



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

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### PARLIAMENTARY LUNCHEON FOR LEE KUAN YEW

In welcoming you to Australia we all recognise that we are welcoming a most remarkable man. Through you, Singapore has built for itself a position in the region and beyond which larger states might well envy.

We in Australia are now undertaking the difficult task of restoring a large and complex economy to prosperity. Your success in controlling inflation stands as a remarkable example of what can be done. Inflation in Singapore averaged 24% in 1973 and 1974, but was reduced to under 3% in 1975.

Through the period of your Prime Ministership Singapore has achieved high rates of growth in production and incomes, so that now per capita income in Singapore is second only to Japan in Asia. The economic strength of Singapore is one of the strengths of the region. This is an achievement which might seem astonishing, for Singapore does not possess great natural resources. Its principal resource is the will, the energy, the capacity to work of its people.

In the years before you became Prime Minister Singapore had suffered from communist violence and was still facing immense social problems. Its prospects seemed grim. The great achievements of your Government have dissipated the concern that many felt at the time. Your Government has succeeded in creating the conditions in which the people of Singapore have been able to build one of the most prosperous communities in Asia.

Singapore has recognised that true security for the people of a nation - in the individual as well as the national sense - derives from encouraging the enterprise, vision and work which makes prosperity possible.

People have a sense of security in their own lives when they can be confident of finding a job, when they know that they can save and that these savings will not be eroded by inflation and when they can plan for their future with reasonable certainty and confidence.

It is when people have a secure independence to build their own lives that they develop the skills and confidence to master a fast changing world.

These same conditions are also essential foundations of national security and national independence.

Ultimately, the strength of any nation is the stature, the clear-sightedness, the vision of its people - and the capacity to work to realise that vision.

Political leaders have a responsibility to make clear the plain facts about the world - that both prosperity and - in the end - national survival depend on a willingness to work, to give of one's best, to accept responsibility.

Political leaders who promise the world for the price of a vote - who pretend that worthwhile goals can be achieved without personal effort - do their people no service.

Singapore has been fortunate to have found a national leader who is above all, a realist - a man who has not hesitated to face difficult facts, and to do what he thought was right for his country.

Under your Government, Singapore has grown strong. It is today, one of the most technologically advanced countries in Asia. It is a great trading centre - open and competitive.

Australia values its relations with Singapore.

Our ties with Singapore exist at many levels.

We value defence cooperation and will do what we can to assist Singapore in building an effective and self-reliant defence capability.

Several of Australia's major companies have established joint venture operations in Singapore as a measure of their confidence in its stability and future growth.

There are regular interchanges at all levels of our societies and in a wide variety of fields. Thousands of Singaporeans have studied in our universities and other tertiary institutions.

Last week in Jakarta, I reaffirmed in an address to the Indonesian Parliament, Australia's attitude towards ASEAN, which I said was one of the most important developments in the region in the past decade. ASEAN is an organisation which has grown out of the South East Asian region itself.

In a relatively short time, ASEAN has demonstrated its vitality. It is showing a resolute political will to forge further economic, social and cultural links among its members. At this year's Bali Conference, the framework was established which will provide firm support for ASEAN's aspirations.

ASEAN is making a real contribution to the peaceful progress of the South East Asian region as a whole.

The changes that have taken place elsewhere in South East Asia have inevitably brought a period of uncertainty and anxiety.

It is imperative that all countries work to avoid the emergence of new tensions and divisions in South East Asia.

For this reason, we welcomed the constructive and forthcoming way in which the members of ASEAN showed readiness to establish friendly relations with the new Governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia last year.

We would like to see the three countries of Indo-China drawn into a peaceful and cooperative role in our part of the world, and the region free from domination by any great power.

We all recognise that subversion feeds on injustice and human misery, and that conditions of permanent peace can be established only when societies can offer decent opportunities to all.

We in Australia will do what we can to contribute to the economic growth and national self-reliance of our whole region.

As long as affairs of the region are in the hands of leaders having the calibre and sense of purpose displayed by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, we have every confidence in the future of South East Asia.

We welcome you to Australia as an old friend, and wish you a successful and enjoyable visit.