SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER UPON HIS ARRIVAL

AT THE WHITE HOUSE RECEPTION ON 17TH OCTOBER, 1967.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My wife and I thank you for you warm words of welcome.

I am almost embarrassed by the lavish words of praise that you have showered upon my colleagues and me in our modest efforts to build a more just and equal society in a very different corner in Southeast Asia.

I am told, Mr.President, that the North American fall is the most beautiful time of the year and so I am looking forward to enjoying the rich hues of the reds. russets, golds and greens of which I caught glimpses as we were carried by air to Williamsburg yesterday and to Washington this morning.

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However, I have been told that perhaps this fall may not be the best fall of the late sixties to have a quiet, relaxed dialogue in order to appreciate your immense and diverse country.

But I was also informed, on expert authority, that next year would be too busy a Washington, if, indeed, I could find anyone in it at all ready and able to discuss dispassionately, the so many old and undoubtedly the several new problems that are likely to be added to the anxieties of the world between now and then.

I had, therefore, considered the possibility of making this journey in the fall of 1969. But by then discussion on aspects of the few subjects of crucial interest to the world -- and in particular to my corner of it -- may be somewhat late.

Worse, what can be said then, by me, will get scant attention from a President and an Administration starting a new term after having gone though fire and brimstone over issues of life and death for many young Americans -- all in the cause of a strange and faraway place called South Vietnam. so, because the relevance of the stability of this corner of Asia to the peace, security and the future, not only of South and Southeast Asia, not only of the Pacific Community, but indeed, of many countries far beyond, I am compelled because of too direct an too immediate and interest to abjure the choice of a more congenial political season in American. And so it is, that I am here today in the fall of 1967.

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I hope, despite the cooing noises from the dovecote or the squawks of hawkish impatience, to find enough equanimity to have a dialogue with you and principal advisers and executives.

For better or for worse, we in Singapore must hope that they will be for the better, the decisions of the American people next fall will strengthen the capacity and the already known resolve of their government to create the peaceful and stable conditions, in which alone, trade and industry and construction would be possible.

But experts who do political weather forecasting have put out a spate of predictions. My preference would be for those who forecast not bright and sunny periods,but those who go to say what patience and prudence, resolution and restraint will see the world through a better and more secure future.

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We in Singapore, like others, want to build this brave new world of modern science and technology, and the great life that they can provide when these disciplines are applied to industry.

Most other countries in Asia also want this -- to find equal excitement and fulfilment in building, instead of destroying.

But some find it difficult to be brave all by themselves, particularly when old friends from western Europe are leaving and no new and strong patrons are willing to take over. A few have even suggested that they would give up -- and immediately -- rather than put up a futile fight against big and massive intruders.

In the end, Mr. President, historians will acclaim and applaud the super-powers, if, after all the harsh trials, they demonstrate that not only they, the leaders, but more important, the people, can show that patience and perseverance and prudence can demonstrate that firmness for a fair peace, which can make the world a safer and a better place for all -- Asians, Africans, Americans, Europeans.

My temperament makes me want to say these things before the event, when the great heart searching and the baring of the breasts have not yet brought a broad consensus.

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That Americans are powerful, all the world is too painfully aware of; the fact that they are brave -- or perhaps a better word -- courageous morally, no one doubts but they do see it in their interests that this courage and this power should

be controlled. For in a world full of bears and dragons that is the best way to ensure that a peaceful future is not unduly threatened.

Do enough Americans believe that their progeny will inherit this brave new world that they have built, unless they make the effort now?

That, Mr. President, is what I have come to find out. I hope I will leave reassured of the future of mankind, of their progress to a better life in a better world.

Thank you Mr. President.

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