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Now look to the future

Tengku pledges support for admission to Commonwealth and United Nations

What it means—at a glance

Singapore is out

By FELIX ABRAHAMSZOON, Kuala Lumpur, Monday

SINGAPORE today separated from Malaysia, following an amendment to the Constitution approved unanimously by both Houses of Parliament under a certificate of urgency.

Tengku: It was my idea

Bitter battle

INSIDE

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Albert Lau

On 16 September 1963, after 17 years apart, Singapore was reunited with the Federation of Malaya. The self-governing colony had achieved its goal of independence from Britain — albeit as a component of the new nation of Malaysia. The ecstatic sensation of independence, however, was immediately dampened by an intensification of Konfrontasi (Confrontation) by neighbouring Indonesia, followed by the Indonesian president's ominous threat to "*ganjang* (crush) Malaysia".[1] Between Singapore and Malaysia, too, feathers had been ruffled during negotiations over Merger. Efforts to insure their respective core interests had revealed deep-seated political fault lines.

Cognisant of such differences yet committed to ensuring Malaysia's success, Lee Kuan Yew, in his speech at the inauguration of Malaysia, called for an "honourable relationship" with the Central Government — "a relationship between brothers … not a relationship between masters and servants". It was, as it turned out, a forlorn plea, for in less than two years, Singapore was out of Malaysia in an acrimonious break-up.

How did the relationship between Singapore and Malaysia reach such an alarming state that the decision to separate in August 1965 was perceived as the only option to avert a more calamitous outcome? In hindsight, the answer could perhaps be found in the post-Merger resumption of the political and

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ethnic rivalry that had so beset relations between the two "power centres" in colonial times, and which Singapore's constitutional separation from the peninsula in 1946 had only temporarily suspended but never completely tempered.

The fundamental problem, it appeared, lay in the deep-seated Malay consciousness of Malaya as being primarily a Malay country — a conviction that found expression, once Malaysia was established, in the belief that the new Federation was simply an extension of the old Malaya. Political power would continue to be vested in a communally aligned, right-wing, Alliance-led government headed by the United Malays National Organisation or Umno, with Malays in charge and given special privileges.

The central Alliance government in Kuala Lumpur sought not only to insulate its base in Peninsular Malaya from the potentially subversive left-wing politics of a Chinese-majority Singapore helmed by the non-communally aligned and Malaya-oriented PAP — a party it instinctively distrusted — but also sought to outplay the leading Singapore party on its own turf so as to ultimately extend Alliance hegemony over the island's political process.

The opportunity came during the Singapore General Election on 21 September 1963, an election for which the PAP had been assiduously preparing for some time, as it was constitutionally required to call for polls before the end of March 1964. Since coming into power in 1959, the PAP had seen its parliamentary strength eroded from 43 to only 25 out of 51 seats by August 1962 — the upshot of a series of defections, deaths and by-election reversals. In danger of being toppled if not for the tentative backing of the pro-Malaysia and Kuala Lumpur-friendly Singapore Alliance in the Assembly — a formalised umbrella consisting of the Singapore People's Alliance (SPA) and the Singapore branches of the Umno, Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) — the PAP government was eager to restore its majority position in an election and concurrently blunt the force of the Barisan Sosialis' propaganda portraying the regime as lacking widespread support.

Mindful also of Kuala Lumpur's ambitions in Singapore, the PAP saw a need to decisively defeat the Alliance's surrogate, the Singapore Alliance, to show Tunku Abdul Rahman there was no effective moderate alternative to the PAP in Singapore.[2] Assessing that early polls before Malaysia's creation were politically risky, the PAP took the tactically more prudent step of staging the election immediately after Malaysia's formation — in fact, just five days after Malaysia Day — so as to insure against the danger of merger being abandoned in the event of a Barisan Sosialis upset at the polls. Bolstered by the ringing endorsement of its stand at the referendum a year earlier and the crippling of the Barisan in Operation Coldstore in February 1963, the PAP was cautiously confident of securing a convincing majority.[3]

Alliance Campaigns in Singapore General Election

Despite an apparently tacit agreement between the Tunku and Lee to keep out of each other's political backyard, federal leaders and ministers, including the Tunku, descended on Singapore two days before the polls to canvass on behalf of the Singapore Alliance in its campaign to

unseat the PAP. On 19 September 1963, VT Sambanthan, the Malaysian Minister of Works, Posts and Telecommunications, slammed the PAP for calling a "snap" election and urged the 1,500-strong crowd at the Canberra Padang to vote for the Alliance to show their support for the Tunku, the "Father of Malaysia".[4] The Tunku himself, speaking at a Singapore Alliance tea party on 19 September 1963 at Federation House in the Tanglin area during his first visit to Singapore since Malaysia was formed, called on voters to get "the right party to run the state" and left no doubt that by the "right" party, he meant the Singapore Alliance — "the party of which I am the leader" — and not the ruling PAP.[5]

The intervention of the Malaysian leaders failed to stem the PAP tide. Contesting all 51 seats, the PAP romped home with 37 seats. This was six fewer than in 1959, but a resounding victory nevertheless since this time it won without pro-communist support. Barisan Sosialis managed to secure only 13 out of the 46 seats it contested.

The PAP's right-wing opponents also failed to sparkle. Despite the backing of Malaysian ministers, including the Tunku's personal intervention, the Singapore Alliance fared dismally. None of its 42 candidates was returned, their complete rout putting an end, for the time being at least, to Kuala Lumpur's efforts to influence the island's politics. Particularly vexing for the Tunku was the loss of the three Singapore Umno (Sumno) strongholds of Geylang Serai, Kampong Kembangan, and Southern Islands. Clearly displeased, the Tunku on 22 and 27 September 1963 vented his anger at "traitors" from within Malay ranks, who did not vote *en bloc* along communal lines for Sumno but voted instead for candidates belonging to the non-communally oriented PAP.[6] He later vowed to get personally involved in revitalising Sumno to take on the PAP in future elections.

"The Tunku was shocked that his Malay base had been penetrated," recalled Othman Wok, whom Lee had named to his cabinet as Singapore's first Minister for Social Affairs after the election. The loss of the Malay wards was a warning the Tunku could not afford to ignore, for it struck at the core of the Alliance system of communal alliances through which Umno derived its ascendancy and hegemony. The PAP's victories in the Malay constituencies "triggered off a reaction on the other side that we should never be allowed to do that in Malaya", ruminated Lee a year later. "We won, and they were determined that we will not win in Malaya."[7]

Bitterly disappointed by the party's electoral eclipse, Sumno, abetted by Umno leaders from the Federation, staged a series of anti-PAP rallies at its local branches, during which an effigy of Lee was burnt. Not wishing to strain so soon his post-election ties with the Federation, Lee responded with appropriate restraint by reiterating his government's desire to work with the Federation on a fair and equal basis, and calling on Alliance leaders to let Singapore resolve its problems without federal interference.[8] After the initial furore subsided, and with both sides eager to move on,[9] there were hopeful signs that the more moderate members of the Umno leadership were thinking of getting the PAP more closely engaged in the Central Government, with the Tunku himself contemplating the prospect of taking two ministers from the PAP into his cabinet.[10] But opposition from the MCA and the more extreme elements in Umno thwarted

further progress on this politically tantalising prospect. Given that the PAP desired to foster a cooperative relationship with the Central Government, and was likely to accept cabinet positions if offered, the collapse of this proposal was, in retrospect, an opportunity lost.

With its exclusion from a national role, the PAP duly picked a strong team to represent Singapore in the Federal Parliament and play its new role as "cross-benchers — friend, loyal opposition and critic". The Tunku, also in a conciliatory mood, consented to have the 12 PAP representatives sit partly on the government side and partly on the opposition side of the House.[11] The Malaysian premier agreed also to take up an offer by Lee to send the Singapore leader on a tour of African countries to counter Indonesian propaganda about the so-called neo-colonialist status of Malaysia. Starting from Singapore on 20 January 1964, Lee's 35-day whirlwind African tour took him to 17 countries before ending in Kuala Lumpur on 26 February.[12] Gratified by the tour's successful "propaganda harvest", the Tunku planned to despatch Lee on a second mission, this time to canvass support for Malaysia in the United States, which was eager to cultivate Indonesia — Southeast Asia's largest state, as well as the world's largest Muslim-majority state — as a prospective Cold War ally. It had initially been reluctant to rein in the latter's campaign against Malaysia.[13] On 12 March, Lee's impending visit to the US on behalf of the Malaysian government was made public. The next day, however, the Tunku issued a coldly worded statement that Lee's US trip was off.[14]

PAP Enters Federation Elections

The reason for cancelling Lee's trip was the PAP's controversial decision to take part in the federal election in April 1964. Concern about how Singapore could safeguard its interests in Malaysia had prompted Lee, before his departure to Africa, to call an urgent meeting of the PAP's Publicity and Propaganda Coordinating Committee. He asked the committee to discuss, but not decide until after his return, the desirability of the PAP intervening in the forthcoming general election in the Federation.[15] The PAP's sense of vulnerability had been heightened by the Tunku's resolve to revitalise the Singapore Alliance and his desire to play a more proactive role in future Singapore elections.

The PAP leadership felt that so long as the party remained "contained" in Singapore, its long-term political longevity could not be assured. It would have no effective counter to Kuala Lumpur's ability to bring the full weight of federal power to bear in its dealings with Singapore and diminish the influence of the PAP over time. The PAP leaders reckoned that such political competition, if not forestalled, would force the party to assume — in self-defence — the role of a pan-Malaysian opposition party. This would bring it into a head-on collision with Umno probably by the time of the next federal elections in 1969, with dire consequences for Malaysia's stability.

Hoping to avoid such an outcome, and encouraged by its new-found Malay support on the island and success at the Singapore polls, the PAP calculated that a "token" electoral intervention

in the 1964 Malaysian General Election to win some seats was a necessary first gesture to establish the party as a "Malaysian" party and persuade the Tunku to include the PAP in his government. This would ensure that the PAP, as one of the founders of Malaysia, could play the wider national role it envisaged for itself, and also give the party the necessary leverage to safeguard Singapore's interests.

