TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE, MR. LEE KUAN YEW, AT A MULTI- PARTY SYMPOSIUM, ORGANISED BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA, HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY`S ARTS BUILDING LECTURE THEATRE AT KUALA LUMPUR ON FRIDAY, 28TH AUGUST, 1964 AT 8.00 P.M.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

When I arrived this evening, having looked up the meaning of "symposium", I expected to find backers reclining under the trees sipping wine, and I was duly alarmed when I found a somewhat hilarious audience with no wine-bottles: truly an achievement of no mean magnitude!

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I must apologise to my fellow speakers this evening and to you for having arrived somewhat late and having drawn the comment of the previous speaker. But you know, one of the problems of leadership in this particular part of South-East Asia, sometimes one gets a command to attend at the royal box for Malaysia vs. Burma...(laughter)...sorry to say, it was 3-nil against Malaysia. And so you

see, one of the problems was that there were 4 Singapore players on the field for Malaysia.

I did not have the privilege of listening to the first 3 speakers -- 2½ speakers -- but I gathered that the topic roamed far and wide, and I would like, if I may, without recovering any of the ground that they may have traversed, briefly to recite what I think are some of the unique features of South-East Asia.

There are, well, in fact, there is only one country in South-East Asia where the leader can speak to his people at one time and be understood almost by all, and that is in Indonesia. It may also almost obtain in Cambodia and to a certain extent in South Vietnam, but in nowhere else is this true. This presents the first problem of leadership: communication. If you can't tell them what you think, you can't tell them where you want them to go, how do you get the army to move in the same direction?

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The second problem, second feature it has, which it shares in a large measure with Africa, is that the majority of the population is not literate. It can speak and hear; it cannot read and write. This presents another problem in transmitting commands. You cannot send a secret missive to your commander and say, "Please open this at dawn then decide where to charge". You got to

take him into the ante-room, whisper the secret words to him, with very great danger of the thing being forgotten by the time war comes; and as in Africa and in all the newly-independent countries, the man who emerges is there bigger than the position he occupies.

You see, a British Prime Minister can come and go: Winston Churchill passed off, Eden passed off, MacMillan carried on. Tomorrow, Sir Alec Home can pass off the world, for Britain does not change. But for all these other countries in the process of emerging towards independence, some personality emerges and dominates the situation, and he is bigger than the post he occupies. So it was with Nehru; so it is with Soekarno. So, to a certain extent, it is also true of the Tengku. And whoever succeeds him has a problem, in that in an institutionalised and settled society whoever inherits the symbols of authority automatically assumes the last authority of the leader: be it the tribal stool or the imperial seal of the Chinese dynasties, or office of Prime Minister of Great Britain. But not so in all these countries in Africa, and also in South-East Asia.

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There is another common feature in all these places; that in the first flush of independence, the leaders who emerged were usually drilled and trained and all fed with the methods, political concepts and techniques of the previous colonial regime; and they very often, give way in the next phase, to native-

educated leaders. So it was Mr. Nehru gives way to Mr. Shastri; so, too, U Nu will give way -- he has already given way forcibly by a General -- but whoever succeeds the General is unlikely to be a western-educated type.

Why is it? The mechanics of power, the ability to make an appeal to your mass base, to be able to invoke response, uniformity of attitudes and actions.

What does Malaysia present against this background of the problems of leadership: a fascinating picture as yet unsettled, of western-educated types in the first generation of independence, trying to operate the system of one-man one-vote and representative government, making modifications and mutations as they go along in order to keep the system from grinding to a halt. I think we have been fortunate in the last seven years, since 1957, of Malaya`s independence, and I fear the skies are not so auspicious for the first seven years of Malaysia's independence.

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The same economic swell; good rubber prices good tin prices; the ability to withdraw from military expenditure as the Communist insurrection shrank; and more got poured into roads and buildings even though of a monumental than a utilitarian nature; but nevertheless, there was construction.

This is the reverse; as we emerge, the problem of synthetic, confrontation and shrinkage in trade, more expenditure drawn away from civilian projects into a defence of a nation.

Do we survive? And the answer to that depends, in my submission, on three factors.

First is the leadership; second, have we got enough economic and human resources; third, have we got friends who will supply us with deficiencies in military resources?

