

TRANSLATION OF PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH IN HOKKIEN
GIVEN AT THE LEONG KHAY HUAY KUAN ON 17TH OCTOBER,
1965.

Mr. Chairman, Brothers & Friends,

I am very grateful to have this opportunity tonight of attending this celebration.

We chose Mr. Ko Teck Kin as our first Ambassador to a foreign country because we have our plans. After our independence, the Federation Government also selected their official to come to Singapore as their High Commissioner. I have known this Commissioner for quite a long time. He was formerly handling the affairs of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and of the Sultans. This gives me the impression that the Federation Government might think that our Government in Singapore has a Sultan or an Agong, and they want to be friendly with us! That is why they appointed this particular official to be their High Commissioner in Singapore! I thank them for this. But we selected our man to be the High Commissioner in Malaysia because he is a man full of experience. He was a Senator. He knows them well and they know him well. He is very familiar with the trade between Singapore and Malaysia, and with economic matters.

Mr. Ko Teck Kin's assistant, Mr. Sim Kee Boon, was formerly a member of the Tariff Board. We want to let them know that our emphasis is on economic and trade matters. Their emphasis is on defence problems. We have been independent for nearly two months I have always been frank. I have never lied. We did not make public our opinions for more than two months. And we had hoped that they would be sensible and reasonable, and that they would understand us.

Although they did not like our remaining in Malaysia, geographically, historically, and because of the bonds of fraternity, we need to co-operate on economy and trade.

For the last two months, we have seen things clearly. I would like to take this opportunity tonight of explaining things frankly to you. Our purchasing power is 43 to 44 percent of that for the whole of Malaysia. We calculate things on the basis of purchasing power rather than on population and area. For if we calculated on the basis of the latter, their population is greater in number, and their area more vast. But have the people in the kampongs much money to buy a lot of things? Possibly they can only buy one copy of a newspaper for the whole kampong! In Singapore, each one of us can buy a copy for himself. A worker's

daily wage in Singapore ranges from four to six dollars. This is quite general. The worker in Petaling Jaya can get only one dollar and fifty cents; and some get only one twenty a day.

Although our buying power is 43 percent, why they do not want a common market? Economically speaking, we have no problems now. We do not have to care about their affairs any more. They won't allow the Malaysia PAP to be registered. The name had to be changed. The crest had to be changed, too. These will be entirely different from the PAP here. This doesn't matter. But, why they want to do this?

Our Minister for Finance went to the United States. He also went to Jamaica to attend the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' conference. He had talks there with the Malaysian Finance Minister. They talked and talked, but to no effective result. The news published in the papers contained sweet words. But they eventually imposed import tax! They did this one Saturday two weeks ago. We also worked on that Saturday and the following day, Sunday and we were ready to do the same on Monday! They did this with the intention of blocking us. But it doesn't matter. Our government servants can also work on Saturdays and Sundays. They don't mind working overtime. The same with our

Ministers who do overtime work together with our government servants. For us, this is a time of test.

They don't understand, and they think that they can do what they like. I think we must make them understand: they want part of any benefits, we also want part of any benefits. And if they don't agree to this, we cannot help it.

Why did these things happen? From the beginning, we spared no effort to help them to form Malaysia, to build the nation of Malaysia. But less than a year after Malaysia was formed, Singapore had two disturbances. And in less than two years, there was separation.

What was the reason for all this? Is it that we did not co-operate with them? No; it was not. After the merger in 1963, we said that we wanted to co-operate with them in every way. Since we have the experience, we told them we were willing to help them in such things as housing and in the building of schools. Our building cost is comparatively low; we have more experience; are more skilled in construction and the execution of contracts. They asked for our Minister to help. We said, "All right." But later on they said, "Thank you, there is no need."

What is the reason for this? We wanted to co-operate but they didn't want to co-operate. In short, this is because they envy us for our progress. But envy is only a small factor. Envy alone could not have caused the separation.