During Lee's absence in Africa, members of the PAP's Central Executive Committee (CEC) — led by a group of Malaya-born or bred Singapore ministers, including Toh Chin Chye, S Rajaratnam and Ong Pang Boon — persuaded the other CEC members to take the momentous decision to contest the April 1964 Malaysian General Election. Not all were swayed. Minister for Finance Goh Keng Swee, for instance, worried that any intervention would sour relations with the Federal Government and jeopardise his common market plans. After he returned from Africa on 26 February, Lee also had reservations, but went along with the CEC's majority decision.[16] Since the Tunku had breached his verbal undertaking to Lee not to participate in Singapore's elections, PAP leaders correspondingly felt less constrained in contesting federal elections. "[I]f the Federation Alliance had not interfered in Singapore's [1963] election, they might have honoured my gentleman's agreement with the Tunku that we leave each other alone for the first elections," Lee recalled. "But the Tunku having breached his own undertaking, they felt released from any such inhibitions."[17] As Lee put it, "the CEC considered all bets off".[18]

While acknowledging that intervention carried risks, Singapore's ministers believed that if the PAP kept the number of its candidates small, avoided fielding them against Umno candidates, and focused only on wards where MCA candidates stood, the party's limited intervention might not be misconstrued by the Federation's leadership as a challenge to Umno or the Central Government. Instead, its participation could be publicised as a bid by the PAP to help Malaysia succeed, by co-operating with Kuala Lumpur to fight the pro-Indonesia, pro-communist and anti-Malaysia parties like the Socialist Front in the Federation.[19] Taking aim at the MCA, which it accused of being ineffective in rallying the urban masses against the pro-communist Socialist Front, the PAP argued that while the moderate Malay leadership of the Tunku and his deputy, Razak, was "vital" to Malaysia, that of the MCA was "replaceable".[20] Behind the PAP's *raison d'être* for intervention was the assumption that without a show of power, especially in its contest against the MCA, the Tunku was unlikely to agree early to share power with the PAP by bringing it into the national government.

Malaysian ministers, however, saw the PAP's thrust as not only "quite contrary" to the understanding between the two premiers but also an attempt to skirt round the constitutional terms by which Singapore was accepted into Malaysia, which limited its representation in the Federal Parliament to 15 seats in return for autonomy in education and labour. After the eclipse of the Alliance at the Singapore polls, Federation leaders were further alarmed at the spectre of a self-assured, socialist, and non-communally oriented PAP crossing the Straits of Johor and engaging the mainland Alliance in political combat for a hand in running Malaysia's affairs. Kuala Lumpur felt it was presented with the choice of either accepting the PAP now or facing a future challenge by a potentially dangerous adversary. Before, Umno's hegemony over the

Malays had no real contender. Now, it faced the prospect of an ideological challenge from the Singapore-based PAP, one that would affect the continued existence of the communally weighted Alliance system that Umno led. Alliance leaders therefore had no trouble construing the PAP move as a direct challenge to the MCA, whose leaders were convinced that the PAP had designs to supplant them as the party representing the Chinese in Malaysia. Dismissing the PAP attempt to divide the Alliance by "attacking one partner … and praising another", the Tunku stood by his MCA partner and rejected the PAP.[21]

The PAP canvassed vigorously during the month-long campaign, "pulling our punches only against Umno, despite their attacks", recalled Lee.[22] It promised to trigger a "social revolution" that would bring the "winds of change" to sweep throughout Malaysia if elected.[23] The PAP campaign "caught the imagination of the Chinese and the Indians and the others, because they now had a leadership to respond to".[24] But despite the massive crowds at its rallies, and its confidence of winning at least six or seven of the nine seats it contested, the outcome of the 25 April 1964 polls stunned and disappointed the PAP: Only one of its nine parliamentary candidates, Devan Nair, was returned.[25] The Alliance won 89 out of 104 seats, 15 seats more than before. The MCA had not only confounded its PAP detractors, it was also returned stronger than before, winning 27 of its allotted 33 parliamentary seats, up from 19 of 32 seats in 1959.

For the PAP, its first cross-strait electoral foray was, according to an American diplomat, an "almost complete rout", hardly redeemed by its single win in Bangsar, with Nair winning narrowly by 808 votes.[26] The PAP's whole rationale for entering the elections — that the Alliance needed the PAP's help — was discredited. The party's inexperience in Malaya, its lack of a party machinery in the peninsula, and failure to accurately read the ground, probably contributed to the debacle. By entering only a token team, the PAP, in Lee's assessment, "did not give people a good reason to switch from the MCA to the PAP". Even if elected, the small contingent would not have been "strong enough to cut a deal with Umno".[27]

The Tunku, on the other hand, astutely campaigned on only one main issue — the need for national unity at a time of confrontation with Indonesia, with a vote against the ruling party meaning disloyalty to the nation. As a result, many Chinese dared not vote for any party except the MCA, observed the Federation's Minister of Internal Security, Ismail Abdul Rahman.[28] With the sudden reversal of its electoral fortunes, the PAP lost whatever leverage it had hoped to gain by crossing into the Alliance's domain.

Not surprisingly, relations between the PAP and the Alliance, never comfortable to begin with, deteriorated further. Whatever hopes the PAP had entertained of being invited to join the Central Government evaporated. For starters, its cross-benching days were over. When the Dewan Rakyat (the Malaysian House of Representatives) convened on 18 May 1964, the five PAP parliamentarians who previously sat on the government side were duly moved to join the other seven sitting with the opposition. Lee was offered, but shrewdly declined, the role of the leader of the opposition.

Still, for the PAP to continue in its professed role as the "loyal opposition" was even less realistic, now that the Alliance no longer trusted it. Having challenged and lost, the PAP faced the

ominous prospect of a newly empowered Alliance, well-positioned with its commanding two-thirds parliamentary majority to wield the big stick in its dealings with Singapore. Reflecting on the PAP's foray into federal politics many years later, Lee suggested that if Toh and Rajaratnam had not persuaded the PAP's CEC to take part in the 1964 election, "the history of Singapore might have been different". He added: "There might not have been Separation."[29]

The post-election period saw the PAP–Alliance rivalry entering a dangerous phase. Though the immediate danger from Singapore had been eliminated, the longer-term threat of the PAP to the Alliance and what it represented — Malay dominance — was not. As Othman Wok later observed: "Although we won only one seat in Bangsar, Selangor, our campaign and mass rallies were very well-attended, particularly by large numbers of Malays. This worried the Tunku who feared that the PAP would eventually be a political force to be reckoned with. The PAP had penetrated his Singapore Malay base. He did not want the same to happen in other parts of Malaysia."[30]

Notwithstanding the abrupt blunting of their maiden Malayan venture, PAP leaders appeared unchastened. They seemed as determined as ever in their post-election statements to bring the "winds of change" to Malaysia. To Umno, this was a political "red light".[31] So it was only shrewd politics, before the PAP could recover its strength, to ride on the momentum of the Alliance's victory and bring the battle to the PAP's own backyard, isolate and contain the party in Singapore itself, keep it on the defensive, and thereby shield the Federation from its politics.

Shortly after the 1964 federal election, Umno activists "decided to go back to straightforward communal politics"[32], as Lee put it, and precipitated a three-month campaign accusing the PAP of oppressing the Malays in Singapore. "They decided to reverse the process of the Malays coalescing with the Chinese and Indians in Singapore," recalled Lee.[33] Taking the lead was the Umno-controlled *Utusan Melayu*, a Jawi-script newspaper read mainly by Malays, which accused the Singapore Government of evicting Malays from their homes in Singapore, turning "Geylang Serai into another Chinatown", and treating Malays like stepchildren — allegations which the PAP refuted as reckless and misleading.[34] Adding to the heat were provocative speeches by Sumno and Umno leaders, including a "fiery" tirade by Umno's Secretary-General, Syed Jaffar Albar, on 12 July 1964 at the New Star Cinema in Pasir Panjang. Representatives from 123 Malay and Muslim organisations had been invited to forestall a similar convention of Malay leaders the Singapore Government had called for on 17 July to counter the "lies and innuendoes"[35] of Umno's anti-PAP campaign. Delivering his keynote address, Albar attacked the PAP and Lee for allegedly oppressing the Malays in Singapore and exhorted Malays and Muslims to stand united and fight for their rights so that "no force in the world can trample us down".[36] As the UK Joint Intelligence Committee reported, Albar's inflammatory oratory at the conference "almost amounted to incitement to violence".[37]

Seen from Singapore's perspective, Umno campaign's agenda was to stir up the Malays in Singapore, possibly to riot, with the objective of, firstly, frightening the PAP government into submission; secondly, undercutting the multi-racial basis of PAP support by giving an object lesson to Malays, both in Singapore and Malaya, not to trust the PAP; and, thirdly, enabling Sumno to reclaim the Malay ground that it had lost in 1963. By discrediting the PAP's non-communal platform, Umno would have also dealt the PAP a fourth serious blow by forcing it to depend on its Chinese base and to operate as a communal party. In such a case, its attraction to non-Malays in the Federation would be much reduced, as the PAP would be forced to challenge the Alliance within the established framework of a communal political system devised to ensure Umno's hegemony. By turning the Malays in Singapore against the PAP government, Umno's purpose was to show Malays throughout Malaysia that only an Umno-led government could safeguard their interests. The tense atmosphere created by the three-month-long communal agitation played no small part in contributing to the two race riots in Singapore in July and September 1964.

Race Riots in Singapore

The first riot occurred on 21 July 1964 during the annual religious procession from the Padang, where some 20,000 Muslims had gathered, to celebrate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday. Prior to the procession, incendiary leaflets calling on Malays to "crush" and "destroy" the "Chinese" government were distributed among the crowds at the Padang. Umno and Sumno leaders had also given inflammatory speeches at the gathering, calling on Muslims to "unite and arise", to fight for their rights and to "sacrifice their lives and properties for the sake of the country".[38] Given the heightened state of communal agitation that had been going on for months, the speeches were potentially explosive. Not only were they highly inappropriate, given the religious occasion, they were also "an invitation for trouble", the Singapore Government said in a memorandum it later submitted to a planned Commission of Inquiry in March 1965.[39] Unruly behaviour was further seen when the closing address by Singapore's Yang di-Pertuan Negara, Yusof Ishak, was interrupted by bouts of orchestrated jeering and booing. However, without strong evidence of trouble breaking out, which the police were unable to confirm, it was impossible for the Singapore Government to cancel the celebrations without risking a backlash from the Malay-Muslim community.[40]

At 4 pm, the procession moved off from the Padang. Sometime after 5 pm, according to the police version cited by Lee, as the marchers passed by the Kallang Gas Works, riots broke out when a member of the Federal Reserve Unit was set upon. He had asked a group that was straggling from the procession to rejoin the main stream.

"Thereafter a series of disturbances occurred as more groups became unruly and attacked passers-by and innocent bystanders," Lee subsequently asserted.[41] As gangs of armed Malays attacked Chinese, and Chinese counter-attacked, the fighting spiralled out of control. The entire police force, supplemented by military reinforcements, was brought into action. A curfew was imposed for 12 days, but it gave only temporary relief as violence erupted after it was lifted. The police was mobilised again and stood down only on 7 August, 17 days after the start of the riots.

