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COMMUNICATIONS WITH MR. LEE KUAN YEW

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies

The last thing that I would want to do would be to comment upon statements made by my colleague, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, of which I have had some reports.

I want to make it quite clear that Mr. Lee has my warm good wishes and those of my Government and that we all hope that Singapore will have a successful future. I have already told him this.

It is quite true that when Mr. Lee was in Australia I had long and useful discussions with him, as did the members of my Cabinet. It is also true that later on he wrote to me and that I wrote to him, but these communications, as he agrees, were personal and I, of course, cannot disclose their contents.

After hearing from him and considering what he had to say, I was by no means inactive. I communicated with the Prime Minister of Malaysia; my Minister for External Affairs saw him; and there is no doubt that our views, which were always helpful, were well known to him as they were to Mr. Lee. Naturally, I am not prepared to disclose the contents of these communications.

I think that the important thing to remember in all these matters is that, while Australia does not determine the future of Malaysia or the position of its constituent States, we are profoundly interested in the future well-being of this part of the world. We hope and believe that Malaysia and Singapore will be able to work out joint defensive arrangements of a satisfactory kind. Indeed, with good will on both sides, we are sure that this result can be achieved.

After the separation of Singapore from Malaysia, I sent to Mr. Lee a warm expression of our goodwill, of our recognition, of our hopes for the future. Those views still stand.

CANBERRA,
31st August, 1965.