TRANSCRIPT OF ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW, AT THE RAFFLES INSTITUTION'S SPEECH DAY, ON 6TH JUNE, 1969

Principal, students of Raffles,

First I want to apologise for being a few minutes late. It is not a good example and one which I urge you never to follow. The reason was a misjudgement on my part as to the speed at which I could get here, knowing there was going to be a procession of lorries which was part of the University Rag Day.

A 150 years is a very short time, reckoning in the terms of the histories of the various civilisations which have existed in Asia. But a 150 years is a very long time in the life of any community. It has been the rise and fall of empires; it has seen the emergence in the last 20 years of over 60 new nation states, of which we are one. I do not pretend to be able to see the kind of world we will live in or our progeny will live in for a 150 years from now. Suffice it to say that if we do our duty, five or ten years from now we will have a more thriving, more robust and a more secure Singapore and that much a more certain future for all of us.

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Life means change. Nothing that lives, whether it be human beings or institutions, is static. Raffles Institution in the years before the war was probably the secondary school in Singapore which had the best teachers and the best students. I am sorry to say that it no longer for the time being occupies that pre-eminent position, partly because of the rapid expansion that has taken place in our educational system, first in the primary schools and then in the secondary schools, which meant that a large number of young teachers had to be trained rapidly and large numbers of an experienced and hard core of teachers in Raffles were hived off to be principals and senior masters of these new secondary schools. But the position will change again and this is a name which should once again be connected with excellence -- high performance, high standards for pupils and teachers.

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As we put right and raise the standards of teachers and students in our schools, so my mind goes forward into the kind of universities which 10, 15 or 20 percent of you will go into. The English stream will be more and more bilingual, I hope effectively bilingual. And this is our way to the future. But by and large the English stream will go into the University of Singapore and the Polytechnic of which those parts awarding degrees may be incorporated into the University of Singapore. And it is my intention and that of my colleagues to see

that that Institution is worthy of the young men and women we are producing from our schools, that we are nurturing with the right values. And by "right values" I mean the values that will ensure you a reasonably secure, a relatively high standard of living which demands a disciplined community prepared to give of its best and ready to pay for what it wants, work and earn and pay for what it wants.

Nothing is more disastrous than to be sucked up into the fads and fetishes that we read about and see on our television screens, the kinds of student protest, unrest, malaise in North America, in part of Western Europe and in Britain. They have their problems; we have ours. We share some problems in common, living in a world which has grown smaller as a result of man's inventiveness and his capacity for instant communication and rapid transportation. Ideas pass quickly from capital to capital and we happen to be on the jet route and on the satellite communication system besides the SEACOM communication system. So what happens in London, Washington, Paris, California, Tokyo, Canberra, Melbourne, Wellington, we know of in a matter of minutes or see on our television screen in a matter of hours. But always ask: is this relevant to me? Ask yourself that question. The American student is caught in his own problems, the dilemma of either being patriotic and dying for a war which seems endless and unwinnable or listening to some of his professors and teachers that this is a wicked, vicious,

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inhuman war which he should dodge, wondering how he is to solve the problems of black versus white, problems of poverty, lack of education, lack of educational and entertainment opportunities. They are different from the problems the British student faces. He has to ask himself what his country's role is, now that empire is over. He is undergoing a period of malaise because his elders in government, in opposition, in industry, in the unions are themselves groping for answers to his future. I am not groping for answers to your future.

My colleagues and I have done our rethinking as of 9th of August, 1965. We attempted the other way, the broader base, a place within a wider framework. It was not workable, not for reasons of personality, conflict of leadership, but for fundamental reasons; and we are determined, whatever people may have thought on the 9th of August 1965, that we shall continue to thrive, to prosper and to uphold values which we consider critical to the survival of new nations which embrace within their frontiers more than one race, more than one language, more than one religion. In other words, giving and being seen to give equal opportunities to all to find fulfilment. And that can best be done in our context by each keeping his own links with his past, his language, his culture so that he will understand his parents, the fables, the folklore, the parables, but seeking common ground with all the other groups because it is not in the past that

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we have to live. It is today and tomorrow that we have to prepare ourselves for; that means common ground, hence effective bilingualism.

I am not just saying so many things which I believe are theoretically desirable. I happen to believe in these things very profoundly and over the years to know that they are absolutely fundamental to our future. So much so although I would like very much for my sons to have come to this school, I decided that because they would be effectively English-speaking, having an English-speaking environment at home, they went to a Chinese school and they are completely at home in either culture, in either language and in more than just these two languages.

Finally, your future is in my hands and those of my colleagues for the time being but ultimately in yours very soon. A generation passes on, a younger one takes over and I do not want to see what we have done over the last 10 years go into fumbling feeble hands. They must go into hands which are firm, minds which are just, free from muddle-headed thinking, which means that we will put our universities and most important that teachers in those universities reflect the values which trial and error plus theory have shown to be important if we are continue to proper and to flourish.

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It will be unrealistic if I did not advert your attention to what has been happening. You know that there have been communal incidents. I returned on the 20th of last month knowing that a Malay had been shot and killed by a group of thugs not very far from here. We held the ground. It erupted again last Saturday. When a situation like that happens, you first let everybody know that there will be just, fair, and firm government. We talk about goodwill, love, fraternity in one community after everybody knows that his life and his property are best secured by listening to reasons and to what the government through its police is urging him to do, not to take the law into his own hands, and not to believe that for reasons for sentiment he ought to beat another person up because of his race. That is a very foolish thing to do in Singapore. Those who take the law into their own hands, will be smacked down firmly and where the evidence justifies it, a criminal prosecution will go right through to the end.

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When we have restored this sense of justice and everybody sees that justice is being done, then we go back and then talk about long-term problems. For this is now a long-term problem different from the riots in 1964. The last time we had no control over the army and the police, this time we have. The last time the problems were not as deep and as abiding. This time they have become far more painful, far more difficult because the magnitude of the problem has taken on a new dimension. From time to time we may have to face this little bit

of fuss and bother but a population properly educated on what is best for itself should be emotionally inoculated from these irrational, communal, emotive outbursts.

Finally it is in schools like Raffles where the different communities learn to be one people that the future lies and eventually all schools in Singapore will comprise within their classrooms more than just one ethnic group. It will take some time, but in the long run we will not have any schools where pupils are put together on the basis of just one race and one language. The monolinguist is a bigot because he does not know that there are other languages and other cultures as great if not greater than his own. A bilinguist has an aperture, a window open in his mind, into other worlds and when all of Singapore understand that and all of them have windows opening on to each other's worlds, then we will have a truly more tolerant, more understanding and for that reason a more peaceful and prosperous future. I wish you well over the next 140 years.

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Thank you.
