TRANSCRIPT OF A SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE, MR. LEE KUAN YEW, AT A RECEPTION FOR AFRO-ASIAN DELEGATES GIVEN BY THE SINGAPORE TRACTION COMPANY EMPLOYEES' UNION ON 22ND OCTOBER, 1965.

Mr. President, friends and fellow-citizens.

I don't want to repeat what I've already said in Malay. All I want to say is that it gives me great pleasure to be here this evening.

I am glad to see in the years since I was associated more directly with your Union that the Union has prospered. I see a badminton court with new cement rendering and lines newly-drawn; windows with new green glass to protect you from the heat of the sun and so on. This shows progress in a material way. I am quite sure that if the Company did not prosper, you would not have been able to levy dues on your members, and this would not have been possible. In other words, we are doing all right.

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But, that's not good enough. We want do more. I read the newspapers, and I see, `Taxi War at Subang Airport' -- a prestige airport at Kuala Lumpur and there is a taxi war! I said, "What's all this?" The Minister for Transport says,

"No monopoly". The Commissioner for Transport says something else. I read it all in the papers, and I am deeply confused. Then somebody says, "You know, there's something gone wrong. One wheel has been oiled, another wheel has not been oiled. So, oil the wheels! -- all wheels!" And, as the years go by the bus requires more and more wheels, so more and more wheels have to be oiled! I say "Never mind". Any way they play, we play -- but always cheaper, always more economical because we play the honest way. It is simple. Mr. Jensen (referring to the Managing Director, STC Ltd.) owes me nothing. No money passed also between him and me; he pays his takes. It's very simple. No money passed also between the Union and me, and it makes it simple. I come here tonight; you feed me; I say "thank you". But, make my life easier: don't pass me money. Because that's very complicated; then I have to explain how I paid for my house and so on. That's all too complicated to explain!

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But, let me tell Mr. Jensen that we do understand money. It does not mean that because we do not take money we do not understand money. And we know the difference between $100,000 and $10,000,000. It is not just the difference between an extra two zero's. No. It's much more than two zero's.

I can assure him and I can assure you and your Union, Mr. President, that we have been watching the roads too. JP, JA, JC, JM cars -- what are they doing

tearing up our roads? J stands for "Johore" -- and I say, "Three cheers to Johore. We want them to prosper." We even pay them 4 cents per thousand gallons of water from the sky -- for nothing! Rain comes down, and we pay four cents! We build the pipe, we buy the land, we pay the rent, we clean the water, we pipe it, we pump it; and we pay money! One day, they will say "charge" -- even for the sea-breeze across the Straits. But never mind. If this will help you to be prosperous, here you are; we will give you.

But, you know, when you wear out my roads and big lorries -- JA, KL, Penang, Province Wellesley, Perak with six or eight wheels at the back run round the roads, puffing smoke, I say "What is all this?" These are our roads, We pay tax and they burn up!

I said "Something must be wrong. It is not right. Please find out." So, we've got a man now standing at the Causeway with a little meter. "JA'? Then it is clocked one. Watch how many days before they go back. And we say "All right, one day....." but no hurry; no hurry at all: slowly. Because if we do it too quickly ... The Tengku says we are going to close our port, so he must build a causeway. Where from? Georgetown to Province Wellesley!

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That is very serious. Do you know why? Because this will be the eighth wonder of the world. This will be one of the deepest Causeways in the world.

When I was a school-boy, I was told this is a very deep straits. The water swirl up and they swing around Malaya, and they go up and they wash the coastline, and they settle sediment all along except for the gap between Penang and the coast. So, you have to drop big boulders -- like the Aswam Dam. There, they dropped big boulders and they stopped the water, and they succeeded. But that is slow, river water. This is fast sea-currents. If you drop a big boulder today the big boulder would have moved off tomorrow.

So, I get very sad when I read this. I get very excited because I say, "It is $200 million going down the sea now. I thought it only went down the drain. Now, it's going down the sea-bed, never to be found." But I said, "Never mind. Good luck to them". You know, it's like the Kra Canal. It worries me. Every time I open the Sunday newspapers they say, "New American Combine is going to cut, with Atomic power, the Isthmus of Kra so that ships can go from Asia to America by passing Malaysia". And every time I think of that, I sleep peacefully, because I say leave it to the Americans and you leave it to the Generals in charge of the Isthmus of Kra, and we are safe for the next generation!

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But meanwhile, to make it all well. You have to work hard. Not I work hard alone. I work hard, anyway, out of habit. I say, you work hard for maybe two years, and after that we will show them.

When you want to go to a conference, you settle your conditions. This is what you call "One-Upmanship". If you go to a conference and the man thinks that you want him to agree, that is hopeless; it is a waste of time. As any employer can tell you -- Mr. Jensen can tell you -- I always go to conference with no intention of agreeing. When they realise that, then we agree.

So I say there is no use for a conference between them and us. For one or two years.....There is no need for a conference. But, meanwhile progress. Singapore surges forward: today, one bus; tomorrow or next year two buses. Day after tomorrow, 2.1/2 buses -- with one mini-bus. And so we go on: better roads, better buses, more traffic more prosperity.

Then when they look over the Causeway and say, "Oh, this is going on -- we'll say. "Yes, that's right. Would you like to share in the prosperity?" Then, we talk. But first, we lay the foundation. And then, after that, we say, "Do you want this?" I am quite sure that Sabah and Sarawak want this. I have no doubts about this (IN ANSWER TO A REMARK FROM THE AUDIENCE). They know. You see, day by day I get fantastic proposals.

