TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW, AT A GATHERING OF SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIAN STUDENTS AT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS HOUSE IN LONDON ON 22ND APRIL, 1966.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I had not settled the subject of my discussion this evening until I walked through the hallway and discovered that I was to talk about the future of Southeast Asia! It is a very large subject, one which is not in the disposition just of Singapore or of Malaysia.

But it is a subject which is likely to occupy the attention of all the major powers of the world probably for this decade, perhaps for a longer time.

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I cannot begin better than by telling you how much I was struck by the thoughts of the changing face of any country when I was in Cairo a few days ago, sitting back at the Mohammed Ali Mosque listening to a performance called "Light and Sound", and discovering that over the thousands of years that the

citadel had stood, so many people had come and gone, so many civilizations had arisen and fallen in an ancient centre of world civilization.

A fallacy into which we very often fall is to believe that there was a fixed order of things before the colonial era. Then the Europeans came, occupied large tracts of territory, distorted history and, with decolonization, we all move back to the ancient paths -- what was, before the Europeans came. That is a tacit, if an inarticulate, assumption made by many an Asian and African nationalist.

And, as I sat back listening to this account of all the conquerors that had come and gone and who had built on the citadel overlooking Cairo, I wondered whether the people who are now in charge of the destinies of some of the nations in Southeast Asia are aware of the facts that the history that is to be made does not mean going back to what was; and that, in fact, it will be impossible to go back to what was.

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Last week, on my journey here, I visited Cambodia and Thailand, and I was vividly aware -- in my discussions with their leaders -- of the fact that history does not mean going back to what immediately was before the French came in Cambodia or Indo-China and the British and French decided to leave Thailand

alone because it was a centre between British influence in Burma and French influence in Indo-China.

For the Cambodians, history meant the hundreds of years ago when the Cambodian Kingdom stretched right across ot the Shan States of Burma. For the Siamese, history meant those years when many regions of present Cambodia were administered by the Thais. There are two versions -- there will always be. The Thais said that the French wrested certain provinces which belonged to them and, by superior force, incorporated them into Cambodia. The Cambodians said that the Japanese took large chunks of territory and gave them to the Thais when France lay prostrate in the Second World War, and it was only right that these regions should be returned to Cambodia when the Japanese lost the war.

And my mind, therefore, went back to Singapore and Malaysia and I asked myself: what does history mean for us?

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What was more important, my mind went back ot Singapore and I searched very hard to find whether it even existed as an independent, separate nation. It never did, you know. The indivisible has been divided. The Malaysian Government so ordained it; we acquiesced in it not because we thought this was an inevitable process of history, but because we thought since

they wanted it this way, this was a better chance of a more satisfactory conclusion in the future.

The point that we must often remember, therefore, is this: human history, wherever it is, whichever part of the world it is, is an unending process. The Egyptians were very kind. After I had listened to the dramatic exposition of what had taken place on the site of the Mohammed Ali Mosque, they presented me with a long-playing record of the recital of events of the people who came and went, of civilizations that rose and disappeared. But there are people who believe that decolonization and the end of the European era means that we all go back to what we were. Ancient titles are resurrected in the hope that ancient glory -- which is believed to have existed -- will similarly be resurrected!

I would choose to believe that the past was never thus, and that the future will never be like the past; and that we have it now, in our hands, to help to determine the shape of the future. Because it is not altogether in our hands. There are bigger forces.

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If the Americans decide to pack it up because the position is untenable in South Vietnam and the arena of conflict moves from South Vietnam across Cambodia into Thailand; and, if the Thais with their very keen sense of

anticipation of history, decide not to resist the irresistible -- or what they deem to be the irresistible -- then, it is very pertinent what happens to the 500 armed Communists wandering around the borders of Thailand and Malaysia. And, if Malaysia cannot be held, then Singapore must make adjustments accordingly.