The mayhem exacted a heavy toll: 23 dead and 454 injured. "It was a heavy price for the Malaysian Government to pay to teach the PAP a lesson for taking part in the Malayan election and to regain the Malay ground they had lost in the 1963 Singapore election," Lee reflected.

"Umno leaders knew what Albar was up to from reading the *Utusan Melayu*, but allowed him to go on."[42]

PAP leaders maintained that the riots had not erupted spontaneously as a manifestation of genuine racial animosities but had been planned and instigated by Umno activists.[43] "All the indications show that there has been organisation and planning behind this outbreak to turn it into an ugly communal clash," Lee reported in his broadcast on 21 July 1964. "All that was needed was someone to trigger it off."[44] According to Devan Nair, who drove from Bangsar to Singapore at "breakneck speed" to be with his family living then at Coronation Road, a partly Malay area, "it was a fairly open secret in PAP circles that the riots had been inspired by people out to do the PAP in".[45]

Othman Wok recalled later that a week after the riots, while he was in Kuala Lumpur, a senior *Utusan Melayu* reporter told him that he already knew at 2 pm on 21 July 1964 that there would be riots in Singapore that afternoon. When Othman asked him how he had known this at 2 pm when the riots took place only much later, the reporter replied: "Oh yes. We knew beforehand. We have our sources, you know." It dawned on Othman that *Utusan Melayu*, which had been spearheading the anti-PAP campaign and publishing the inflammatory speeches by Umno leaders, "must [have] been informed by those responsible for the impending riots because it was going to be big news".[46]

In the absence of a "shocked" Tunku, who was away in America, the acting premier, Razak, flew into Singapore the day after the riots started with a racially mixed party of federal ministers in a display of unity. His purpose was to tour the affected areas, visit casualties at the Singapore General Hospital, appeal for calm, restore confidence, and assess the situation. Singapore ministers were also busy at work. Multi-racial goodwill committees were set up in all constituencies. Lee toured the badly hit areas to show that his government was still functioning and reassure the people that it could restore things to normal — "although we were no longer in charge of the police and army".[47] Razak and Lee did not get on well in Singapore. Disagreeing with Lee's version of events, Razak blamed the trouble instead on a "mischief-maker" (by implication a Chinese) who had allegedly thrown an empty bottle into the procession.[48]

Mutual suspicions ran deep and no joint broadcast was made before Razak left the same evening for Kuala Lumpur. The Singapore leader had apparently been brushed aside by federal ministers who criticised him publicly and made statements without consulting him. For Lee, the failure of Razak to take an explicit and resolute stand against communal politicking was disturbing as it raised serious doubts about Kuala Lumpur's sincerity on the goal of creating a Malaysian nation. With his government powerless in the security field, Lee feared that Kuala Lumpur might take advantage of the situation, declare martial law, and rule the state directly, rather than act through the Singapore Government.[49] "Lee's image and authority were seriously impaired in Singapore," observed American consul Arthur Rosen. "[F]or a few days, Central Government leaders virtually took over the Singapore Government. … Kuala Lumpur's muscles were flexed for all to see."[50]

Even as federal and Singapore leaders appealed for calm, Malay extremists did not let up

in their agitation — either directly, through leaders like Albar or indirectly, through their mouthpieces like the *Utusan Melayu, Utusan Zaman* and the Umno journal, *Merdeka*. What the campaign revealed, from the PAP's viewpoint, was not only the irresponsibility of its sponsors but also their more insidious political agenda — the forcible replacement of the elected PAP government in Singapore. Depicting PAP rule as oppressive to Malays and putting responsibility for the riots squarely on the Singapore Government, the new anti-PAP offensive called for the "discredited" PAP government, supposedly now in a state of collapse, to be changed. Barely three days after the riots started, *Merdeka*, for instance, asserted that for the good of Singapore and Malaysia, the "leadership of the PAP government who are in power now should be changed and replaced" and called on Kuala Lumpur to "act firmly" and pay serious attention to the Singapore Malays whose "fate … solely depend on the Central Government now".[51]

The PAP's stature in Singapore was severely affected by the riots. PAP ministers who toured their constituencies in the aftermath were "alarmed by the poor reception" they received, according to an American diplomat who observed the scenes.[52] The government's inability to protect its peoples and seeming impotence in the face of federal power had turned public opinion against it. Among the Chinese, many felt intimidated as a result of the open pro-Malay bias of the federal troops and police during the riots, Lee noted in his memoirs.[53] Many believed that had it not been for the Chinese secret society members who rallied to their defence, more Chinese would have been killed or injured.

Disquiet too was evident among Malays, who were more inclined to accept Razak's version of events. This led Goh to surmise that the PAP probably lost the Malay votes it had won in September 1963.[54] "It was terribly disheartening, a negation of everything we had believed in and worked for — gradual integration and the blurring of the racial divide," Lee reflected years later.[55]

To hold their position, Singapore leaders wanted Kuala Lumpur to condemn Umno extremists for instigating the violence, failing which they would have no choice but to convene a post-mortem or an inquiry that would not only exonerate the Singapore Government of the charge of mistreating the Malays in Singapore but would also result in an indictment of Umno leaders for precipitating the violence.

Goh reflected later: "[B]y mid-1964, we were thoroughly disillusioned. We knew that Malaysia had not brought about the benefits we expected. … I myself could not see how we could extricate ourselves from this mess."[56]

Co-operation or Co-existence?

For decades, the secret negotiations leading up to the Separation of Singapore from Malaysia were shrouded in secrecy. It was only in 1996 that the public was offered a glimpse into what had ensued in the lead-up to Separation. Melanie Chew interviewed Goh for her book, *Leaders of Singapore*. As their conversation turned predictably to the break-up of Malaysia, the former minister's response was anything but expected.

Chew: When did you feel that Malaysia was going to break up? Was it a surprise to you?

Goh: Now I am going to let you into what has been a state secret up to now. This is a file, which I call Albatross.

In the early days, there was a lot of discussion about changing the terms of Malaysia by the Prime Minister, Rajaratnam and Toh Chin Chye. It got nowhere. They discussed all types of projects. Was Singapore to be part of Malaysia, but with special powers, or with no connection with Malaysia?

Now on 20 July 1965, I met Tun Razak and Dr Ismail. Now this is 20 July 1965. I persuaded him that the only way out was for Singapore to secede, completely. …

Chew: How did Tun Razak and Dr Ismail react?

Goh: Oh, they themselves were in agreement with the idea. In fact, they had themselves come to the conclusion that Singapore must get out. The question was, how to get Singapore out? …

Chew: So the secession of Singapore was well planned by you and Tun Razak? It was not foisted on Singapore?

Goh: No. It was not.

(There followed a long silence during which he slowly leafed through the secret file, Albatross. Then he shut the file, and resumed his narrative.)[57]

In his then embargoed oral history of 1982, Goh said the "Albatross" he referred to was Malaysia.

> **By that time, the great expectations that we foolishly had — that Malaysia would bring prosperity, common market, peace, harmony, all that — we were quickly disillusioned. And it became an Albatross round our necks. How to get out of this mess? … Well, Malaysia was the Albatross. Very sad but instructive episode in our political education.**[58]

The contents of the Albatross file, kept secret for many years, are being published for the first time in this volume. The file contains detailed notes, memoranda and candid observations by

Singapore ministers, including Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Keng Swee, Toh Chin Chye and S Rajaratnam. They were personally involved in private meetings with senior Malaysian ministers in the lead-up to Separation. Discussions took place behind closed doors — in offices, private residences, over lunches and dinners, and on golf courses — away from the glare of public and media scrutiny.

Among the first documents in the Albatross file is an account of one such meeting between Goh and Razak, a week after the July 1964 riots. Goh had known Razak since their student days in London when they served together in the Malayan Forum. Goh was the only Singapore minister Razak knew well enough to discuss their mutual problems frankly. When Goh proposed coming to Kuala Lumpur, Razak invited him to stay at his house for several days.[59]

During their meeting on the afternoon of 28 July 1964, Goh found Razak to be deeply distrusting of Lee and complaining "vigorously and at length"[60] about the Singapore leader. Lee's apparent "lack of intuitive grasp of Malay sentiments" and his "habit of speaking freely and volubly on sensitive matters", Razak felt, had resulted in him giving public statements that caused "deep resentment among the Malays". The acting premier's rant left Goh with the impression that Razak did not think the terms of any settlement would be observed by Lee, who would keep them "only so long as it was to his advantage to do so".[61]

Razak made Goh two offers: either (1) co-operation between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, with the PAP represented in the Cabinet of the Central Government on the condition that Lee resigned as the prime minister (as he "was unacceptable to the Central Government in any basic settlement"), possibly to be given some other assignment such as in the United Nations; or (2) co-existence, whereby the PAP would not be represented in the Cabinet but both governments would operate in their respective spheres of influence, on the condition that the PAP would deal with the Singapore Malay community only through Mohamed Khir Johari, the Federation Minister of Agriculture and Co-operatives, who was also the chairman of the Sumno Liaison Committee. (Khir had joined the discussion at 2 pm on 28 July.)

As a fundamental condition for either co-operation or co-existence, Razak was emphatic that there must be an end to the PAP's attempts to win over Malays. When Goh asked if, as a *quid pro quo* for Lee's resignation, Albar would be removed, Razak brushed this aside. "No," he said.[62] He assured Goh that he had the Umno Secretary-General and the *Utusan Melayu* completely under his control.[63]

In the evening, Razak invited three of his colleagues — Albar, VT Sambanthan (the Minister of Works, Posts and Telecommunications) and Khir Johari — to meet Goh, apparently to buttress his point that Lee was an obstacle to an enduring settlement. Calling the Singapore premier "utterly chauvinistic" and a "dangerous man", Albar said that so long as Lee was in charge, "the entire nation was in peril". Clearly agitated, the Umno Secretary-General called on Goh to save the nation by taking over the PAP leadership from Lee. The charge that Lee had repeatedly wounded the feelings of Malays was also made by Khir and Sambanthan. The latter added that the economically depressed Malays would feel their fate being sealed if non-Malays were granted political parity with them.[64]

Razak's two proposals were poorly received by the PAP. His terms, said Goh, were like "those of victor to vanquished".[65] What the acting premier offered was essentially a one-sided deal which the PAP would find hard to accept. As for the stipulation that Lee resign, Goh considered it a "completely unreasonable and absurd proposition". It probably stemmed from Kuala Lumpur's worry that Lee was likely to "dominate the Cabinet proceedings" if he were included in a coalition government. "Razak knew that he was no match for him [Lee]," surmised Goh. "So this was one of the reasons why … if Lee went to [the] UN, then I would be representing Singapore."[66]

