on this note: that I believe, given sincerity, good faith, and goodwill, we can make what we have set out to do succeed. You see, the complex of society is such that it puts an incentive to non-communal policies. Forty percent Malays, roughly more or less speaking, 40 per cent Chinese, 20 percent others: logic, the arithmetic. You can't run away from it. And that arithmetic will bear its weight on the political situation over the years. Right now, not all the 40 percent Chinese and 20 percent Indians and others have got the vote. But over the years, as they come out, born here, educated here, they all will. And the political complexion of our country will undergo a subtle change for the better, and it is this change which some people are afraid to face, that causes this erratic and reckless bit of politicking.

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You see, they don't really believe they can convince the Singapore Malays that they are oppressed. Otherwise, I think a riot would have taken place, because facts, the impact of man's daily life, whether he is oppressed or not, he knows. And we can, over six months, one year, two years if necessary, just as we debunked the Communists, so we can debunk the communalists.

But all this is meant for consumption over the Causeway to people who have not come to Singapore, who read all about Malays being driven out from the town, and say, "Oh yes, what a wicked Government it is. So, how necessary it is always to make sure that we have our <u>own</u> kind of Government, our <u>own</u> people in charge; only people of the same race can be trusted to look after our rights." That is one of the objects of this exercise. I don't know whether they will succeed. But I do know, if they don't know watch out, they will succeed in unzipping Malaysia right down the middle, because that is the first sign -- Bukit Mertajam.

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Here is a sophisticated city. People are not so easily swayed and moved into reckless action. But in the rural areas where sophistication is not of such a high level, there are enormous dangers in this kind of exercise.

I'll end on this note: that we conceived Malaysia as a Malaysian nation. That was what it was ordained to do. That was what the Constitution set out in solemn words: all men, regardless of race, all the fundamental right; how the Government cannot discriminate between races; then special provisos: how the government can discriminate between the communities for jobs and licences in order to help the Malays. In other words, you start off first: we are a Malaysian nation, then we help the Malays; not we are a Malay nation to which Chinese, Indians and others are added and tolerated. This is basic. If Malaysia is a Malay nation, then I say that is the way to wrap it up nicely and hand it over to Soekarno. There is no other way. The logic of it is relentless. But if it is Malaysia is a Malaysian nation, then I say we shall survive, we shall endure as one of the few countries in the world where different communities who have migrated, and settled, and lived together under colonial rule and kept from getting in each other's ways and cutting each other's throats by force, were able, when the force was removed, to live happily amongst themselves.

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You know, never believe that it cannot happen to us. Always prepare for it. There is no reason why the British Guinean Indian should be burning the house of the British Guinean Negro; but they are doing it. There is no reason why the Indians in Burma should leave Burma, stripped off their worldly possessions. But 28 million Burmese are doing that to 1 million Indians. Right

now, nearly three-quarters of a million Cypriots, Greek Cypriots, are doing it to hundred thousand Turkish Cypriots. Do we really want these things? I say we owe ourselves, our neighbours, our countrymen, and our own children, an obligation for restraint and understanding. But sometimes with restraint must also come a firm and clear assertion of our right to live here. And if this is understood, then all is well. If that is not, then I say we are in for a troublesome time.

So, whatever it is, I hope you will keep your minds, in the course of your multifold other problems, on this one; and help to play your part in spreading a little bit of goodwill and understanding. Every time you meet a Malay friend, just try and add one little bit more word of understanding to dispel this hysteria which is being worked up by a group of extremists.

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Finally, may I end by saying that it is perhaps more schools like this, more housing estates like this, that ensures the sanity against racial extremes. And on that note, may I thank you all for having listened to me patiently.

18th July, 1964.