EXTRACTS FROM A TRANSCRIPT OF AN ADDRESS
BY MR. LEE KUAN YEW WHEN HE RECEIVED AN
HONORARY DOCTORATE OF LAW FROM THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY
AT PHNOM PENH ON 8TH DECEMBER, 1967.

Your Royal Highness, Your Excellency the Minister for Education, Mr. Rector, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

To have the public oration delivered by the Minister for Education of the Royal Kingdom of Cambodia, delivered in the Royal University of Cambodia, is an honour as great as it was entirely unexpected.

I must ask for your indulgence in not having prepared a scripted response. I went to Angkor to contemplate and to meditate. However, what is lacking in precision, and literary style, which comes from words and phrases being polished and re-polished, may perhaps be made up by the fact that it comes the more candidly. What it lacks in elegance may be the more interesting for being the unvarnished truth.

National Archives of Singapore

Without reference books, since I did not know I was to receive a doctorate in law, honoris causa, I have to speak from memory and paraphrase the Justinian definition of law. Justinian stated that law is the will of superior and enforceable authority. There have been a spate of definitions in hundreds of languages, before and since Justinian. But through all these definitions, two elements are common. First, law is laid down in certain and precise terms; second. it is backed by the sanction of superior power, whether in criminal or in civil cases. Hence the significance of one thought of chairman Mao, that power springs out of the rifle barrel.

I had the privilege of being taught international law by an eminent international jurist, the late Prof. Hirsch Lauterpacht. He started life in Australia, went on to becomes Whewell Professor of International Law in Cambridge. Later he became a member of the permanent Court in International Justice at The Hague.

National Archives of Singapore

The first distinction he underlined was the difference between municipal and international law. The law of each individual country is binding on all its subjects except the sovereign. The law of the international community has one element missing: the enforceable authority. In legal theory every government of every independent nation is sovereign and supreme.

Hence before the World Court, a few years ago, could find in favour of Cambodia in the case of the dispute over the temple of Preah Vihear, both parties, sovereign powers, the Government of Cambodia and the Government of Thailand, had first to agree to submit to the jurisdiction of the Court.

This is not the case between two parties to civil contract. No one is asked to submit to a court's jurisdiction, excepting diplomats representing their sovereign countries who therefore enjoy diplomatic immunity. Therefore we know that treaties, however solemnly entered into between sovereign and independent nations, can be violated with impunity except where the Untied Nations intervenes which has been done only when disputes were between the smaller nations. The decisive sanction is the unpleasant consequences that the other party to the agreement might inflict in retaliation by the use of superior force.

National Archives of Singapore

In San Francisco in 1945 where the charter of the Untied Nations was proclaimed, more than 50 governments of sovereign nations attempted for the second time, to do what the League of Nations at Geneva had failed to achieve. They made the first steps to convert international morality into international law. The record is one of varying degrees of success.

We see clearly the realities of power behind the forms of protocol. In 1945 there were five big powers with permanent seats in the Security Council. Each has the power of the veto. In other words, if anyone of the five big powers- who incidentally, all today have the atom bomb-- are involved in a dispute, no resolution can be passed, But,even where they all agree as in the case of Rhodesia, all condemned the viciousness and wickedness of a system in which one kind of human being is considered superior to another kind because of ethnic or colour differences, sanctions have failed to bite. And where the big powers have a direct or even an indirect interest in conflicts between smaller powers, no settlement is possible. Hence the tragedy of Vietnam.

It was not my intention to discourse on the problems of jurisprudence. But in response to what the Minister for Education as public orator has stated in his citation, I felt obliged to touch on the subject.

National Archives of Singapore

Whilst there were five big powers in 1945 each endowed with veto powers, today there are only two super- powers. The application of science and technology to industry; the economies of scale that arise our of the mass manufacture of goods and services for mass markets; vast populations in large continental land mass with good communications, have made this trend one

unlikely to be reversed, for some time. You, Monseigneur, have referred to the U.S.A. She is one such continental land mass. The USSR is another.