After Goh updated Lee by phone on the afternoon of 28 July, Lee said he was prepared to resign in the interest of finding a solution but doubted whether his resignation would resolve the more fundamental problems that confronted Malaysia. When Goh conveyed this to Razak during their golf session at 5 pm, the latter, appearing "uncomfortable and embarrassed", said he had only made the proposal since Goh had asked for the formation of a national government and that it was "not his wish to depose Lee".[67] Actually, Goh had not asked for any such thing. He presumed at the time that Razak's dithering probably stemmed from his having second thoughts on whether Lee's resignation would improve the situation.[68] In his oral history interview 18 years later, however, Goh maintained that Razak probably knew the plan to despatch Lee to the UN was a non-starter:

> **Razak knew that this was off — Lee going to UN. And then he said … that it was not his wish to depose Lee. In fact, it was very much his wish. He said he'd made this proposal since I had asked for the formation of a national government. I never asked for it.**[69]

Goh suspected the British High Commissioner, Antony Head, had proposed the idea of a coalition government to Razak, who, in turn, suggested it to him.[70] In fact, when Goh briefed Head on the morning of 29 July, the High Commissioner remarked that the solution was a more widely representative federal government that could strengthen national unity in the face of Indonesian aggression. Head was also specific enough to suggest that, as a possible compromise, the national government could include two representatives from Singapore and one each from Sabah and Sarawak, with Lee remaining as Prime Minister of Singapore. "[T]here was no point in the British defending the frontiers while the rear slowly disintegrated," Head said. The British High Commissioner did not think Razak's terms for co-existence — namely that Singapore dealt with Malays through a federal Malay minister — were workable. Nor did he think Lee's resignation would do any good; in fact, it might do considerable harm and "inflame Chinese feelings", particularly when the troubles were started by Umno. As for Albar, Head assessed that he was "likely to create further trouble" and would have to be sent out of the country.[71]

The next morning, 29 July, Razak told Goh that, on further reflection, he saw snags in the "hastily thought out" propositions he had put forward the previous day and would like to withdraw them. He could not see any satisfactory solution with Lee outside the picture. Declining Goh's earlier suggestion that Toh and Rajaratnam join them for talks in Kuala Lumpur on 29 July — for he did not know them well enough to open up to them, he said — Razak proposed instead meeting up with both Lee and Goh during his visit to Singapore on 1 and 2 August.[72]

The 2 August meeting in Singapore did not turn out well. While Razak dropped his insistence that Lee resign, he also ruled out the prospect of the PAP joining the Alliance for another two years. He subsequently revised this to "six months or so", on condition the PAP kept off the Malays in Singapore and refrained from "politicking" in the Federation — including staying away from the Chinese in Malaya — without any *quid pro quo* on the part of Umno.[73]

The PAP's acceptance of such a demand, as historian Edwin Lee put it, "would mean a denial of its very existence as a party open to all races".[74] It would make the PAP a communal rather than a multi-racial party. It was not a condition the PAP could accept. Razak's attitude left both Goh and Lee convinced that he was opposed to a coalition with the PAP. Goh had no confidence that Kuala Lumpur would carry out its side of the bargain as it was not even prepared to meet his "minimum condition" that, in fairness, Albar should also go.[75] With the failure of the talks, and Razak's refusal to put the blame for the riots on Malay extremists from his party, the PAP government was left with no choice but to press for an inquiry, a process that was likely to increase rather than diminish political friction and contestation. On 4 August, Lee announced his intention to hold a "post-mortem".[76]

The gloom lifted slightly after the Tunku visited Singapore on 18 August to appeal for harmony and to hold talks with Singapore leaders. He had four days earlier made a tearful return to Kuala Lumpur on 14 August to an emotional welcome. His willingness to speak out quite sharply against those who had been "careless" in their speeches went some way towards recognising publicly Umno's share of responsibility.[77] By and large, however, the Tunku shrewdly pinned the blame for the violence on querulous "delinquents" and pro-Indonesian "instigators" who were out to foment fighting between communities. "My party, Umno members, are stout-hearted," he said. "Because of this, the moment they are pricked, they react and hit out."[78]

Privately, the Tunku told Lee that during his visit to London on his way back from Washington, the British Prime Minister, Alec Douglas-Home, had tried to persuade him to form a coalition government with the PAP. The Tunku told Lee, however, that taking the PAP into the federal cabinet would split his party. He indicated that the PAP instead should withdraw from Malaya and confine itself to Singapore.

While Singapore leaders publicly supported the Tunku, and Lee spoke of the "beginning of a thaw", the Tunku faced a major challenge. The day after he returned to Kuala Lumpur, activist Umno elements, apparently unhappy at the Tunku's amenability to a *modus vivendi* with Lee, renewed their anti-Lee campaign in *Merdeka* and *Utusan Melayu*. They hoped to get the Tunku to deal firmly with Lee, even as they looked to seek mass support for their views at the coming national Umno conference on 5 September.[79]

Three days before the conference, a second race riot broke out in Singapore.

The Second Race Riot

On 2 September, several incidents where Malays assaulted Chinese culminated in the killing of a Malay trishaw-rider in the Geylang Serai area by a group alleged to be Chinese. This set off another series of racial clashes. The police and military were again called into action and an island-wide curfew was imposed. On 8 September, Razak, accompanied by Lim Kim San and Toh Chin Chye — the latter deputising for Lee, who was in Brussels attending the centenary celebrations of the Socialist International — toured the riot-affected areas. By the time the curfew was lifted on 11 September, the latest wave of violence had claimed 13 more lives and injured another 106.

Another controversy, however, was about to unfold. On the day Lee returned, 13 September, the *Sunday Telegraph* in London published a scathing editorial on the Tunku's "complacent attitude" towards Chinese advancement and urged the British premier to bring pressure on him to "give the Chinese a fair deal" and "build a non-racial united community really worth saving".[80] As Lee had been in London since 7 September, meeting with government and Labour Party leaders as well as the press, Malaysian federal leaders, including the Tunku, presumed that Lee was the inspiration behind the *Sunday Telegraph* attack.[81] Angry at Lee, the Tunku hit back during a Singapore Alliance reception on 20 September. He said that while the July riots "might have been" because Singapore Malays felt neglected and were being driven out of their homes, "some politicians in Singapore" were not free from blame either. Referring to the PAP's participation in federal elections in April, which he said were "quite contrary to what we agreed", the Tunku reminded the PAP that it had no right to interfere in Malaysian affairs. He called on Umno, MCA and MIC branches in Singapore to strengthen their organisations to lead Singapore along the path to unity with the rest of Malaysia. PAP leaders felt a rebuttal was necessary, but were persuaded by the British to exercise restraint and meet the Tunku for peace talks on 25 September instead. There, both sides agreed to a "truce" to avoid communal politicking that might exacerbate racial relations and even lead to the break-up of Malaysia.[82]

PAP–Umno ties had been profoundly affected by the riots. The PAP now knew it could not work with Umno, not when the moderate Malay leaders were apparently unwilling or unable to restrain their more radical activists — or even worse, sanctioned their activities. While Goh felt that the Tunku had probably not been told of the risk of disturbance arising, as he would otherwise have stopped it,[83] he was not sanguine that other Malay leaders would have wanted to thwart it, even if they had known. Razak, for instance, had admitted to Goh on 28 July that his opinion had been sought on the likelihood of trouble breaking out in Singapore and he had thought it unlikely. On hindsight, it was "an error of judgement", Razak said, adding: Had he foreseen it, he would have taken action to avert it. Goh found Razak's admission difficult to reconcile with his statement that he had Albar completely under his control. "Now, clearly he knew what was going on and he had sanctioned it," Goh asserted. "I do not believe that Albar would have acted on his own without Razak's support."[84] Goh reckoned Razak "weighed the odds of a communal disturbance and he was prepared to risk it".[85]

From Singapore's perspective, the Malay leadership seemed determined to preserve Malay hegemony by condoning the extremists' campaign against the PAP. They probably felt the risks were worth taking in the hope the PAP might be intimidated. As Goh put it: "They were banking on the fact that they could have cowed us into submission. That was clearly the intention."[86] With no hope of a wider coalition, and with Umno activists allowed to do their worst, the PAP felt even more vulnerable, especially when Singapore's internal security was under Kuala Lumpur's control. With a Malay federal minister in charge of internal security — albeit the moderate Ismail — Malay extremists did not feel they had to exercise restraint in their anti-PAP activities.[87]

"Truce" Collapses and Rift Widens

The shaky two-year "truce" agreed in September did not last. A month into the "truce", the Alliance opened a second front aimed at undermining the PAP among the Chinese in Singapore, including openly consorting with the Barisan Sosialis in a bid to woo the Chinese ground. Umno also decided to rework its Malay front in Singapore. Arriving on the island to open five Umno branches on 25 October 1964, Khir Johari announced plans to overhaul the Singapore Alliance so as to end PAP rule in the next election. It brought a pointed reply from the PAP condemning Khir's call for its "ouster" as against the terms of the "pause". After Khir denied any knowledge of the truce,[88] the Tunku stepped in to clarify on 28 October that the "truce" applied only to communal issues and did not bar the revitalisation of the Singapore Alliance — an interpretation the PAP disputed. Nevertheless, it welcomed the Malaysian leader's "invitation" to present alternative programmes to the people. On 1 November, Toh said that the PAP would also be "reoriented and reorganised so that we can get at Malaya".[89]

Both sides crossed swords again after Malaysian Minister of Finance Tan Siew Sin unveiled on 25 November controversial tax proposals in his Budget to raise funds for Konfrontasi-related expenditure, including a half-per-cent turnover tax on gross earnings and a two-per-cent payroll tax. The PAP criticised the Budget sharply, pointing out the taxes would hit Singapore disproportionately hard (in relation to its population, employment and economy),[90] with the island paying some 25 per cent of the turnover tax and 40 per cent of the payroll yields.[91] A stunned Tan Siew Sin reacted, somewhat intemperately, by threatening to raise Singapore's contribution to the Central Government from 40 to 60 per cent. This drew a sharp response from Lee about "irrational people" who replied to criticism by asking for 60 per cent of Singapore's revenue.[92]

The PAP campaigned hard against the taxes, not only in Singapore but also through its branches in Malaya. In Singapore, the pro-PAP National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) packed the Victoria Memorial Hall on 14 December for the first mass protest rally against the Malaysian Budget. Minister for Labour Jek Yeun Thong, who spoke at the rally, called the taxes "obnoxious" and "iniquitous", whose "effects would be felt more heavily by the 'have nots' who are in the majority", and vowed to "argue out our case until the Central Government realises that a more enlightened policy should be adopted in future".[93] Accusing the PAP of turning the tax

proposals into a political issue at a time of national crisis and creating "an atmosphere artificially super-charged with political strife", Tan said that the proper course would be for Singapore to discuss the matter with Kuala Lumpur, instead of attacking the proposals "in the strongest possible terms publicly". He added: "You are not likely to get such dispassionate examination at a mass rally."[94]