The development of Singapore is Singapore's own business. But Singapore's development will eventually have an impact on the people of the world, of Malaysia. The nine million people in the thirteen states of Malaysia, when they see the development of Singapore, will say, with one voice, that this is a good and that they want the same, too. So, this will embarrass them and thus, they don't want to co-operate.

And they were going to oppress us so that we could not develop. Constitutionally, they would not do this. If they did not do things according to constitution, if they did something unreasonable, then we would have had to attack them during a Parliamentary session.

At last year's Budget debate, we politely gave our reasons why it was unwise to impose the payroll tax and the turnover tax and the like. But their Finance Minister said that this was being subversive! These are national issues: trade, finance and the economy. But they classify them as subversive activities! Why? Because we were gradually exposing the truth about their feudal society.

And they could not stand this. And yet, they wanted to say that the policy of their Government was to help the poor!

We put forward many reasons for opposing their imposition of those unreasonable taxes, let alone others. There was for instance, the crown cork tax -- five cents on every bottle of soft drinks. But there was no increase of tax on beer, whisky and brandy! I asked, "This is to help what sort of people? Do you mean to say that this is helping the poor people?" And he said that what I said was subversive!

They have no other way so they make use of communal feelings which has caused two disturbances. They thought that once there was a disturbance, we would be afraid to die -- and we would beg them... But, if there had been a third disturbance, it would have spread to the whole of Malaysia, and both sides would have faced the end. They dared not therefore do such a thing again.

Later, he ordered us to get out; but I said, "This is unreasonable; you must give the time to discuss with my Cabinet Ministers." He said, "Well I give you two days." These two days were Saturday, the 7th of August and Sunday, the 8th of August. At that time, almost half of the Singapore Ministers were in Kuala Lumpur, another half were in Singapore. As such, I had to travel many times

back and forth between the two places. I didn't mind this. Then, they thought that since our water supplies were controlled by them, and if they didn't want to buy our products, we would not be able to develop our economy. (It then looked as if they were being very wise).

Never mind. If they definitely want it to be so, let us put it to the test.

When we were in school, we used to hear children challenging each other saying, "Let's see who can last longer." I think this is a time of test for Singapore.

They said they didn't want to buy our products. Just to cite an example; we wanted to jointly set up a car-assembly plant; half the parts would be theirs, and half ours. For example, it would be their tyres and our batteries; and with other parts, we would manufacture cars for sale in the whole of Malaysia.

Now, they had discussed it with our Minister of Finance. What I could gather from our Finance Minister was that they thought they could go it alone and manufacture cars themselves. They said, "We don't mind even if you don't want to buy our cars. Our buying power in respect of cars is 70%. I was rather surprised when I heard this. I rang up the Registrar of Vehicles in Singapore for

the number of vehicles in Singapore. And the answer I got the was this: the number of privately-owned cars alone has already exceeded one hundred thousand. And the number of vehicles in Malaysia excluding those in Sabah and Sarawak? It is short of two hundred thousand. Calculating from these figures, the number of cars in Singapore make up more than 40% of the total.

You don't want this market? Never mind. Go ahead and do it on your own. We shall find other ways and means.

After one or two years ... The 31st of August 1967 is an important day..... We don't want to get involved in this matter, because history will then say that Singaporeans, because they were impatient, did not give the Tengku a chance to take charge of matters and as a result, there was trouble. So, not to add difficulties to the work of the Tengku, I think it is better that we keep quiet and let their Minister for Finance do what he likes. But if this takes place two years from now, they too, will have to face reality.

As Mr. Ko Teck Kin mentioned just now, the people of Singapore always like to face reality. Anyway, two years from now, we shall be able to let them know that we do not need their 50% purchasing power; that we have ways and means of ensuring our development; and that our people have enough energy and experience to cope with any situation.

What is there to be afraid of? After two years, we shall be able to tell this plainly to them. When I officially opened Trade Union House on the 15th of October, I said: You need our help to protect your country because the British are using the base on our island to help you in your defence. As such, without the help of Singapore, there will be no Sabah, Sarawak and Malaya. Because Malaysia as it is, cannot prosper, cannot flourish unless we co-operate.