I say leadership first because before you can exploit your human and economic resources, there must be cohesion. The army must move in response to commands and move in the same direction. We have, as I have mentioned, a leader in our neighbour who is unique in that amongst other things, he has moulded out of a conglomeration of three thousand islands, an identity of national purpose. Hungry they may be; chaotic the country may have become; but he has infused in three thousand islands, scattered from as far as Acheh in the north-west to West Irian in the South-west, a distance, I was once reminded by an Indonesian official, as far from Tokyo as to New York, and wielded them to a nation. They are Indonesians. They understand what the Bung tells them.

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Our first problem is that every time the Prime Minister of Malaysia speaks, whether he speaks in English or in Malay, the national language, not more than 40 percent can understand. That is the first problem he faces. In that situation, the leader requires something more because he hasn't got the ability of facile communication, and what Nehru had, in its place, was the charisma of the leader. Thousands flocked to hear him, not understanding what he said. It is true. But they thought to be in his presence was to have been blessed. And so when Nehru passed, an age passed with India. And his successor will face immense problems without the same charismatic touch, the legend of the leader.

And to that extent, it is the business of Malaysia to build up for its leader the same legend, perhaps not on the same magnitude as India, because we are not of such gigantic proportions. But it is important that there should be, in place of facility of communication, a belief in the magic of leadership; faith, confidence.

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Why, how -- it is in the human eye. And so it was that although in the 48 hours the Tengku spent in Singapore -- as I've said, at any one time in Singapore, I would say not more than 20 to 30 per cent understood him in Malay, or in English -- he was able, by gestures, by expressions, to infuse confidence and trust. Marks out one of the essentials of leadership.

The problem that that presents us is: what happens after Nehru? And the solution we must find in more institutionalised and less personal forms of leadership.

The other factor I mentioned was economic and human resources. I say we have them, in relative terms in South-East Asia, in great abundance. Highest standard of living the whole of Asia. Japan caught up with Singapore about two years ago. But it is something to be grateful for. Ten million people, six million of immigrant stock, resourceful, ingenious, industrious: infusing into the whole of the economy a drive that raises the whole 10 million above the 103 million level of its neighbours. That is also something to be grateful for.

And third, have we got friends to supply deficiencies in military capacity? Well, for the first 5, maybe if we are lucky 10 years, I'd say yes. But in that period, we have to learn to live, a small nation in the midst of big ones, ambitious expansionists, armed, by learning how to be small but tough by ourselves. There is no other way. If we believe the British people and their Exchequer will indefinitely spend 150 million pounds -- the British High Commissioner was reminding me of when we banned these 46 commodities -- 150 million pounds per annum, in our defence, approximately 1, 200 million dollars... what for? For the time being, perhaps, reasons of strategy, economic interests, prestige, living up to the letter of your guarantees. But indefinitely, year in and year out, 5, 6, 7,

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8, 9 ,10 years? No people does that for another. The Americans do it for Vietnam for 10 years, and they are sick to the teeth with it. And the British do not want to be involved in a Vietnam in Malaysia.

Hence, our problem must be solved, the basic problems must be solved in the first 5 preferably, but definitely, within the decade, or I say: scrub it out. We are lost.

I say this not to dampen your hilarity, for I believe, with sense of sudden death, comes a great deal of reckless living.

What we really want to meet this situation is careful readjustments of our resources to create the capacity to last indefinitely.

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What are our problems? The previous speaker spoke of a one-party state with displeasure. I sympathise with him because being in facade, 3 different communal parties, it is not possible for one party without obviously dropping that facade to take over. Therefore, so far as he is concerned, it must be a 3-party state. But whatever the manipulation of digits, finally in this context, for the next decade, we have to resolve the problem of synchromation: the Malay, the

Chinese, the Indian and other communities at the speed and momentum with which they go forward.

This is a problem which must be resolved. Being a non-communal party, we believe that in the long run, Malays endures or is absorbed by her neighbour, depending upon whether Malaysia becomes a Malaysian nation with cohesion, national identity, and consciousness and unity of purpose -- in which we survive -- or it remain 3 distinct component parts by and large: Malay, Chinese, Indian.

You see, the main-springs of culture, language, civilisation of these 3 communities are outside the country: Indonesia, China, India. Each one of them is able to give a higher inspirational urge to the people within here because of its higher level of civilisation: literature, history, Borobodor, the Great Wall of China, and the Taj Mahal. There ain`t no such symbols of greatness here .... You have got the National Museum; you`ve got an air-conditioned Parliament House; you have got a National Mosque in the building.