As the PAP–Alliance rift widened, the Tunku himself was having second thoughts about keeping Singapore in Malaysia. In a dinner speech at the University of Singapore's medical college, King Edward VII Hall, on 9 December, the Tunku complained of the "unnecessary excitement" and unhealthy aspects of Singapore politics, which he said were the reasons why he had not been "very anxious to bring Singapore into the Federation". In an oblique reference to the PAP-organised opposition to the taxes, the Tunku called on politicians of various types — including the "lightning flash ones" (a reference to the PAP symbol) — to subordinate their activities to the interests of Singapore and Malaysia. Offering to make changes if any of the taxes seemed either unworkable or objectionable, the Tunku issued also an ominous warning of a possible "breakaway" as the "only solution" if the Singapore politicians "of various colours and tinges and flashes" disagreed with him.[95] Lee later remarked: "Our criticisms of the turnover and payroll taxes had struck home."[96]

Constitutional Re-arrangements

As PAP opposition to his tax proposals escalated, the Tunku began thinking seriously about limiting Singapore's involvement in federal affairs. Shortly after Goh arrived in Kuala Lumpur on 15 December to attend Currency Board meetings and to participate in the Budget debate,[97] the Tunku informed him of his desire to have Singapore "hive off" from Malaysia. Goh recalled in his oral history interview: "Now I haven't the faintest recollection when the Tunku said this to me, whether it was during one of the lunches or on the golf course. But obviously, this was not an idle remark because it led to a series of discussions between Lee and Malaysian Ministers, formal discussions of which we've got records."[98]

On 19 December, the Tunku spelt out to Lee in Kuala Lumpur the broad outline of what he meant by "breakaway" — his ideas for "constitutional re-arrangements". According to Lee, the Tunku's view was that "Singapore should look after itself and have as little to do with Malaysia as possible".[99] The Tunku's aim was to bring about a looser "partnership", with Singapore "independent, but part of the peninsula", its position falling "somewhere in between" Southern Ireland and Northern Ireland in relation to the United Kingdom. The Tunku stressed that defence would need to be under Malaysian control, in return for which Singapore would get the common market. The Tunku asked Lee to prepare a paper to clarify what Singapore was prepared to settle for.[100] Malaysian Minister of Home Affairs Ismail subsequently told Lee on 31 December that what the Tunku basically wanted was to go back to their original plan whereby Lee would "look after Singapore for the Tunku".[101] Razak, however, had "different ideas" and wanted Singapore to pay for 17 per cent of total federal defence expenditure (based on the percentage

of Singapore's population in Malaysia) but without having control over the part of the armed forces it paid for or any influence over defence or external affairs. From his talk with Claude Fenner, the Malaysian Inspector-General of Police, on 25 January 1965, Lee had the impression that Kuala Lumpur would also like ultimate control of the police in such a re-arrangement, or at least control of the Special Branch.[102] In short, Lee reckoned the Tunku "[didn't] want us in Parliament [in KL] interfering or taking part in Malaysian politics, he didn't want PAP branches in Malaya or in Sabah and Sarawak, and leading the Opposition". "He wanted us back in Singapore as we were when the British were in charge, but instead of the British, he would be in charge."[103]

The Tunku's offer generated "considerable excitement" among Singapore ministers. Setting out his analysis in a memorandum to his cabinet colleagues, Lee maintained that the Tunku's latest move was not unattractive to either the Federation or Singapore. On the one hand, with Singapore in Malaysia, the non-Malays in Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak could count on their combined strength to stand up to Malay communalism and make it inexpedient for Umno to use communal politicking as successfully as it did under the old Federation. On the other, if Singapore were out of the picture altogether, the non-Malays would again become a "permanent minority" and vulnerable to communal tactics. "So [the Tunku] wants a re-arrangement whereby Singapore is again out of the Malaysian milieu," Lee said. He surmised that Alliance leaders probably also realised that by resorting to suppression, they would risk souring ties with the British, Australian and New Zealand governments, which were actively defending Malaysia against Indonesian aggression, as well as lose the goodwill of Afro-Asian countries, whose leaders like Gamal Nasser of Egypt and Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria held Lee in high regard.[104] The Tunku's offer was therefore a tacit acknowledgement that "we cannot be fixed in Malaysia". Lee elaborated:

> **If under the present arrangements, they could render innocuous our influence in Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak and contain us in Singapore, then they would not have been thinking in terms of a re-arrangement. For, if necessary, they could always invoke the sovereign authority of the Central Government and physically confine us, take over Singapore and exorcise us from the rest of Malaysia.**

The Tunku's proposition also offered Singapore the hope of getting the "benefit of all worlds" — autonomy, political stability, common market and economic expansion, without interference from Kuala Lumpur. "The picture of a prosperous and flourishing Singapore doing better than the rest of Malaysia is most attractive," Lee said. More than that, autonomy would enable Singapore to better insulate itself from dangerous communal pressures building up in Malaya over language and other issues — and the "certainty of conflict, definitely within three years", especially over the 1967 deadline to make Malay the sole official language.

There was, however, a downside in accepting re-arrangement. Lee cautioned:

The price we pay is to give up our ability to influence events in Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak, and to leave the overall fate of Malaysia to the Umno leadership. ...

To put it in the crude communal terms in which the Tunku and his colleagues are probably thinking and calculating, they are giving up a quarter million Malays in Singapore in order to get rid of 1.6 million non-Malays also in Singapore. Thereby they secure absolute control once again over nearly 4.7 million non-Malays (or 4.3 million non-Muslims) in Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak. Conversely, they calculate that by giving us control over 1.8 million people in Singapore, we have to give up our influence over 4.7 million non-Malays throughout the rest of Malaysia.

This was a "heavy price" to pay, Lee emphasised. Not having influence over defence and external affairs was also potentially injurious to the island's interests, as Singapore would be leaving its fate "to be decided by people in whom we have no confidence, but by whose decision, such as their joining Maphilindo, we might be ruined". (Maphilindo referred to a proposed regional group to be formed by Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia.) The Tunku's needling of Sukarno in 1962 and 1963 had "precipitated Confrontation which might have been postponed and avoided for several years", Lee felt.

To stay true to their longer-term ideological mission, Singapore ministers could continue in their present course and build on the PAP's strength and capacity to slowly rally the non-communal groups in Malaysia, which would include nearly all the non-Malays and progressive Malays, and "erode slowly into the Malay base in Malaya itself". Provided the Alliance government would not "act against us unconstitutionally", Lee could envisage a situation developing by the time of the 1969 elections in which Umno would have to face the united force of the non-communal groups. "The chances are that we shall be leading this Malaysian group," he wrote. Though Umno might still win the majority of seats, the PAP-led team should attain a majority in Sabah, Sarawak, Singapore and perhaps Penang, setting the stage for the next phase "in which either they come to terms with us, or they will have to act unconstitutionally".

If they can act unconstitutionally, then we shall be temporarily scrubbed out and trouble will break out in the country. If they cannot act unconstitutionally, and refuse to come to terms on a Malaysian nation, they must join Indonesia. If they do not lose their nerve and join Indonesia, they will have to come to terms, and finally agree on a Malaysian Malaysia. We would then have achieved what ideologically we have always set out to do.

"Eventually in 10–15 years, we may win enough progressive Malays to be able, with the non-Malay base, to take over the Central Government constitutionally," Lee wrote. Lee, however, believed that Umno leaders would not permit this and would counter this strategy by allowing their extremists or "Ultras" to "play for short-term solutions such as scrubbing us out through

unconstitutional methods if they could, or 'booting' us out of Malaysia through communal riots and the offer of autonomy, with them controlling defence". The PAP would not be able to contain racial strife, as internal security was in Kuala Lumpur's hands. "Communal politics, using riots as a weapon, can force us into a position where, in spite of every reason and logic to the contrary, the people will want to get out of Malaysia," Lee submitted.

Lee reluctantly concluded that the PAP's only realistic option was to go for some kind of "disengagement" in the hope that this was only temporary and a future re-integration with Malaysia would be possible. To keep their ideological objective in play, Lee proffered that "any re-arrangement must not permanently isolate Singapore and insulate the rest of Malaysia from us". In the event that a future re-integration did not occur and Singapore's interests were instead harmed by Malaysian foreign policy decisions, like the formation of a Malay-oriented Maphilindo to "fix" the non-Malay groups in the region, then "our re-arrangement must enable us to 'hive off' and buy more time for ourselves, just as Israel survives perilously in the Middle East"; in short, to go for "political existentialism" — "buying time, avoiding conflict, and hoping that in an improved situation, we can in future go on again for a Malaysian nation".

Lee's accompanying draft memorandum for the Tunku, completed by 27 January 1965, outlined the shape of such a re-arrangement.[105] Singapore would become a completely "autonomous" state, possessing all the powers it had prior to joining Malaysia, leaving Kuala Lumpur in charge of only defence and external affairs, as the British had been. Singapore citizens would withdraw from federal politics and Malaysian citizens, likewise, would be prohibited from party politics in Singapore. The net effect of such a re-arrangement would be the creation of two different political societies, with "twin centres of authority", reaffirming Malay predominance in Malaya and Chinese predominance in Singapore.

But if Singapore were to pay for defence and external affairs, then invoking the principle of "no taxation without representation", it should have its own representatives in the Federal Parliament. To ensure that the Singapore members had little or no reason to openly criticise the federal budget and policies relating to defence and external affairs (and such matters of internal security affecting defence), a Council of Ministers, with five from each side and the Malaysian premier holding the casting vote, would be set up to discuss and decide all such matters behind closed doors.

