TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW, AT THE WHITE HOUSE DINNER, MAY 8TH, 1975

It is two years since I was here as a guest, on a similar occasion, of your predecessor. For America, her friends and allies, the world has been somewhat diminished since then. In the first years after the end of World War II, the great events were the Cold War, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Blockade and the Korean War. In each of these trials of will and strength, America and her allies in Western Europe and, later, Japan, came out strong and united. But the dramatic turn of events of the last two years, the war in the Middle East in October '73, followed by the oil embargo, and four-fold increase in oil prices, the partitioning of Cyprus in June '74, and more recently the loss of Cambodia to the Khmer Rouge and the capture of South Vietnam by the North Vietnamese army, have weakened America and her allies.

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The economic recession and increased unemployment, on top of the crisis of confidence over Watergate and other related issues bequeathed a host of grave problems on your great office. They have become the more difficult to resolve because of bitterness and animosities within America, and between America and her allies, over past policies and suspected future courses of action.

Then, as the United States was near distraction, as a result of these problems, the North Vietnamese, who had been well supplied with arms by her allies, struck with suddenness and boldness, and brought off a great political coup, routing the South Vietnamese army. They had judged the mood of America correctly. They got away with it. These events have grave implications for the rest of Asia and the world. I hope you would not think it inappropriate for me to express more than just sympathy that so many Americans were killed and maimed, and so much resources expended by successive Democratic and Republican Administrations, to reach this result. It was an unmitigated tragedy. It was not inevitable that this should have happened, especially in this catastrophic manner, nor that the problems will end after communist control of Cambodia, South Vietnam and Laos, and their allegiance to competing communist power centres.

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Now, much will depend upon your Administration getting problems back into perspective. An economically weakened America, with recession dampening the industrial economies of Western Europe and Japan, leading to falling commodity prices for the developing world, other than the oil producers, was threatening to further weaken other non - communist governments the world over. Now it looks as if the worst may be over.

It may take some time, and no little effort, to sort out the complex problems of the Middle East, to remove the threat of a sudden cut in supplies of oil at reasonable prices. Then comes the restoration of confidence in the capacity of the United States to act in unison in a crisis. But no better service can be done to non - communist governments, than to restore confidence that the American government can and will act swiftly, and in tandem between the Administration and Congress, in any case of open aggression, and where you have a treaty obligation to do so.

If the President and Congress can speak in one voice on basic issues of foreign policy, and in clear and unmistakeable terms, then friends and allies know where they stand, and others will not pretend to misunderstand when crossing the line from insurgency into open aggression. Then the world will see less adventurism.

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When confusion reigns, it is more often because men's minds are confused than that the situation is confused. I found considerable clarity of exposition on future policies, both here in our discussions this morning, and in most of my discussions on Capitol Hill. Whilst there was no congruence of attitudes and policies, I believe there is enough common ground on major issues. If this

common ground can form the foundation of a coherent, consistent policy between now and the next Presidential Elections, there would be relief around the world.

Like the rest of the world, we in Asia have to get our people reconciled to slower rates of growth, now that the cost of energy has nearly quintupled. But growth, however slow, compared to what it used to be, would be of immense help in keeping the world peaceful and stable. Only then will great matters be accorded the priorities they deserve. And men's minds will be less confused. One such confusion is that since Vietnam and Cambodia were not America's to lose in the first place, then nothing has been lost. It is this apologetic explaining away of a grave setback that worries many of America's friends. Since we do not belong to you, then you have lost nothing, anyway, if we are lost.

I am happy to tell you, Mr. President, that my immediate neighbours and I have not been lost. Indeed we have every intention to co-ordinate our actions and policies to ensure that we will not be lost. It is a euphemism for a takeover, often by force. It will help if Americans do not find this strange.

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