ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW, AT THE DINNER TO THE RT. HON. NORMAN E. KIRK, PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND, SATURDAY 22 DECEMBER, 1973

Mr. Prime Minister,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you on your first visit to Singapore as Prime Minister of New Zealand. First, we in Singapore have a special regard and respect for New Zealanders. Second, since you took office a year ago, we have found your government sincere in its approach and forthcoming in its policies. These make for warm personal and inter-government relations.

The inter-governmental understanding and ties have been built up from the early years of empire. But they are nevertheless real. And they form a useful credit item to carry forward as we turn over a new page, into an era where, under vastly changed world conditions, we have to seek new links for economic co-operation and for continued stability and security.

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The relatively simple world that we knew for many years after the end of the second World War, when American supremacy and Britain's special relationship with America were fixed reference points, is no more. The world picture has grown increasingly complex. The emergence of the Soviet Union as a super power, equal to the United States in military terms, has been demonstrated in Europe and the Middle East. The Soviet Union's new position may be felt in other parts of the world. In Southeast Asia, there is the growing strength of China which must be taken into account for the medium term. No one relishes the prospect of being caught in a new cold war between two Communist giants, the Soviet Union and China. Instead, Singapore would like good relations with all the super powers and the great powers. We want to stay non-aligned and avoid involvement in their conflicts.

The question is how is this to be achieved? American dominance in Asia can no longer be what it was. The naval presence of the Soviet Union is increasing. The renewed presence of China in the international community is actively felt. And what course will Japan follow to ensure her economic well-being? These are factors which will determine the shape of the future, and our responses in anticipation of their probable developments. However, whatever the picture which will emerge as a result of altered circumstances of the great

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powers, we hope to keep much of the old links. For they will help ease our adjustment into the more complicated multi-polar world.

We appreciate these old ties, all the more because regionalism has come to Southeast Asia. And New Zealand is part of our wider region. Regional economic strength has been demonstrated by the EEC. In Africa, in the OAU and the Arab world, regionalism has emerged as a potent political force. For Southeast Asia, perhaps also the Pacific, we must try to achieve whatever regionalism can yield in economic co -operation and political stability. And if we can gear these regional arrangements into the economic dynamos of America, Japan and Western Europe, then development will enhance peace and prosperity. For these industrial countries can furnish the capital, technology and the markets to make better standards of living possible.

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Since Britain first declared her intention to join Europe in 1962, multifold new economic nets have been woven across the Pacific, especially between Southeast Asia and Japan, and Southeast Asia and America. We have increased our ties with Australasia. We have benefited from the generosity of successive New Zealand governments in providing us with technical expertise, training for economic and defence needs and university education.

For Singapore, the last ten years have been momentous ones. Great changes took place all over Southeast Asia without overwhelming us. It was in good measure because of our Commonwealth friends. They helped us to safely bridge the period of instability and insecurity to the present tranquil and economically rewarding state of Southeast Asia.

So it is more than just ordinary courtesies of protocol when I express my appreciation for the contribution made by New Zealand -- a contribution much larger than the proportion of either her numbers or her GNP, because of the stalwart and robust qualities of the New Zealanders.

Now, may I ask you to join me in drinking to the health of Mr. Norman Kirk, Prime Minister of New Zealand.

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