That is why Britain is seeking to join the European Common Market. However a wise diplomat pointed out that the European Economic Community was not the same thing. For with the organisation there is no enforceable will or superior authority. It is a common submission which each sovereign state could withdraw at will, De Gaulle has recently indicated he might be obliged to do for France if the other five insisted on Britain's admission. Therefore even if it were to integrate progressively as originally intended, it could not equal the industrial, technological, and the military capacity of the U.S.A. or the USSR.

There are only two other countries countries with one central authority over a vast continental land mass and a huge population. One is the People's Republic of China, most numerous and therefore unlikely to be the least. The other is India. But there are difficulties in running an open democratic society which the Indians have gallantly done since their independence in 1947. Last year they found 10,000 Indians with PH.Ds,Indian brains servicing the British and American economies. According to an English scientist, Lord Bowden of Chesterfield, Principal of the Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, writing in the Journal of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers; July 1967, it

National Archives of Singapore

takes £20,000 to produce one Ph.D in the sciences. And a Ph.D's value to the community during his lifetime as a source of new ideas may be as much as £250,000.

But it is not just the not so developed nations who are faced with this difficulty. There is a brains drain and a growing technological gap between Western Europe and America. The West have their EEC, but it is not equal to America in industrial and technological strength and hence in personal rewards. Every year, the amount which Western European governments are paying in royalties for using U.S. patents, creative innovations and inventions, by American and by European brains who have gone to America, is growing. Last year US$5,000 million was the difference between what Europe pays the U.S.A. and vice-versa. And the Americans are forging ahead in space sciences and space communicatons, leaving the West European behind.

National Archives of Singapore

I am not so well-informed about the counterpart position in Eastern Europe. I have read about the COMECOM, the Common Market of the Eastern European countries and the USSR, and the Warsaw Pact, the East European counter to EEC and NATO. But I remember a most perceptive observation of one East European leader I met last year. He said the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in its present form would keep them the middle non-nuclear powers of

Eastern Europe, metaphorically, the hewers of wood and the carriers of water, in the science and space age of the 21st century.

Economics, industrialisation, and technological development are the bolts and nuts of industrial strength. And industrial strength is what the military capacity and well-being of each nation is built on. Whatever the ideology, the thoughts, the beliefs, which can enthuse, stimulate, and galvanise a people, we have still to count the hard units that make up industrial strength and growth i.e. the technological capacity and skills and sophisticated capital equipment which is economically feasible only if there is a vast market to serve.

Further, there is a correlation between the educated and skilled digits of community, and its gross national product. A British Government's chief scientific advisor, Sir Solly Zuckerman, recently elaborated this in two Lees-Knowles lectures. He referred to America, with her gross national product per annum of US$790,000 million for 1966. (It is expected to be US$830.000 million for 1967).

National Archives of Singapore

It has a population of 200 million. It has a per capita income of about US4,000. He pointed out that 300 out of every 1,000 Americans, have had more than 12 years of education, up to at least high school and beyond to the university.

He compared it with Nigeria, black Africa's biggest and potentially richest country--with oil, power, mineral resources--and 40 million people. they have a per capita income of only US$64 per annum. He observed that less than 1 person in a 1,000 Nigerians have had an education of 12 years or more.

And Lord Bowden in the Journal I quoted earlier pointed out that last year, 1966, the G.N.P. of America increased by more than the total G.N.P. of the African continent, which is hardly changing at all.

There are the harsh realities of our technological age. Methods and means of production have undergone a revolution even greater that the political convulsions that have shaken the world since the second world war, followed by revolutionary changes in Asia, in Africa and in Western Europe itself.

National Archives of Singapore

The vast resources required in research, for example, in supersonic jet means that when the research is accomplished, large numbers of these jets must be produced and sold to make the investments economic and profitable. So only three nation groups- the USSR, the USA, the Anglo -French collaboration on the Concorde-- are planning to produce the supersonic passenger plane. The other nations will have to buy from them.

