

TRANSCRIPT OF AN INTERVIEW GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER,
MR. LEE KUAN YEW, TO MR. GERRY SEYMOUR, RESIDENT
CORRESPONDENT OF INDEPENDENT TELEVISION NEWS (ITN) ON
AUGUST 11, 1965, AND RECORDED AT THE STUDIOS OF
TELEVISION SINGAPURA OF THE SAME DAY.

Good evening. My name is Gerry Seymour of Independent
Television News of London. With me is the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr.
Lee Kuan Yew.

Prime Minister, could you tell me whose decision it was for
Singapore to secede?

Mr. Lee: You read the newspapers yesterday? The Tengku, it is his
wish. He is a Prince of the Sultanate of Kedah, and also the
popularly elected Prime Minister of Malaysia. But I think he
had no choice. He told me that if we insisted on going on,
then-- he is getting a bit on in years -- the thing may get out of
control and bloodshed.

Mr. Seymour: You are saying then that the Tengku does not have control in Malaya?

Mr. Lee: No, I am not saying he has not got control in Malaya, I think he is in control in Malaya. But I think some of the chaps, the wild men, have been running around too long and too far. They should have been stopped last year. No, I do not want to say anything which... You know, I have to live with the Tengku, He is the Prime Minister of Malaysia, and Singapore needs a Malaysia which is at least on working terms with Singapore.

Mr. Seynour: Has the Prime Minister been away too long this time, do you feel?

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Mr. Lee: That is speculation. I cannot say whether if he had come back earlier, it would have made any difference. I doubt it. I think it is much deeper than that. It went back to April last year when the ultras or the chaps who speak the language or racism... You know their slogan? "Satu bangsa, satu negara, satu bahasa".

Mr. Seymour: What is that mean in English, Prime Minister?

Mr. Lee: One race, one country, one language.

Mr. Seymour: What are the strains between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore?
What have they been?

Mr. Lee: They are the problems of a multi-racial community. You have to balance them. It is not our fault; it is not the Tengku's fault. I am here because over 100 years ago, the British came to Singapore, a little fishing village; they wanted to develop the place. The locals were not people who wanted to work fixed hours for time and cash-- the fishermen, some with a bit of agriculture -- so the British, to exploit the natural resources, rubber, tin, copper, encouraged immigration from India and from China, and ultimately it became more from China. Sometimes, I think it is a little sad ... I do not know whether I would have been a happier man, but at least I would have been faced with less problems My great grandfather made a little fortune, and he went back

to China and had he taken his son with him, I would not be here; I would not be faced with these problems.

Mr. Seymour: Can Singapore survive as a separate independent State?

Mr. Lee: You are asking me a question which I have answered so many times: that I felt a viable country would require a broad base, and Singapore with Malaya, with Sabah, with Sarawak is broad base.

Mr. Seymour: What about with Indonesia?

Mr. Lee: Could I put it this way, by way of example: to sit on a stool is more comfortable and stable than to sit on a shooting stick.

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Right? Now we are on a shooting stick. But I intend to sit on that shooting stick and since that is all that I have got -- 214 square miles -- we will jolly well make it a strong shooting stick. You have seen Singapore, the people here? It is a shooting stick made of steel.

Mr. Seymour: Have you got to trade with Indonesia?

Mr. Lee: We have got to trade with the whole world.

Mr. Seymour: Indonesia though?

Mr. Lee: If they want to trade with us, We welcome it.

Mr.Seymour: What about relations? Do you expect the confrontation to go on between Indonesia and Singapore?

Mr. Lee: Haven't you read the news? Dr. Subandrio says, and ANTARA his News agency has reported him as saying confrontation goes on with Malaysia now; I am Singapore.

Mr. Seymour: Would you expect to sign a peace treaty with Sukarno?

Mr. Lee: Peace treaty? We are not at war: President Sukarno and me. The last time I met him, we were on cordial relations, and I have never said a harsh word about him although I have condemned this infiltration and aggression and the bombs and all the acts of terrorism.