But, since you do not want to co-operate with us, I think you had better go and build your own military bases. Today, the newspaper reported that the Tengku had revealed that they planned to construct a Causeway to link Penang with Province Wellesley on the inland, just like the Causeway which joins Singapore and Johore. He said, "This can facilitate the flow of trade."

I think they had better keep the money for the construction of an airport or of military bases, because the construction of a Causeway will cost them a lot of money. One should be more careful about spending, spending such a large amount of money. Money spent is very difficult to get back.

I personally think they did not probably carry out a survey of how deep the sea is. Besides, the distance between Singapore and Johore is only one mile;

whereas, the distance between Penang and the mainland of Malaya is about four to five miles. The depth of the sea there is about five to six times that of the Straits of Johore. Today, you fill in with some boulders; tomorrow, you will not find them anymore. I wonder whether this is a psychological tactic or whether it is only a joke. But, nevertheless we want them to understand that we do not mind what they do in the next two years: go ahead and do what you like; we will not interfere. Because, when we say a few words they make a fuss out of it -- issuing protest notes and what not. In my opinion, saying a few words is really a small matter. If they think what was said is not true, they can just come down to our courts and issue a summons; and the matter is solved. Our judges are not corrupt. They do things according to the law and the facts. But up to this moment, no summons has been taken out. On the other hand, we have issued a summons to Utusan Melaya! This summons has, up to now, not been settled. This summons was issued to find out who should be responsible for the two riots.

But, the court in Singapore will continue to deal with this matter.

I would like you to excuse me if I do not tell you clearly what are our "overall plans". But I can assure you we are confident, within these 2 or 3 years, that we can everything under control.

Since they do not want to co-operate with us, they can go to Britain or to any other country they like to build their own military bases: But, how can you protect Sabah and Sarawak? I always have the feeling that they talk before they calculate, whereas we calculate before we talk. We have to think of the effect of each and every word that we speak: in what way they will treat us, and how we shall find a way out. All this must be calculated beforehand:

I say: for these 2 years, we will let you have your way. This is not to say that there is nothing we can do, or that we have no confidence. We have. It is only that we do not want to have trouble in these few years because this is a dangerous period. If anything happens, they suffer, and we too suffer. But I want to make this point: when we say, "Long live Singapore", then we must also say: "Long live our brother Malaysians". This is the thing to do. If you say, "Long live Singapore", and all of your own race come running down to

Singapore one day, ... that is not the way to do things!

I have always said: their habit is to play "dam" (draughts); to eat one piece at a time. But playing chess is quite different from playing "dam". When they behave like this, we find it hard to explain

They say they don't want our goods; they also want to tax our goods. In Johore now, they have many factories: it is very crowded. But I see that many factory owners are feeling bitter. 70% of their goods are sold in Singapore. If they want to sell their goods to us, by all means: after all, we belong to the same family, and we should help one another. And when we sell our goods to them, they want to have a little tax! So we have to tax their goods too. If they raise the import tax, then we can only do the same. Thus, it is one step against one step; "try and see". It is easy to stand this for two to three years, but after three years, when our various development projects, have come to fruition, when we do not have to rely on them any more, we will lay down the cards!

I have always stressed that Singapore, Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak should come together. I have also stressed the close ties of geography, history, culture, race and of blood. And I think they believed, because of these statements that we would collapse without Malaysia. This is very wrong thinking indeed. In fact, if we want to know whether a people, or a country, or a Government can survive or not, we should, first and foremost, understand whether that people has got courage and capacity, and whether they possess modern skills and techniques.

I came late just now because I went to the Chinese Chamber of Commerce Auditorium to take part in the anniversary celebrations of a union. You can see from the new Trade Union House that we have many skilled workers who are up to world standards.

I have visited over 50 and I have seen Russian houses and roads. They are all very large and imposing. But if you try and close the door, you will have to worry a bit, because there may be some creaking.