If Kuala Lumpur wanted the PAP out of the Federal Parliament, then Singapore's contribution to defence would not be in cash but in kind. It would raise and maintain five battalions of troops for its own defence and place them at the disposal of the Central Government in times of national need. Singapore would also appoint, at its own expense, a representative at every Malaysian mission abroad. For this re-arrangement to work, the memorandum maintained that there must be a minimum of interference by Malaya in Singapore and *vice versa*: "The more powers the Central Government obtained to interfere with Singapore as in finance, the more it became necessary for Singapore to present its point of view to the Centre."[106]

Of Lee's cabinet colleagues, two — Toh and Rajaratnam — were "dead [set] against" the proposals for a constitutional re-arrangement.[107] Rajaratnam was convinced that any temporary

withdrawal from Malaysia would only mean the isolation of the PAP — to be eventually finished off by Malay extremists who would see an autonomous and prosperous "Malaysian Singapore" as a political, ideological and racial threat to Malay nationalism. "I do not for one moment believe that Malay extremism will let a detached Singapore alone," Rajaratnam wrote in a memorandum circulated to his Cabinet colleagues, asserting:

> **Singapore, either as a centre of Malaysianism, or Chinese chauvinism or Communism, will be viewed as a threat to Malay nationalism partly because a Malaysian Singapore will make cowing of non-Malays in Malaya difficult and partly because of fear that at an opportune moment, Singapore will try to reassert its influence through discontented and resentful non-Malays.**[108]

The Minister for Culture was convinced that the PAP, as the "most strident advocate of multi-racialism",[109] should stay the course in the Federation, rally the people against the Ultras and thus stand a better chance of countering them. By pulling out of Malaysia, he argued, the PAP was not only abandoning its potential allies in Malaya, Sabah or Sarawak to the tender mercies of the Ultras, but also betraying their trust in the PAP and weakening their will and ability to resist.[110] "Our active supporters will never trust us again," Rajaratnam warned. "We had exposed them and left them to face such nemesis as the Ultras may care to visit on them. The feeling that they had been used and then discarded to suit our convenience would be hard to counter." He added: "If the non-Malays resist the Ultras successfully it will be because others have led them, and ... they would then have no need for a PAP. If the non-Malays cave in, they will be less inclined to follow a PAP which returns to lead them." Withdrawal had another disadvantage: it would strengthen the hand of the Ultras and give them time not only to "break all non-Malay resistance in Malaya" but also "firmly secure their Malayan base as a prelude to dealing with an isolated Singapore and the PAP".[111] "[B]y the time they come to deal with us," Rajaratnam ruminated, "we [will] have no friends and allies in Malaysia."[112]

Toh was with Rajaratnam.[113] But the majority of the Singapore Cabinet supported Lee. Two days later, Lee presented his memorandum to the Tunku. Lee also gave the paper to Minister of Home Affairs Ismail, who showed it to his Inspector-General of Police, Claude Fenner.[114] On 31 January, Lee met the Malaysian premier and Ismail for the first of their discussions.[115] Throughout February, as chronicled in the Albatross file, Singapore and Malayan ministers met on numerous occasions to try to work out a deal. But by the end of the month, it was clear that re-arrangement was out.

Negotiations floundered for a number of reasons:

First, while the Tunku was initially prepared to "give us everything to get [Singapore] out" of the Federal Parliament, he had hardened his thinking and wanted to not only control Singapore's defence but also get Singapore to pay for the cost of Malaysian defence in return for a common market. As Lee reported on his talks with the Tunku on 31 January: "It is only natural that he wants the best of all worlds for himself. At first he was prepared to give us everything to get us out. Now on reflection and discussion — probably with his colleagues — the danger of our being completely out and independent is manifest to him, hence the desire to control defence and external affairs."

The Tunku's desire to get Singapore out, however, was "implacable". "If you are out of Parliament, we can be friends. Better that way — if you are in Parliament, you must criticise," he said. When Lee replied that his colleagues might not agree to consider Singapore's withdrawal from Malaysia, the Tunku shot back sharply: "You tell them that I will not have Singapore, that is all. I do not want Singapore and they can do nothing about it."[116]

On its part, Singapore could not agree to such "constitutionally indefensible"[117] terms, stressing that "there can be no contribution in cash for defence if we are out of Parliament" — in essence, no taxation without representation.[118] Otherwise, as Deputy Prime Minister Toh hinted to his Malaysian counterpart, Razak, the island would become a "semi-colony" in Malaysia.[119] In response to the Tunku's suggestion that Singapore could have its say on defence through a proposed Defence Council "where we will be consulted but the final decision will be his",[120] Toh asserted that this "could not ameliorate the question of contribution to defence expenditure". "After all," he added, "it is Parliament that must give approval to the Budget, including defence allocations."[121]

Second, Kuala Lumpur wanted Singapore out of federal politics, but was not prepared for Malaysia to be out of Singapore politics. It appeared that when Kuala Lumpur referred to Singapore returning to the *status quo ante*, it had in mind the situation before Merger when branches of Umno, MCA and MIC operated in Singapore and Malayan leaders could come down and "make speeches to them". For the PAP, the "logic of reciprocity" would suggest that "we can operate PAP branches in Malaya and make speeches to them".[122] As Lee saw it, the "pros and cons are evenly balanced": Whilst the PAP might gain in the long run as there were more of its potential followers in Malaya than Umno had in Singapore, the presence of the latter would afford its "Ultras" organisational scope to "cause security problems even after the constitutional re-arrangements". He added:

> **If we want peace in Singapore without them interfering or having the capacity to interfere, then we will have to shut down across the Causeway. Alternatively, as a compromise instead of shutting down, the branch organisations will carry on but no longer [as] part of the parent organisation. This problem is bound to be a ticklish one to resolve. We should be sure in our own minds where our long-term interests lie.**[123]

Third, a spanner was thrown into the works after the British got wind of the talks. Lee suspected that Fenner had informed Antony Head, the British High Commissioner.[124] Any sign of a crack in the new federation was unacceptable to the British, who were fighting to defend Malaysia. Lee recalled that British ministers reminded him that the British government had spent some £200 million to defend Malaysia against Indonesia's Konfrontasi.[125] Not only would the

disintegration of the Federation give credence to Indonesian propaganda claims that Malaysia was only an "artificial and ephemeral construction, not deserving of strong support",[126] it would also adversely affect Sabah and Sarawak, leading to "a breakup, in fact if not in name, of the Federation".[127] Having agreed to the two Borneo states joining Malaysia, the British, according to Lee, "felt a sense of responsibility" towards them and wanted Singapore to be represented in the Malaysian Parliament to "protect the interests [of Sabah and Sarawak] and resist too extreme a Malay preponderance in policies" in the Borneo territories.[128]

The British wanted no change — or only the minimum necessary. They skilfully and patiently worked on the Tunku and other Malaysian ministers, enlisting the help of British officials employed by the Malaysian Government, like Fenner in the police and GW Gould in the Federal Treasury. Visiting senior officials like the British Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral Louis Mountbatten,[129] and Roger Hollis, Head of MI5, also expressed their concerns. Hollis convinced Ismail that it was inadvisable, from a professional viewpoint, to divide the police in Singapore and the Federation.[130] Lee saw all this as "characteristic of British methods — never head-on assault to say that there shall be no changes, but a gradual piecemeal erosion of the other man's point of view".[131]

By mid-February, the Tunku's position had shifted again: he now wanted the PAP to be represented in the Federal Parliament and for Singapore to be given fiscal autonomy to remove state-centre friction.[132] In return, he wanted an undertaking from the PAP to cease attacking the Central Government, particularly on fiscal policies, and the closure of PAP branches in Malaya, presumably with a similar shutting down of Alliance branches in Singapore.[133] This attempt at compromise, however, soon came to nought. Sumno had gotten wind of the talks and resented being abandoned by Kuala Lumpur. Several of the Tunku's key ministers were also not in favour of giving up any of the levers of control the Federal Government had over Singapore. Tan Siew Sin, for instance, opposed giving fiscal autonomy to Singapore;[134] while Ismail, counselled by Fenner and Hollis, was convinced that Kuala Lumpur must retain full responsibility for internal security in Singapore.[135] On its part, the PAP could not close its branches in the Federation as long as Alliance branches in Singapore stayed open.[136] Nor was there any point in re-arrangement without Singapore controlling its own internal security. As Lee put it, without control of its internal security, Singapore "could always be held to communal blackmail and our only lever against the excesses of the Federal Government was our ability to influence the ground throughout the rest of Malaysia, so it was impossible to quit Malaya".[137]

British pressure on the Tunku had the desired effect.[138] By the end of February, the Tunku had "done nearly a complete right-about-turn" and backed away from pursuing a settlement.[139] As Head reported to London on 4 March, British objectives had been achieved: Singapore not giving up seats in the Federal Parliament and no complete autonomy for internal security for Singapore. Still, the "prospect of improved relations between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur are not, in my view, at all good," the High Commissioner warned.[140] This was Lee's assessment as well. The behind-the-scenes discussions had kept the situation from boiling over. But with disengagement seemingly no longer on the cards, Lee advised that the PAP should rapidly

consolidate its ground in Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak before the next truce was imposed, so as to sharpen the PAP's "pressure points". "Every time there is a breach of truce, we expand," he counselled his colleagues. "We must be moderate, conciliatory, but clear and firm on our stand that Malaysia is a Malaysian nation."[141]

The need to make a "clear-cut stand on what we believe Malaysia is and should be" was asserted by Lee at a morning televised news conference shortly before he departed for New Zealand on 5 March.[142] "The immediate issue, from our point of view," Lee said, "is whether this is going to be a Malaysian nation". Disengagement was still on his mind, despite the British having stymied the process. In an oblique public reference to the secret talks, Lee suggested that, politically, "it would be wiser if we allowed a certain amount of disengagement". With Konfrontasi still unresolved, and given the desirability for Singapore and Kuala Lumpur to close ranks against Indonesian aggression, he believed that "it might not be unprofitable for us to find a *modus vivendi*, a means of disengagement to take the heat out of [the] intensity of feeling on this matter."[143]

Lee was not alone in hoping that disengagement could be put back on track. His finance minister, Goh Keng Swee, was also mulling over the prospect of bringing "constitutional re-arrangement" back on the agenda. In a top-secret memorandum, which he completed four days after Lee had left for Auckland, Goh warned that "current trends, if unchecked, may lead to a critical situation before long". Echoing Lee, he suggested that a "disengagement between the PAP and the Alliance is necessary to avoid impending calamity". There were two ways to achieve this, he said. The first, and the most satisfactory solution, was a "complete" disengagement, whereby the PAP and Alliance would close all their party branches in the other's territory. So long as branches existed in each other's domains, "the risk of entanglement over some issue or other will remain", Goh contended. But if this approach was not politically feasible or desirable, then a "partial" disengagement could be considered as an alternative. Under this less absolute scheme, both sides could keep their existing branches but no new ones would be formed. To further reduce areas of possible conflict to a minimum, he proposed that the PAP and Alliance could take certain measures to keep out of each other's political turf. First, PAP state assemblymen would not participate in the activities of PAP branches outside Singapore, on the understanding that Alliance state assemblymen and federal MPs would likewise not be involved in the activities of Alliance branches in Singapore. Second, PAP MPs in the Federal Parliament would not speak on any subject in which Singapore had been delegated autonomy. Third, the PAP would not contest elections outside Singapore and the Alliance similarly would not take part in Singapore elections. More detailed arrangements could be worked out by a joint committee while broader policy issues could be settled at the ministerial level. If the underlying "logic" was fully accepted by both sides, Goh believed that this provisional "re-arrangement" exercise could succeed in its interim objective until "another fresh approach" might be made, once Konfrontasi ended, to embody the new relationships as a binding amendment to the federal constitution.[144] Whether Goh's paper was ever circulated to his PAP ministerial colleagues cannot be ascertained, as there is no indication that the document was discussed in the Cabinet.[145]