These then, are the major imponderables. But assuming that the process of bleeding and attrition goes on in South Vietnam; that, despite all the viciousness and the brutality of conflict, the Americans are not defeated -- nobody is suggesting that they can win, but that they are not defeated -- and that therefore the battleground cannot be shifted from South Vietnam over Cambodia on to Thailand; and that we have in Southeast Asia time to sort out our little differences: what should we do?

And I hope you will forgive me tonight -- those of you who are not from Malaysia or Singapore -- if I spend some time discussing what I am quite sure is of considerable concern to large numbers here who, I believe, are from Malaysia and Singapore.

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Assuming that for the next five years -- it may be less perhaps, more perhaps -- the battleground does not shift, what is there in store for us? How can we secure the future for ourselves?

We thought -- at least, I thought -- that we would have secured it by a wider base -- a broader federation, a multi-racial society -- to rationalise what has happened over a hundred and fifty years of empire and the migration of peoples from China, India, Indonesia into Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo territories. But, for a diversity of reasons which, I think, ought to be well-known to you, it did not work out the way we thought it should have.

Now we have been divided politically -- not socially, not economically. And, indeed, from time to time the Ministers of Government in Malaysia remind us in Singapore that the defence of Malaysia and that of Singapore is indivisible.

This is a truly remarkable situation that a country whose defence depends upon bases sited on a particular segment of its territory -- the central focal point of it -- decided voluntarily to exorcize that territory out of its jurisdiction and to invest it with sovereign authority! And we are told that defence is indivisible.

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Recently, when the Indonesians said they intended to recognise us and that they wanted to help us along to become more independent -- because we were showing signs of the exercise of independence of action and judgement -- we welcomed it.

But we were then told that we had to choose our friends. When I was a little boy in school in Singapore, we used to hold out hands to each other and say, "Look, here is one, here is one; you choose. If you hold this, you are my friend; if you hold that, then you are not my friend."

I hope we are not little boys -- at least, not here. And therefore, I refuse to believe that life is that simple.

But, the sad thing was: there was nobody to act as a Greek chorus for me.

You know, if I had a good opposition in Singapore, not one which is so confused and bewildered for the moment that it does not know what it is doing ... Supposing that opposition had said, "... and yes, we shall table a motion which reads, '... and this House resolves that the Republic of Singapore shall, in view of the choice it is offered, decide to choose the Republic of Indonesia as its friend'". ... Now, if the opposition had said that -- not I said it -- can you think of all the consequences if that resolution were to be carried and implemented?

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So, you see, this is quite a unique and complicated situation and one which, I believe, the Indonesians and their leaders are sufficiently subtle, intelligent and skilful enough to exploit to the maximum.

You read the London Times today: they are choosing the officials to send to their mission to Singapore. So says Antara, the Indonesian official news agency. And so it will be read in all the capitals of Southeast Asia and so temperatures go up. But I can assure you, not in Singapore nor in London because we prefer to take a more detached and a longer-term view of the problems which really have arisen because of the history of human migration that has occurred over the last 150 years. It is there - and there, I hope, to stay.

After all the dust has settled -- as I hope it will in 1966 -- a practical, working relationship must be established between Malaysia and ourselves in Singapore. We did not seek this separate independence. But having had it thrust upon us, I think it is only natural that we should want to do the best we can for ourselves in this situation. Which means, in effect, to ensure the security and the survival of the people we consider to be one.

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This is crucial: the definition of "people". Legally, they are divided now into two groups: citizens of Malaysia; citizens of Singapore. And it was done by an act of legislation on the 9th of August. It left a situation where five ministers in Singapore found themselves foreigners to their families: their own fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters in Malaya. They are foreigners technically; and if

passports and visas are required at the Causeway, then the ludicrousness of the situation is brought home to the most absurd conclusions. But I have not the slightest doubts that five of my colleagues do not consider their mothers and fathers, their brothers and sisters and their friends and their relatives to be what they are and not foreigners.