You may know from that that their building technique is not so good. There are also some countries which want to "show off" and everytime they invite guests there is pomp and splendour. But when you get to the toilet, then you can really find out how skilled their workers are. For instance, when they want to fix a tap on this side, they make a hole on the other side! What is the reason for this? Hole on one side and tap on the other? Perhaps it is because the water pipe is not long enough, so it is more convenient to make another hole instead!

There will be no such thing in Singapore. This morning, I went out, and returned home in the afternoon. The matter of security is more serious now, so I have to have a few chaps about me, and so I need an extra bathroom. When I

returned home, I asked: "Is it completed?" I had a look at it, and I say I am proud of the quality of workmanship. The coloured tiles were all neatly in place. The last tile was a few inches from the basin so they cut the tiles into 2, and then fitted them in nicely. You want to drive such skilled men to despair? I say: Nothing doing. We must succeed!

As regards the geography of Singapore: Mr. Ko spoke about just now, and it is not necessary for me to elaborate as I am not good in geography. However, while I was in school, my teacher explained to me why Singapore has 3 to 4 good harbours; one at Tanjong Pagar, one at Seletar, another at Jurong and at Clifford Pier. The main reason these places are good harbours is because of the physical features. As we know, the world turns from West to East. So we see the sun rising in the East and going down in the West, and the currents go in the same direction.

The waters of the Pacific Ocean sweep down the southernmost point of the continent of Asia. The large ocean sweeps down the southern tip, and scours the coast-line of the southern tip; that is, Singapore and the Straits of Johore ... And it takes all the deposits and goes up the Straits of Malacca and then as it goes by, it drops all the deposits along the coast. So you have got long, still patches like Malacca, Port Dickson and Port Swettenham.

It is difficult to struggle against geography -- you have to struggle every minute, every day, every year and even for decades. Anyway, this is their own matter and we need not do so. We do not have to struggle against geography or history, as we know both geography and history are helpful to us. Our population, our workers, and their skill, the standard of our education: all these will make our society a success! Moreover, we are careful in our handling of affairs and we calculate every step we take, and its consequences.

There will be no problem for us to sell our products such as textiles, etc., to Britain, Australia and New Zealand. If we want to succeed, our economic development is the most important thing; only then will there be a stable society. Unless we develop economically, everything will be in vain.

The Governments of Australia and New Zealand -- also that of the United States -- know very well about these things and I do not have to explain. We do not have to shout slogans such as; "Anti-America, anti-imperialism or anti-Soviet Union."

We want to make friends with all the world, no matter whether India, China, the Soviet Union or the United States. The most important thing is: we want to trade.

I have full confidence that we will succeed. Within two or three years, we will be able to prove that what they have calculated is wrong! They thought, after we had been kicked out, that everything would be finished -- and that people will forget what we have said, forget our analysis of things, and that even the political influence will have vanished. But history will prove who is right and who is wrong.

If they thought that without their co-operation we would not be able to survive, it is a great mistake: Because there are countries who want us to survive, and our survival will be of great help to their security.

I do not have to explain in detail; and I am sure our businessmen will understand. Perhaps, tomorrow these businessmen may send a telegram to Hong Kong or Japan saying, "If you have any trouble about the quota, well, come to Singapore. There will be no problem here!"

I can assure you if our workers and our people understand that this is a just, and a fair society and that what has been done and what will be done are not purely for the benefit of businessmen or of rich men, we will succeed.

If business is going and a "towkay" makes money, the workers will benefit too; new houses, new schools will be built and there will be no problems for our children and everyone will be happy. A society of this kind will, in the end, influence the destiny of some countries in South-East Asia.

It may take ten years or twenty years, but the factors of history, geography, economics and the ties of fraternity will make this society a success.

Now I want all of you to join me to toast, "Long Live Singapore,"
Meanwhile, don't forget that while we say "Long Live Singapore", in our hearts we should also say, "Long Live the People of Malaysia". Otherwise, if it is only, "Long Live Singapore", the people of Malaysia may all come to Singapore and then there will be trouble again!

Let us toast now, "Long Live Singapore".

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Thank you.