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PRIME MINISTER'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE 1990

We ended the 1980s in good form. For 1989, we made 9.2 per cent growth. For the decade of the 80s, because of the recession in 1985, we made 7.1 per cent growth.

It has been a decade of self-renewal. A new generation has assumed leadership positions in the Cabinet, Parliament, and the public services. Before the end of 1990, Goh Chok Tong will take over as Prime Minister. Singapore enters the 1990s with its people and leaders confident that they have pulled together when the going got rough, and can do momentum of the investments already committed, plus high productivity consciousness, we shall achieve 4-6 per cent growth for the 1990s.

Tumultuous events in 1989 marked the end of an epoch. The political earthquakes in Eastern Europe have irreversibly changed the map of Europe and the world. Their impact and implications will take several years to work out.

The bipolar world in which every international issue turned upon the need to contain the Soviet Communist bloc has ended. Geopolitical relationships worldwide are altering.

But it is too much to expect all countries to live happily ever after. To maintain peace in the world there must be a new balance of power. For a few years, the Soviet Union will be less menacing because it has to grapple with economic and political reforms. China too is pre-occupied with leadership change as the long-march veterans pass on.

For Asia and the Pacific a sound relationship between America and Japan is crucial to stability and growth. This may be more difficult in the future without a common threat from the Soviet bloc.

But for the present ASEAN should enjoy peace, with the prospect of more years of high growth. Let us use this period to consolidate Singapore's political and economic position and increase cooperation within ASEAN.

I wish all a happy New Year. Let the 1990s be the decade when Singapore comes of age as a developed country.