The dismantling of empires has not altered the hard facts which determine a nation's capacity. The Africans seek solidarity on their continent to acquire greater economic strength through unity in a wider whole. So the contemporary trend towards wider opportunities on co-ordination and co-operation, in Latin America and in Asia. Hence the Asian Development Bank. Hence the interests of the Japanese to achieve wider co-operation between the nations around the Pacific Basin. They do not have this large continental land mass and have only a middle-sized population 90 millions. They have to seek their future, like us, the smaller non-communist countries of Asia in a wider whole, through regional co-operation.

May I add that a grouping of industrially developed nations makes for very great industrial strength and added prosperity for each. But a grouping of countries all industrially undeveloped, economically not affluent, and technologically backward only means greater poverty to share the little prosperity co-operation can create. That is why Singapore, seeks association and co-operation with technologically advanced and industrially developed partners ..We welcome the Japanese, Australians, British, Americans, Germans and Russians to Singapore, whether as ship-builders,ship-repairers, tyre-manufacturers, assemblers of transistor radios, television sets, steel tubes, motor

National Archives of Singapore

scooters, motor cars and so on. In non-Communist Asia, Japan alone has the capacity to supply us with what we lack, the manufacturing skills, the technological and management expertise, without which we may be back in the rice-fields, and planting bananas or waiting for the coconuts to drop.

Finally, may I say, how proud I would be if I were a Khmer. Two factors determine a people's capacity and speed of growth. First, the quality of each individual digit, the human beings who make up that society. Second the quality of the leadership the unifies and mobilises them to a concerted and sustained effort. Over 1300 years ago, in 615, your ancestors built your first monuments in brick and carved them at Kampong Thom. Whatever the nexus between the Italians and the Roman Empire, or the Arabs and the Pharoanic empire, there is little doubt that the Cambodians who reside in Cambodia today are by and large descendants of the same Khmers who built continuously for eight centuries from 615 A.D. up till 1432 A.D. There is evidence in sandstone and laterite of your capacity for sustained and intense endeavour. And you have in your Head of State a patriot to give you that solidarity and constructive purpose which moves a nation forward.

National Archives of Singapore

These two qualities the capability, knowledge and skills of the population and the quality of their leadership, determine the efficacy of their social,

economic and political organisations. For only then can they utilise to the maximum the limited human and natural resources available. Hence the super powers are recognising the fallacy of the "numbers game". It does not mean that because a country has a large population and land area,therefore they are better off than a country with a smaller population and less land area. No people know this better than the Japanese. They swept down and drove the British from Malaya and captured them in Singapore in lees then three months, on 15th of February 1942. Although the Gurkha and the British soldier, disciplined and dedicated professionals, fought well and courageously, and one Gurkha or one British soldier was equal to one Japanese, the 95,000 allied forces available were cut up to strips by a force of about 40,000 Japanese.

Similarly, those who watch with baleful eyes what is going in Vietnam, know that one South Vietnam government solider is not the same as one Vietcong. The motivation is different, hence the difference in discipline and effectiveness.

National Archives of Singapore

It is my hope that eventually all in non-industrialised Asia will work out the arithmetic of the technological age and rapidly acquire the skills, knowledge and expertise and accumulate and acquire the capital equipment. Then in co-operation and collaboration, we can move forward with both the Western and the

Eastern Blocs. If we learn this lesson in time, perhaps we might holed up our heads and move at more or less the same tempo with them into the space age of the 21st century.

Given the continued solidarity of the Khmers and the wise leadership of His Royal Highness, and I hope in collaboration and co-operation with us, Cambodia and Singapore, I hope, can keep up with the rest of the developed world. For let no one forget that whilst the White Americans were not even in America 1300 years ago, and their forebears were living in caves in Europe, you and I, our ancestors, had already discovered methods of production that made possible cultivated and developed and civilised ways of living. Let us hold our heads up with some pride and renew our determination that what we have lost in the last 1300 years, we will make up for in less than the next 1300 years.

National Archives of Singapore