"Malaysian Malaysia"

Whether the PAP liked it or not, it was being forced more and more into the opposition. As Lee elaborated: "The position now is that Umno and the Malay extremists in Singapore can always be used as a stick to blackmail us through communal trouble, and either we disengage in a way which makes Singapore no longer subject to communal blackmail, or we must go on as we are and face the consequences."[146] For the PAP, a counter-strategy was urgent, as Kuala Lumpur would not let up in its campaign to topple the PAP. As Lee recalled:

> **We had to find a counter to this system of intimidation through race riots, with Chinese being killed and maimed wherever they dared to resist Malay domination. We decided that one effective defence would be to link the opposition in all the towns in the Federation in one network, so that a riot in one major city triggered off riots in others to a point where the police and army would be unable to cope, and all hell would be let loose … any communal intimidation by Kuala Lumpur would risk tearing Malaysia apart.**[147]

The PAP had in fact considered the advisability of forming a united opposition front since mid-1964. Securing allies was a tactical necessity if the PAP wished to end its political isolation, break free from containment by Kuala Lumpur, counter the tactics of the Ultras, and spread its non-communal ideals throughout Malaysia. Building up its own party branches in Malaya and Borneo would take too long. Even as talks for disengagement started in December 1964, the PAP stepped up its search for allies to strengthen its hand in the negotiations. On 12 February 1965, Lee, Toh and Rajaratnam met the disaffected leaders of like-minded opposition parties from Sabah, Sarawak and Malaya, who had become increasingly restive as they listened to the racially laced speeches of Albar and other Umno leaders in the Federal Parliament. The PAP leaders had suggested a link-up, with the intention of forming an alliance of non-communal opposition parties to fight for a Malaysian Malaysia.[148]

The moves to unite the opposition did not escape the Tunku's notice. On 24 April, he publicly disclosed that he knew of plans by Lee and the PAP to forge an "opposition get-together" and urged the people to "make a study of this man before they give their heart and soul to any such move".[149] Its thunder stolen, the PAP could not remain silent and three days later, on 27 April, Toh confirmed publicly that a grand convention of yet unnamed pro-Malaysia opposition parties would be held. Twelve days later, on 9 May, leading office holders of five opposition parties — the PAP, the Penang-based United Democratic Party (UDP), the Perak-based People's Progressive Party (PPP), the Sarawak United Peoples' Party (SUPP) and the Machinda Party of Sarawak — met in Singapore. After a two-hour closed-door session, they issued a declaration that formally launched the Malaysian Solidarity Convention (MSC). Its clarion call was "Malaysian Malaysia".

If the idea of a Malaysian Malaysia electrified the imagination of many people, it was anathema to Umno leaders, who saw it as a direct challenge to Malay supremacy and special rights.[150] A war of words ensued, with escalating intensity. At the two-day Umno general assembly on

15 and 16 May 1965, speaker after speaker demanded Lee's arrest for allegedly saying that Singapore wanted to secede and Malays were not Malaysia's natives.[151] Matters came to a head during the parliamentary debate in May 1965. In moving the motion of thanks for the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's speech on 25 May, Umno backbencher Mahathir Mohamed described the Singapore premier as an example of a Chinese who has "never known Malay rule and could not bear the idea that the people they have so long kept under their heels should now be in a position to rule them".[152]

As Mahathir's remarks implied that "Malaysia will not be a Malaysian nation", Lee moved a motion on 27 May expressing regret that the King's speech "did not reassure the nation that Malaysia will continue to progress in accord with its democratic constitution towards a Malaysian Malaysia". Instead, it had "added to the doubts over the intentions of the present Alliance Government and to the measures it will adopt when faced with a loss of majority popular support". Accusing the Malay extremists of seeking, and even threatening, the use of force, to ensure a Malaysia ruled by Malays, Lee affirmed that the PAP and the MSC, on their part, would act constitutionally to achieve their long-term objective. He urged the Federal Government to state clearly whether it intended to work towards a Malay-Malaysia or a Malaysian Malaysia. For even greater effect, and to show, according to Rajaratnam, that "he's not a Chinese leader",[153] Lee delivered a substantial portion of his speech in fluent Malay, without a script. He challenged Umno leaders to compete with the PAP to modernise the Malay way of life and to uplift the lot of the poor, Malays and non-Malays alike. That was the crux of the matter, he said, not Malay rights or language. It was a stunning performance in the Federal Parliament, before Malay MPs and a gallery packed with Malays. They listened in such rapt silence that "you could hear a pin drop", Barker recalled later.[154]

"The Malays present did not expect me, the supposed anti-Malay Chinese chauvinist out to destroy the Malay race, to speak in Malay with no trace of a Chinese dialect accent," Lee related in his memoirs. "The Tunku and Razak looked most unhappy. I was meeting them on their own Malay ground and competing for support peacefully with arguments in an open debate." As Edwin Lee wrote: "He was getting his message through to the Tunku's own backbenchers. This was unforgiveable."[155] That the debate was a "very major red light" for Umno leaders was not in doubt, observed Rajaratnam. Lee could speak directly not only to the English- and Chinese-educated but also to the Malay-educated. Umno leaders, on their part, could only "talk to the Malay-educated and English-educated, not to the Chinese-educated". "So they must have done their sums," he reckoned.[156]

Federal ministers and backbenchers rose to assail Lee, with Razak, rounding up the debate on 3 June, delivering a 40-minute broadside against him. Not surprisingly, Lee's motion was defeated. But from the PAP's viewpoint, the debate had elicited the admission from top Alliance leaders that they too, no less than the PAP, subscribed to the idea of a "Malaysian Malaysia". They also gave the assurance that they would fight the PAP "democratically and constitutionally".[157] The price paid to extract the public admission, however, was high, as the Australian Department of External Affairs noted: "One result of Lee's tactics is that he has quite alienated the Alliance

leadership … now, Umno leaders, particularly the Tunku who is the crucial figure, are thoroughly fed up with him and say they cannot possibly work with him. This is a very serious situation; Malaysia was largely the creation of the Tunku and Lee."[158] The Tunku did not say a word during the bitter debate, but as he was to write later, Lee's speech was the "straw that broke the camel's back" for him.[159] As Barker remembered: "Looking back, I think that was the moment when the Tunku and his colleagues felt it was better to have Singapore and Mr Lee out."[160]

Malaysian ministers were also worried about the PAP's plans for a series of MSC rallies in various Malaysian states. The series was kicked off on 6 June in Singapore at the National Theatre packed with some 3,000 people. "It was a rousing meeting that brought hope to all those who heard it on Radio Singapore or read about it in the press," Lee said. "We had broken the spell of silence and met their communal intimidation head-on."[161] Kuala Lumpur, however, read the rallies — wrongly, in Goh's view — as a new PAP-led offensive to capture power.[162] As Goh explained:

> **Of course, that was the last thing we would do. It was only after the riots when we were cornered — really cornered because the Malaysian Government could, at will, switch on this riot and get people killed — that Lee decided on a counter-offensive to make life intolerable for them. I think it was Lee's policy that if we were to get good terms out of them, either total separation or a new working agreement, that they must find existing arrangements intolerable. And he knew that it had to be done at great risk to himself but there was no other way because we were at the receiving end all the time. The [Malaysian] Solidarity Convention was again another move to bring political pressure to bear on KL — that they cannot get away with a racist policy directed towards Singapore. But Razak completely misread the picture and thought that we were on the offensive to capture power.**[163]

The next day, the Alliance whip, TH Tan, called on the government to either put Lee away "to sober him up" or take constitutional measures to exclude Singapore from Malaysia.[164] Devan Nair "feared the worst". As he recalled: "I expected the Constitution to be suspended and I was looking forward to another spell in jail."[165]

In mid-May, alarming cables on the subject of Lee's arrest passed between Head and London, and were read with concern by British Prime Minister Harold Wilson. Head was instructed to tell the Tunku that the British premier was anxious to discuss the matter with him during his visit to London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference (between 17 and 25 June 1965) and "assume[d] that the Tunku will not in the meantime commit himself to any irrevocable step".[166] Before flying off on 11 June for the conference, the Tunku tried to contain the situation by stating his readiness to listen to what Lee had to say "about what is giving him all these worries and anxieties".[167] Lee was cheered by the Tunku's offer and said he would wait for his return to "talk things over", but was prepared to discuss with Razak if the matter was urgent.[168]

Lee's talk with Razak on 29 June, which lasted "a most uncomfortable two hours", came to nought. There was no meeting of minds.[169] "We went round and round,"[170] recalled Razak. "I found it impossible. Our minds did not meet on most points."[171] According to Lee, Razak was not prepared to agree to his demand to stop the clamour in the Malay press, which circulated in the villages, and to have all future agreements in writing and made known to all, including the secondary leaders, without which "any political accommodation was meaningless".[172]

In Razak's rendering, Lee had insisted that the Tunku and Razak should cast off the "extremists" in Umno responsible for the tense atmosphere if the Central Government wanted his cooperation. Rejecting Lee's allegation about the "extremists", Razak told Lee that he should have confidence in "the Tunku, myself and others" if he wanted to cooperate either with the Alliance or Umno.[173] Razak reported to the Tunku: "I told him that if he wanted to fight our 'Ultras' in Umno there would be trouble. He must leave it to us to handle members of our parties. He said quite clearly he had no confidence in the leadership of Umno, other than yourself, to handle the 'Ultras'."[174] Razak later said that he had been unable to persuade Lee to stop politicking: "I asked him for an assurance that he and his friends would not make provocative remarks against the Malays or interfere with Umno's domestic affairs. Unfortunately, he declined to give the assurance."[175]

The encounter left Lee with the impression that Umno would not budge from its position that it was Singapore that had to adjust to the Malay-based political system that had existed before Merger and would not tolerate intrusion by other parties on its exclusive Malay preserve.[176]

If the MSC had continued on its trajectory, Lee was convinced that a further violent pushback from Umno was likely. "[T]here would be bloodshed," he emphasised in his oral history interview in 1982. The Alliance leadership, as part of its conduct of "psychological warfare", had tried to "scare me" in the hope that "we will retreat", Lee said. But as the PAP leadership would not be intimidated, and did not show any sign of backing off, one "obvious solution" for Alliance leaders would have been to lock up Lee and other members of the PAP leadership. But such an act of repression would not have been advantageous to Kuala Lumpur as it could have led to "civil disorder". Given that non-Malays in Malaysia at that time outnumbered the Malays, the Malay leadership "could not have contained them", Lee thought. Arresting him, furthermore, had another drawback: it would have made him "a great martyr" and "there will be pressures from the British, Australians, New Zealanders and newspapers … for my release". Lee believed he would "come out stronger" if he were detained. "I'll have a bigger following, unless of course, I recanted or weakened or compromised myself, which I suppose I may have if I was put under tremendous torture or pressure — but I didn't see myself going back on the stand I'd taken publicly."[177]

Lee revealed that the PAP ministers nevertheless had discussed contingency plans "in case they locked some of us up". Those who were not arrested would "form a government-in-exile in Cambodia", he disclosed. The Singapore leader's warm ties with the Cambodian head of state, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, led him to believe that the monarch's "sympathies were with us" and that an approach to him would be viewed favourably. "[I]f I could have eluded arrest, I'm quite sure Sihanouk would have allowed me to set up office, so to speak, in Cambodia. Or if I had been

arrested, then if I had given a letter to, say, Toh or Rajaratnam or Goh, they would have been allowed to set up office and carry out propaganda and political activities from Cambodia."[178]

Lee could not disregard the possibility that extremist elements, acting on their own, or taking the cue from their political sponsors, might resort to more injurious methods to "get me out of the way". "Arrest means martyrdom which is bound to be a plus. The thing that worried me was travelling on roads, because a collision with a big lorry is almost … impossible not to be fatal. … And they could arrange for a driver to do this," he felt.