Mr. Seymour: Would you expect the British Navy to continue to stream up the Straits between Singapore and the Indonesian Rhio Islands?

Mr. Lee: Can I put it in another way? I have got a little suburban house with fruit trees: apples, pears ... And I have got a table laden with peaches and television sets, refrigerators... I have got a very fragile fence, and outside -- this is in a tenement area -- a very hungry people; hungry, and therefore angry and worked up: sense of greatness, large numbers. They see nice suits .. and you can see Singapore. And I am not suffering from malnutrition. I am not saying that President Sukarno is.

Mr. Seymour: Are you saying that the two peoples have got to get on?

Mr. Lee: No, no, no. We want to get on. But if they do not want to get on, then I have got to live. And if they come into my compound and with knives and knuckledusters beat me up and take the apples and pears and the suits and the television set and the radio and the refrigerator and the furniture and I

have got the right to get help from whoever I can and that includes the British. And it so happens that I am a personal friend of Mr. Harold Wilson and I am also a friend of Mr. Edward Heath.

Mr. Seymour: Do you expect help from Communist China, Soviet Russia?

Mr. Lee: Help? What kind of help?

Mr. Seymour: Any kind of help. Do you any economic aid? Trading help?

Mr. Lee: Trade I welcome from all. Why should I not? China the Bank of China which the former Central Government closed we have allowed it to carry on. I mean trade, you, you know.

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It does not mean trade plus something else. We trade so long as you leave my furniture and my family alone. But if you come and trade, then suddenly my children begin to think queer and begin to denounce their father, well, that is not the idea.

Mr. Seymour: If you open up trade with Communist China, would you not run the risk of having communist influence in Singapore?

Mr. Lee: I don't think so. I will say this: whatever their intentions, we have got to learn and to live with them (i.e. Communist China). And any radio set in Singapore can receive Radio Peking: crisp, crystal-clear

Mr. Seymour: You speak of learning to live with people

Mr. Lee: No, no, no.....

Mr. Seymour: Why could you not learn to live with the Malays? Why could the Malays not learn to live with the Chinese?

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Mr. Lee: I wanted to live with them so much, and we did. You know, three Malay Constituencies in Singapore in 1963 voted for my party.

Mr. Seymour: How was the Federation then broken up? Who?

Mr. Lee: I have got to work on cordial relations with the Tengku and his colleagues, But some of his colleagues are men who do not talk your language and mine. They talk of "jihad". You know what a "jihad" is ?

Mr. Seymour: Is it advance (?)

Mr. Lee: No, no. Holy war for a great cause. Allahu-Akhbar which means God is great. But I once was a counsel for 12 men who were prosecuted for murder in the Bertha Hertogh riots in 1950-1951, and the interpreter was sitting down.... I didn't know what Allahu-Akbar means then. I didn't know what he meant then. But the interpreter it is something I will never forget the rest of my life ... He said, "My Lord, some of the crowd were shouting 'Allahu-Akbar'." so the judge said, What does that mean? What you are asking?" He said, "My Lord, it means God is Great. But it is a battle-cry." You know, like the Japanese "Bangsai". You go and do these things, are you surprised that riots took place in Singapore last year? 140 years of the wicked British and there were no riots! Four years of the wicked Singaporeans, or the

Chinamen if you like ... the Singaporean who was a Chinese

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Mr. Seymour: May I ask you just one more question? If there had not been secession, would there have been inevitable bloodshed between the two races?

Mr. Lee: Personally if you ask me, it is now water under the bridge. But the answer was a looser Federation, and I don't think there would have been bloodshed. Smack down six people; six people smack them down; stop this poison in the Jawi press, in the Arabic script -- They run this press ... Smack down six people; have a looser Federation and this thing will tick. But now, it is over.

Mr. Seymour: Prime Minister, thank you very much indeed. Good night.

11th August, 1965.