TRANSCRIPT OF A SPEECH MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW AT NAVAL BASE ON 21ST DECEMBER, 1965, DURING CELEBRATIONS OF SINGAPORE'S INDEPENDENCE BY RESIDENTS

Friends,

May I just summarise briefly what I have said in Malay.

I think the circumstances in which we came to acquire sovereignty over our own territory and over the bases are probably unique in the history of colonial revolutions. As far as the British were concerned, the whole idea of having Malaysia was because there would be security of tenure for their bases. You know, Singapore is a volatile place: people speak up; they are anti-colonial: they are fervent; they are prepared to fight; they talk in a very robust and vigorous way. So the British thought in terms of a wider whole with people who are more accustomed to courtly gestures rather than with the open, rabble-rousing type of political society which we have in Singapore where everybody speaks his mind. In that way, they thought they were safer. But it was not to be.

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And today, we are the owners. If you are Singapore citizen as I am, you and I are joint owners of Singapore.

But there is a limit beyond which you should not go because otherwise, you will find yourself with a piece of real estate which nobody else say want to rent.

Theoretically, you can give the British notice and they will be out of the Naval Base. Then you can go around for another chap and say, "Will you hire the Naval Base? What rent will you pay me? How many jobs will you give and what salaries will you pay?" I think in extremis, it is quite possible... We will have to work out all these various permutations and combinations.

But best way of all, I think is: we stay put. Adjustments will have to be made... The world is not the same as it used to be 10 years ago, and it never will be. I don't know what exactly it will be ten years from now, but it won't be what it is today. The world moves on relentlessly. But, on one thing, have no doubts: we are the owners. And, if we do foolish things, we have only ourselves to blame.

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But, ownership gives us an independence of action which we did not have before. You know, all these years they have owned these bases, and they

brought in people from India, Hong Kong and elsewhere. And in the process, they distorted the course of development. But that is now part of history.

Your fathers or you yourselves may have come here with the idea of just making some money, sending it back and going home. But whatever may have been the original intention, you are here now and the chances are that you are here going to stay. And even if you yourself feel like going back to your village in India for example, your children are here to stay. They are here and I know that. They are my fellow citizens whether I like it or not. And I prefer to like it because, to begin with, I think their fathers had a lot of verve. You require a certain amount of verve and drive to leave your village and your homeland and to strike out into the unknown.

But in the meantime, we must consolidate Singapore -- at every level. We must throw up leaders.

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A country is not great just because of its numbers or because of the size of its area. You saw the SEAP Games in Kuala Lumpur? Singapore has two million people, but it has, according to today's newspaper, won 24 Gold Medals. Malaysia with nine million people has won 25 Gold Medals. So we have got 12 gold medals for our one million; Malaysia for their one million has got 2 ½ gold

medals! Thailand with 28 million people has won 26 gold medals. So those who calculate in terms of numbers alone make a big error. This is a country with verve, vitality. Never mind the numbers. What we have got, we make them good. And five years, ten years from now you will see what we can do.

Before, the schools were to train clerks, peons, servants; not leaders. Now, we train leaders. There has to be a change, an orientation of the education in our schools. We want now, not just people who can read and write but leaders of men -- in thought and in action.

Every school will have a band; will have a cadet corps. Every school will have gymnastics. Every school will have clubs where we will see who shows qualities of leadership, for taking on the responsibility of leading, of helping his fellow citizens.

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It is a society with those qualities of leadership that will survive. And I am quite sure that we can throw up and train up enough leaders who will make our small population more than a match for anybody else around the area. Not that we can take them on, but nobody can take us on without considering the consequences.

I read in the newspapers that someone has said we want a territorial army to defend Malaysia. What for? It is not our duty to defend other people. It is our duty to defend ourselves; to defend Singapore. And, we will defend it. We don't want other people to help us defend it unless we want them to. For instance, we want the British to help us defend Singapore. So we have asked them to stay.

And I hope in 10 years' time every boy and girl coming out from our schools will know how to defend this country. Every boy, every girl will come out knowing not only what he or she has to know but if needs be, how to take the latest automatic to defend this country to the last man. We will do that in 10 years. And, we will survive; we will be here a thousand years from now -- regardless of whether people boo at us, whether people shout at us and threaten us or whether they explode bombs at us. We intend to do what we know is our right: our right to be here, our right to keep what we have built.

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There was no community centre before the PAP Government came here. There was no road here, 100 years ago. We built this over 100 years -- all of us. And we will keep this -- yours and mine -- and improve on it.

And this is what it is all about: it is an exercise in survival. We will keep what we have got, improve on it, and defend it against all who want to destroy it.

And in that way, we will show the light for all our friends in the region. And, a thousand years from now, we will have a multi-racial society in Southeast Asia. That is your duty and mine.

Thank you.

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