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What then, keeps these three communities together in Malaysia? Because Malaysia happens to give each one of these main communities and many others besides, a better life than either Indonesia, China, or India for all its history and civilisation can give their peoples.

Why is that? Because there was the good fortune of rubber and tin, and administration ticking away as power was handed over. Because, as I have said, the immigrants and the indigenous communities continue to co-operate to run the system. If they fall apart, as they did in Ceylon, then the decline will be rapid and irreversible. Therefore it is our business to see that it does not fall apart.

But we must also remember that however much we forge ahead, the three big magnets, pulling those forces in disparate directions, Indonesia, China and India, have much greater potentials than Malaysia could, at its best, offer its 10 million people. One day, God forbid, not too soon, the most fertile region in the world, the 3,000 islands, and the artistic and not untalented people, some order will be restored in place of chaos, and they will begin to move forward. And time now, it is estimated that the Chinese government can explode a nuclear device. Any time now, the Indians are going to set up jet-fighter factories. But in two or three decades, we must accept the position that if we have not by then congealed the 3 main component parts of Malaysia into <u>one</u> nation, albeit of different races, of different religions but with a national identity and purpose of his own, then it must break. The moment one of the countries outstrips Malaysia in the human material comforts life, then plus the inspiration of culture, civilisation, greatness, the parts must go asunder.

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And so you see, whilst we accept for the time being is necessary that we admit that the Malay community, for diverse reasons, has over the last 15 years, stuck together, so it is necessary to work with communal forms, but conscious of the fact that that does not provide long-term survival.

You see, if Malaysia has one important component -- the Malay component -- 40% of the people, completely Malay and feeling closer to the Sumatrans, the Javanese, the Boyanese, the Riau islanders, the Celebes, than they feel to fellow Malaysians who are Indians, or Chinese, or Eurasians or Punjabis, then I say Malaysia must belong to the Bung. That is as simple as that. If Malaysia, with the dominant 40% is a Malay nation, then the biggest Malay chief must inherit it by either armed force or both armed force and intellectual, ideological, cultural subversion: the gradual erosion of loyalties and the will to resist. You see, every day, Radio Jakarta from Medan, Palembang, Jakarta, even from Tanjong Pinang in the Rhio Islands, they beam, they talk of the greatness of the Malay race, Bangsa Melayu: the great regathering of the tribes of the Majapahit and the Srivijaya Empire.

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These are not, unfortunately, things that our Malay friends can afford to laugh at. You know, I spent some time the last few weeks with the Malay parts

of the Singapore population, and I have, in the course of my perambulations, visited some of the islands. And I went there now with different antenae, feeling, and I discovered that in some of them, 3/4 have come from Indonesia; the Malay population, one quarter may be indigenous. And one good government servant of Javanese extraction, loyal to Malaysia, in St. John's Island for the Health Department, finds it so unpleasant to listen to Malaysia denouncing Indonesia, and vice versa that everytime the news comes on, whether it's from Indonesia against Malaysia or in the other way, he switches off. It is too painful a conflict of loyalties.

If I may put you the problem in an inverse way. Supposing a Chinese leader were to arise in Malaysia and say, "4 million Chinese arise and fight the 8th Group Army" I have a feeling that a large proportion of the four million people may suddenly lose all interest in wishing to fight for what they have got.

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So we must understand the problems that Malaysia faces, when with that armed insurrection -- in Brunei there is also the FLN type of guerillas support -- you have to overcome only a better armed foe, but one who persuades you that you are of a lower order because you are in the company of white men fighting men whom you should be proud to welcome. That is the problem that we face.

And I say thank God when three landings were made in Pontian, the response of the inhabitants who were largely of Indonesian descent was superb. They were loyal, but with this one reservation; that some of the landing parties have disappeared. They had a network.

So you see, the first problem in survival is: have we got the will to be ourselves and not to be so many Malays, Indians, Chinese, Eurasians, and others? Do we feel more for each other and what we give to each other in Malaysia, or are we subdued, emasculated by pulls made to chauvinist feelings, pride in culture, race, language, in history and civilisation? If we are not able to resist that, we haven't got the first pre-requisite of survival: cohesiveness and an identity of its own.

