STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER,

MR LEE KUAN YEW, AT THE OPENING OF

THE SECOND COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

REGIONAL MEETING (CHOGRM) IN NEW DELHI ON 4 SEP 80

May I, on behalf of my Commonwealth colleagues, thank you for your warm and gracious welcome as the host of the second Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting.

All of us are beset by many complex economic, social and security problems. They all seem unsolvable. One can easily become cynical at yet another gathering of Heads of Government, to stir up a stew of leftovers from other conferences: unfair terms of trade, balance of payments problems because of high oil prices, unemployment, inflation and protectionism. We can add little to make the brew more palatable or more digestible. But Commonwealth meetings have succeeded more often than other international gatherings in eschewing rhetoric and achieving substance. And it is worth recalling that when the Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Lusaka in August 1979, the week-long round of conferencing, interspersed with interminable private talks, drinks and meals, did bring about a change of minds on Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

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They led to a final round of negotiations which ended the guerrilla war, and elections were held for an independent government.

Since we met in Sydney, two momentous events act as landmarks: the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, December 1978, and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, December 1979. For the first time since the Korean War in 1950, when the North invaded the South, two communist governments moved their armies across national boundaries without any pretence over intentions.

It is instructive to note how the principals explain away their violations of the UN Charter.

The weekly magazine, Moscow News, of April 15, 1980 said:

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> "Non-interference is good thing, but the principles of international law do not exist in a vacuum ... History and politics cannot always be fit in legal formulas."

The Red Star of April 15* said:

"They (the Soviet Armed Forces) have lost their internal function but their external function has expanded and filled with a new essence, their international responsibility for defence of the gains of Socialism and Communism, fraternal socialist countries has increased."

In a commentary, Radio Hanoi on January 31, 1980 (Singapore Monitoring Digest, February 2) said:

"In less than one year at the two ends of Asia, history seems to repeat himself in its more basic features."

"What can be concluded from the parallel events?"

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Two of the three conclusions Radio Hanoi listed:

" (1) Nations on this vast continent, whether on its eastern or western end can no longer accept the fate reserved to them by their oppressors, whether they are imperialists

* Translated from article entitled, "V I Lenin on Defence of Socialism and Modern Times"

or hegemonists. They must rise up to thwart enemy plans, and in this they can have a multiform aid, including military aid, from neighbouring socialist countries.

(2) The present balance of forces in the world is such that in the confrontation between the forces of socialism and national independence on the one hand, and the forces of imperialism and reaction on the other, the former have the upper hand. Beijing wanted to give Vietnam a lesson in February-March 1979 to punish it for its 'hegemonistic doings', but it was rather the Chinese rulers who received a lesson from Vietnam and who have failed to reverse the situation in Kampuchea."

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On 18 August 1980, Radio Hanoi broadcast a message signed by Le Duan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and Premier Pham Van Dong to Babrak Karmal, Secretary-General of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan:

> "As close comrades-in-arms of the Afghan people, the Vietnamese people deeply rejoice at the great achievements you have recorded in national construction and defence, thus inflicting dismal defeats on the imperialists, the Beijing expansionists and other reactionary forces ... We firmly believe that the Afghan revolution is irreversible."

In short, they are establishing a new doctrine of justifiable intervention outside the framework of the UN Charter: precedents for open armed intervention. Both Kampuchea and Afghanistan had communist governments professing non-alignment. This did not save them from zealous interference by their neighbours, self-righteous regimes, anxious to anticipate the future by force, to establish the true millennium of communism. What idyllic future were they so anxious to secure for their neighbours?

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I believe the striking workers in Poland were signalling an important message. They are amongst the first captive converts of the communist faith. Thirty-three years after a communist government was imposed on them in 1947, these Polish workers, in whose name the Communist Party of Poland claimed to govern, made a heroic plea for a return of a small part of the freedom they had

lost. Theirs is the despair of those trapped in the ice of the communist system, which detente and the Helsinki Agreement have not thawed. Despite the overwhelming presence of Soviet arms and armour in their midst and around them, Polish workers have demonstrated their passionate desire for more food and some freedom from the strait jacket of the communist society.

We who have come to this conference represent politically pluralistic societies. We do not pretend to know what the future has in store for us. We do not have the impudence to invoke history in pursuit of a self-righteous conviction that we know how to anticipate history. When I was last here in Delhi in December 1978, Madam Chairman, I had difficulty in arranging a meeting with you. I did not know, nor perhaps did you, that you would, as Prime Minister of India, welcome me back again. There is much unintendedness about this world.

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For example, 1980 was to herald the third development decade. The Brandt Commission report on North-South problems was to have prepared the ground for the Special Session on Economic Development of the UN to debate this. The report was to have given a fresh impetus to a global approach to the interdependent problems of energy, finance, transfers of capital and technology, freer trade and less protectionism, better terms of trade for

commodity producers, and global development. But before the report was released in March this year, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan has set America, Western Europe, and Japan off on an urgent programme to increase defence expenditure. Increased defence spending will not help significant transfers of capital and technology from North to South, whatever the result of the present debate at the UN.

We form a diverse cross-section of nations, different in size and culture, stretched across the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Our deliberations will not change the compulsions of strategic interests of the great powers, at least not immediately. Nevertheless, by expressing our condemnation, without fear or favour, of the use of force in settling disputes by big countries against their smaller neighbours, we can alter the political climate of the world. We can change world opinion for the better, by putting all aggressors on notice, that we shall support those who are attacked, whatever the pretext, to defend their independence. We must do this if we want to reinforce peace and stability. This is one justification for our meeting in Delhi in September 1980.

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