And "people" means: those whom we consider part of us. But this one people -- whether you are Chinese and you have your family there; whether you are Malay.. And lots of Malays have come from Malaya and taken jobs in Singapore and still do ... And the migration from Malaya to Singapore after separation was at the rate of 2,000 adults a month. Two-thirds of the Singapore police force are Malays from Malacca and other parts of South Malaya and their families are still there ... And if you ask them to believe that they are now foreigners to their kith and kin in Malaya, it will be an exercise very diffiicult of accomplishment.

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One whole is now divided into two unequal halves, of two different proportions; and each side of the two unequal halves will now attempt their solutions to the problems of a multi-racial society. And the attempt that each does on his own half must, in turn, affect the situation in the other half.

In other words, by way of illustration: if we decide to pursue actively and, if it turns out to be successful, a multi-racial solution in which the various communities including the Malay component is integrated, not assimilated ... Because we do not desire nor do we intend to make the Malay minority in Singapore in the image of the majority, but you can integrate ... You know, the difference between assimilation and integration is a very fundamental one. Those of you who follow the debate will know that some people in the region believe in assimilation. In other words, the moulding of all others until finally, they become one uniform result. We don't think this is possible; not in this situation and not in the time that they are thinking of.

But if we succeed, then we improve the chances of a similiar integration process on the other side. But the danger is this : if the other side attempts assimilation by administrative and other means, then it must register a reaction on the Singapore side.

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What I hope we can achieve is a position where we make Singapore a model society in which we demonstrate that it is possible to integrate successfully, and hope that the battle for a similar process be fought by those who are left on the other side of the Causeway.

You see, an important component of the price paid for separation was that the Singapore side should cease to exercise an influence on events outside Singapore. Hence, we are in International House -- and not where we usually foregather although, mind you, Singapore paid for one-third of the price of those building! And crucial and key to this problem is whether potential leadership material gives the necessary drive and impetus to a similar solution there or seeks the easier way out: personal salvation by drifting down to Singapore.

This is a battle which can no longer be fought by people who have been left on the Singapore side of the Causeway. It is a battle, which can be fought and won by those left on the other side: eventual reassociation which is more akin to what it now exists in Singapore: an open, competitive integrated society.

I choose to believe that, in any case, the future of the people in these now divided territories is indivisible.

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It can be resolved in one of two ways -- by the ballot or by the bullet. And it is very serious ... When we were asked to leave on the 7th of August last year, we asked ourselves whether the end result would be better if we left or if we refused to leave and went on to the logical conclusion which must mean the use of force more within the ambit of emergency powers ... But if that was the price to bring about a multi-racial situations, I think my colleagues would not have

flinched from the unpleasantness. But the conclusion that we came to was: that a refusal to accept what was proposed must mean -- not immediately, perhaps after one or two further stages -- incarceration, release, elections, victory, incarceration -- perhaps in two or three stages, leading ultimately to a broad "Fatherland Front" as they have in South Vietnam. Because as the ballot is denied as the means for social change, so the bullet is the answer. And as we did not have -- the non-Communist forces did not have -- bullets sufficiently organised, it must mean the use in the end, and the alignment together with the Communists who had the bullets.

So, we opted out -- not solving anything but just giving time. Time in which we hope wiser counsels, more careful calculations will be made of the long-term results, and time in which those who have been left behind on the other side of the Causeway must put their stake on their future. If they don't and they quit, the non-Communists quit, then the Communists will be the only ones left to carry on the battle. And therefore if they win, it will be their victory.

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I choose to believe that there are many non-Communists who feel passionately enough about their future to put a firm stake on what is their right...

And I go back to the thoughts of the Mohamed Ali citadel overlooking Cairo: that history is never a repetition or a retrogression to the past. It is what you choose to make of it. And if you lack the courage and the gumption to put your stake firmly in place, then I say you deserve to perish. And if you perish, then I must perish in Singapore. So, you see, I have a stake in your capacity and your resolution of carve out your future for yourselves -- which eventually, means a future for ourselves in Southeast Asia.

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