The second major problem we face now is that with the next few years, we will see a shift from western-orientated leaders to local-orientated leaders. Mr. Shastri was minor shift, but a shift nevertheless between Mr. Nehru and Mr. Shastri. And so it will be in the next few years, and with it comes a train of problems. So long as you run this one-man one-vote, easiest of the appeals that can be made to the ground are the simple emotional ones, not economic development and progress and all these other things they don't understand, but simple things pride in race, in language, in religion, in culture. And the man who

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can speak in the language of the native inhabitant is the man who can bring those wells of sentiments up to his advantage.

So it was that Bandaranaike, with calculated recklessness, played with language -- Singhalese -- and played religion Buddhism -- against Kotalawalla and his United People`s Party, confident that the Singhalese constituting the largest single vote in the country, he could win; and win he did, at a price. The package got unscrambled. In the end, the country was unscrambled; he died in the hands of a Buddhist assassin. How easy it is. But it took some time. In Ceylon, 1960, independence 1949 -- 10 years.

So it is the first few years of Malaya; great tolerance. Today, red cross over English language signs. They are perhaps in jest; it starts off in jest. One man went down to Singapore and said I should be slit by the throat; said in jest. Shortly afterwards, some 27 people were disembowelled in the streets of Singapore. It was <u>not</u> in jest.

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Nobody defends an English street-sign when it is crossed in red. But I shudder to think what would happen if a Chinese language signboard of a school were to be crossed out in red and contra-emotive pulls arise.

These are the problems of our society that make nonsense of all the sweet things we talk about: democracy, one-man one-vote, arrest and detention without trial, and so on.

You know, if there were 50 arrests and detentions without trial before that fateful evening of the 21st of July, some 27 people would not have died and some 480 people would not have been injured in Singapore. That is a fact. The pamphleterers, the speakers, the runners: bring them to a court of law, prove that they were going to do these things? Who gives evidence? Even now, let alone to bring accused persons in court, accused persons who have got partisan following ready to riot a second time: what do you do in that situation? And I say what you want is leadership and firm government. Restore order first, then talk about law.

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I do not wish to labour you with any further analysis of our problems, but I would like to make a friendly rejoinder to what the previous speaker said, and not in jest: that everybody has a place in Malaysia. That is basic and fundamental. Otherwise, it cannot work. You see, the juxtaposition of Malaysia, the forces within Malaysia, is such that if any one group tries to run it exclusively to the disadvantage of the other groups, a reaction will set in in which the group that started it will not have the capacity to see it to the finish.

Let me explain. Malaysia started off, has started off 40:40:20; and a built-in incentive to non-communal politics. You see, you can't win by making an appeal to any one group. If you play for Chinese 40% you`ve got 40 plus 20 on the other side. And so, we never play for Chinese 40.

It started off with the administrative and military machine, the apparatus of the State, largely in Malay hands, and the economy and the civilian structure of the state -- the professionals, the doctors, the accountants, the factory managers, and so on -- largely Indians and Chinese. We need each other. We have to accommodate to give room for each other, a place under the sun. And I hope it will be more than just a place. It has got to be an honourable place under the sun.

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Let me give you a simple illustration. If, through some momentary madness, the Chinese and the Indians and the others, who constitute 60% of the population, decided to remove the pre-eminence -- constitutional rights and others of the Malays -- I say that is the end of Malaysia. The 60 per cent cannot win because immediately the ties become closer the other side. And this time when they land, nobody will tell you who landed.

Contrary-wise, if the 40 per cent with the guns decide to squat on the 20 plus 40, it has not the capacity to do so: too big, too amorphous, and a very hazardous adventure. And what is more, the three governments actively involved in defending Malaysia -- Britain, Australia, New Zealand committed -- are three governments dependent on one-man one-vote, and therefore, not altogether free to act as they wish. A British government caught in a South Vietnamese situation will not produce Barry Goldwater as Opposition Leader. Neither Australia or New Zealand.

Therefore, you see, for the first decade, the delicate balance of checks and counter-checks provides a built-in incentive for cohesion, because every component part gets an advantage out of it. If we stick together and fight together to preserve what we have got, and making better what we have got, everybody benefits. If we try and do the other chap in, you cannot benefit. That is the saving grace of a nation. If they can benefit, then I say some may be tempted to try.

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But I am reassured that I think behind all the effervescence of oratory at election time and at other times besides election-time. Those in authority, positions of leadership in Malaysia understand the arithmetical equation.

And on that note, I leave you with this happy thought: that you've got 10 years, and so have I; that if we let these 10 years run out, and nothing more permanent is put in its place, then I say the sands of time have run out on us.

28th August, 1964.

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