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One proposal is: now Malaysian Airways is there so they are going to change the headquarters to Kuala Lumpur. I say, what's all this? They say,

"Yes; otherwise, every four-engined aircraft, four-engined jet must stop first in K.L., then stop in Singapore." I say, what is this? We'll both lose business then. You stop at a junction here, and you stop there also. So the bus, gears, clutch: all spoilt. I don't know whether you have got a clutch in an aeroplane, but whenever it is that acts like a clutch on an aeroplane.

I am quite sure it will also be spoilt. For no rhyme or reason you go up, and you come down, passengers get sick, time gets wasted. So I am very worried. I say what's all this? They will lose business; We will lose business. You don't want? ..... All right. Never mind. Now, we calculate how many areoplanes we can buy. They say, "Oh, very few." We say, "Well, never mind. How many aeroplanes can BOAC lend us -- in Kongsi?" Yes? Then okay: where do we go?

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All right. Then, from Kuching if they want to come to Singapore, they can travel either by Malaysian Airways or by Singapore Airways. Have a choice. Singapore Airways -- there is a multi-racial makan; anything you want. You can speak any language, and air-hostess says, "Yes, I understand." Then we calculate. Your jet -- Boeing 707, Boeing 727, Comet -- does it want to stop at Singapore or does it want to stop at Kuala Lumpur? As you wish: but we serve

you. We are accustomed to being always polite. The customer is always right. And, in Singapore, we knew that.

And I say, we can play this long, we can play this slow. But eventually, the destiny of South East Asia depends upon you and me -- upon the will, the determination never to give way on basic fundamentals. You can beat me, you can kill me, you can lock me up. But I cannot surrender my birth-right. I am here, you are here. We built this together. It belongs to us together. We will prosper together. And, nobody is going to intimidate us.

And I am quite sure nobody is going to intimidate Devan Nair. Every other day, I get a telephone call which says, "Devan Nair was seen with you". I say, "Yes, he's always seen with me. He's my friend. Now that he's a foreigner, he's my foreign friend. Never mind. So what?" They say, "Oh,? He'll be arrested". I say, "Is that so? That is a very interesting point. Let's try and see who can stay in prison longer". And in the end, prison walls are not strong enough. The human capacity to mobilise people to fight for their future, for their progeny, for their posterity, must win.

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And this is the bigger fight. Never mind Mr. Jensen. Whether it is two weeks' bonus or three weeks' bonus or four weeks' bonus, we will play along

with him. Never mind.....More bus-routes, more buses. But meanwhile, work harder, more prosperity.....And they will watch Singapore booming away. And on the quiet they will also come here to have a good time.

You know, we've got an island set aside for all this. You and I: we don't want all this. We don't want to go grey-hounds racing or to the casino -- that's no good. But, the American tourists like it. So, I get a proposal from the Tourists Board: have a casino, grey-hound racing, all-night session. So, we look around for a spare island. And we found one. Lay the pipe-lines, lay the electric cables -- and all Malaysians can go there. Singaporeans will serve them. Whatever you want -- grey-hound racing, poker, dominoes, roulette, massage, steam-bath -- all provided.

But, for Singaporeans, for you and I, we will go to sleep early; we will wake up early; tomorrow we work hard. If you go for a massage and tomorrow your bones are weaker we will never succeed. Let the other fellow have a good time. Never mind. We will give the full red-carpet treatment. But, for Singaporeans, I say, "First thing in the morning, physical jerks -- P.T.". Those who want a real massage, we can beat them up properly.

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And, after two years we talk again. For these two years, we work. We talk..... We don't care. When we talk amongst ourselves we talk like free men. If they want to end us darts or poisoned arrows, we will say., O.K. We've got a very thick skin -- rhinoceros. When the arrow hits, the arrow will fall -- blunted. No effect whatsoever. The rhinoceros is disappearing in Africa and also in Borneo. But we say don't worry. This is the modern rhinoceros; it is sure to survive because it has the capacity and the will to succeed. We'll make this a centre for ferment and change in South East Asia.

You know, every time I say "revolution", they get frightened. So I say now, "ferment and change" -- like the bread. You know yeast? You put yeast, and then the dough rises. Singapore is the yeast. The whole of the region will rise with the yeast. And, if you work hard, and the yeast rises faster, all is well.

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So to my friends in the S.T.C. Employees' Union, and to my friends from Afro-Asia and from Malta and Yugoslavia, I say "Welcome to Singapore". And Singaporeans join me in welcoming them. And to Singaporeans I say, "Practise hard; work hard. We are sure to succeed. Never doubt it".

If you read the history books, you will see that those who are timerous, those who are pleasure-loving, those who are leisure-loving, die. History is full

of them. The Roman Empire grew. They got soft and they got weak, and they died. Some empire died even before they got strong. So there you are.....

We will prosper together, and nobody is going to intimidate us. And I am quite sure nobody is going to intimidate Devan Nair. And out of Pulau Senang will come some prosperity. Don't worry. To Raffles Lighthouse, Pulau Senang, the outmost point of our territorial waters will come out-board motors from Indonesia, will come people hungry, and with dirty rubber, dirty copra, which we know how to clean. We have the labour and the skill to clean them. And they want, in exchange for this dirty rubber and dirty copra, some cigarettes, some drinks, some rice, some food, some medicines. I say "Welcome". And if the Malaysians say this is no good, we will say "Too bad. What to do? They have to live; We have to live". And we are kind to humanity -- including Indonesians. We wants them to live, we want them to prosper, we want to exchange rice, medicines, cigarettes, beer, whisky for dirty copra, dirty rubber and pepper and so on.

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And I say a people with that capacity, that resilence, deserves to survive -- you and I.

Thank you.

22nd October, 1965.

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