But Lee said he "had to push [this thought] to the back of my mind, take whatever precautions I [could], travel by air as much as possible, by road as carefully as possible". Any other way "would have meant a psychological encumbrance which would have prevented me from operating effectively", he said. "I knew there was this risk; it had to be taken and that's that. Full stop. Press on."[179]

A less pernicious approach might be to "get somebody to take over from me, either Goh or Toh, anybody less difficult."[180] But even that prospect was torpedoed after Toh, together with Goh, Barker and Lim Kim San, in a show of collective unity, issued a statement at a press conference on 8 July that left no doubt that the PAP ministers would not "quietly acquiesce" in Lee's detention. They urged the Central Government to "consider carefully the consequences of yielding to the course advocated by these extremist circles":

> **We know that soon after the last meeting of Parliament and the first public rally of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention in Singapore on June 6, instructions were given to make a case for Mr Lee's arrest. … The Alliance leaders must realise that Malaysia will break up, if any such repressive action is taken.**[181]

The purpose of the press conference, as Lee reflected, was "to tell the Tunku: Look, all the moderates who are acceptable to you would not take over. … So that was out."[182]

Endgame: Negotiating Separation

With disengagement no longer on the cards, and both sides propelling towards collision, the Tunku was thinking hard about his alternative solution for Singapore — separation.

The first Singapore minister to be informed was Lim Kim San. A member of the Malaysian delegation to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, he arrived in London on 22 June.[183] He visited the Tunku in his hotel suite at the Ritz. Struck by a painful attack of shingles five days into the conference, the Tunku was convalescing. As Lim took his leave, the Malaysian leader told him: "You can tell your prime minister he can attend the next Prime Ministers' Conference on his own" — a hint that "Malaysia would eject Singapore, leading Lee to attend the conference as the prime minister of a sovereign state".[184] The Tunku himself confirmed later: "I took him [Lim] into my confidence and told him exactly how I felt about Singapore. No one can say that the State Government was not kept in the know."[185] But when Lim wrote to Lee on 23 June, he focused only on the Tunku's remarks about the possibility of a re-arrangement. He had missed the "bigger implications of the Tunku's cryptic statements" altogether, as he subsequently reported upon returning to Singapore in early July. "I was too obtuse then to catch the significance of some of his remarks," Lim reflected.[186] "He had a very charming way of saying things without your realising it."[187]

Still in pain, the Tunku was admitted to a private hospital, The London Clinic, on 25 June, the day the conference ended.[188] "I had never been in a hospital bed in my life and I never knew before what it felt like to be stretched out on a bed without being able to move one's legs or to turn to one side or the other for days on end," the Tunku recalled in his memoirs. "Every movement caused grinding pain, but my mind was alive and active; so as I lay there, I was thinking of Mr Lee Kuan Yew. And what I thought did not drive the pain away, but made it worse."[189] He had "plenty of time to think from 'A' to 'Z' and backwards from 'Z' to 'A' of our problems with Singapore".[190]

On 29 June, after four days in hospital, and feeling a little better, he decided to put his thoughts on paper. Writing a "balance sheet" that ran into several foolscap pages, he "weighed the pros and cons" of evicting Singapore.[191] "Whichever way my restless mind turned, I could not help but come to one conclusion — and that was to cut Singapore adrift from the rest of Malaysia."[192] Otherwise, he felt, there would be "no end to the bickering with Singapore, except perhaps if Mr Lee Kuan Yew is made Prime Minister [of Malaysia] in the real sense of the word".[193]

The Tunku wrote to Razak on 1 July telling him that he had given himself time to think about Lee and had spoken to Ismail "on the line of action which I think we should take in facing his [Lee's] confrontation". He added: "Perhaps it would be a good thing to talk with him [Lee] now, but ultimately I fear we will have no choice but to cut out Singapore from Malaysia in order to save the rest of the body from gangrene."[194] He suggested that Razak "talk things over with senior members of the Cabinet".[195]

Razak decided to arrange a meeting with Goh, who had just returned to Singapore in early July after seven weeks of medical leave in Germany.[196] On 15 July, Goh met Razak at his home in Kuala Lumpur, with Ismail and Albar present, according to his recollections in his oral history interview. After the usual "belly-aching session against Lee", Razak said that they could not go on like this and asked whether Goh had any ideas. A surprised Goh suggested that "the best thing would be to call it quits … we should go our separate ways". Asked to elaborate, Goh said: "Well, we leave Malaysia, become an independent state." He added: "All these tensions that built up, communal tensions, will all be over."[197] If this was Goh's view, Razak told him he was "ready to discuss this" and that he would consult his senior colleagues. But he would like Goh to first go back and sound out Lee on the issue.[198] Razak subsequently reported to the Tunku:

> **Early last week, Dr Goh Keng Swee, after his return from medical treatment in Germany, came to see me to talk things over. … Keng Swee strongly believes that the only way to stop a head-long collision between us and Singapore is to separate Singapore from the Central Government.**

I told him that if this was his view, we would be ready to discuss this, and that I would consult my senior colleagues, i.e. Datuk Dr Ismail, Siew Sin and Sambanthan, and that he should first go back and consult Kuan Yew and his colleagues. I did not, at this stage, commit ourselves one way or the other.[199]

Goh, on his part, reported to Lee that Razak wanted to discuss a re-arrangement that would allow both sides to disengage and avoid a disastrous collision. After exploring all possible alternatives with Goh, Lee instructed him to try to find a way to avoid a racial clash. He impressed on Goh that it was imperative to restrict the talks to the "minimum few" on both sides and be "absolutely leak-proof". If the British got wind of the separation plans, Lee feared "they would have applied immense pressure on the Tunku to call the whole thing off … [and] would have agreed to have allowed the Tunku to arrest [a] few of us rather than have Malaysia break up". As he explained: "[T]he whole idea of Malaysia was to get Singapore in with the Federation." Lee feared difficulties too from within his own ranks — in particular, from Malaya-born or bred ministers like Rajaratnam, Toh, and Ong, who had all objected to the disengagement that had been contemplated earlier in the year, let alone complete separation.[200] A third danger was the possibility that the "Malays in Singapore would riot" upon learning that they would be out of Malaysia, Lee said.[201]

Five days later, Goh met Ismail and Razak in the latter's office on 20 July. This time Albar was not present. Goh confirmed that only Lee, Lim and Barker had been consulted (as Toh and Rajaratnam were too committed to the MSC to consider any re-arrangement) and that all three agreed that the only way to avoid impending calamity was for Singapore to secede. In his memoirs, Lee revealed that it was only in 1994, when he read Goh's oral history interview recorded between 1980 and 1982, that he discovered that Goh had "never pressed Razak for a looser re-arrangement as I had asked him to". Instead, Goh had gone "along with their desire to have us hive off".[202] In his oral history interview, Goh suggested why he did not follow Lee's instructions. "I'd had enough of Malaysia," he said:

I just wanted to get out. I could see no future in it, that the political cost was dreadful and the economic benefits, well, didn't exist. So it was an exercise in futility. So [as] far as I'm concerned, you know, it's a project that should be abandoned once you see that it's worthless. And taking into account that the Malay leaders were quite fed up with it and were seeking some relief from pain which they found unbearable, this looked to me as something which they would have accepted.[203]

By mentioning that Lim and Barker were privy to the secret talks, Goh probably hoped to bolster his case and reassure Razak that the secession proposal was indeed being seriously considered and had the support of the Singapore ministers Razak trusted. Besides Goh, Lim and Barker were the other two Singapore ministers who were regarded relatively more favourably by Malaysian leaders.

Compared to Lee, Toh and Rajaratnam, they were not active on the political front. As a result, Federation ministers tended to be more comfortable with them.[204] Lim, for instance, recalled that he got on well with Ismail, so much so that "I could be quite frank with him and he appreciated that". "And he was quite frank with me," he added.[205] Barker and Razak had known each other since their Raffles College years. "I used to play hockey for the first team and he, for the second team" recalled Barker. "So we've known each other from young — hence, that trust."[206]

Razak, however, distrusted Lee. "Razak's attitude towards Lee was one of deep-seated distrust," observed Goh. "They say he's a clever man, but he always wants to be one up on other people," Goh recalled Razak saying. Goh opined that Razak believed that "any undertaking given by Lee would be kept only so long as it was to his advantage to do so".[207] He noted that Razak had also "formed an impression in his mind that Lee intended to capture power in KL; that he had visions of the PAP appealing to the Malay mass in sufficient numbers together with the Chinese mass and thereby displacing the Umno government".[208]

Half expecting Lee to reject separation, the Malaysian deputy premier appeared both relieved and incredulous that Lee would agree to secession.[209] But Goh stressed the break should be effected quickly, before the PAP became too deeply committed in the MSC. He also stressed repeatedly the need for absolute secrecy.

To Razak's suggestion that both sides jointly — and firmly — inform the British of their intentions, Goh told him that this would be "a total misappraisal of British skills",[210] cautioning the British would never agree to separation. He pointed out that the British believed the MCA would sooner or later lose the leadership of the Chinese to the PAP and were already "backing PAP to the hilt as a co-partner in governing Malaysia". If a PAP–Umno coalition were in place, the British knew that there would be no risk of Malaysia joining Indonesia, with the consequent loss of their military bases in the Federation. Goh insisted that the negotiations must therefore be kept from the Federation's expatriate civil servants and be presented as a *fait accompli* to the British who would otherwise obstruct them if they knew. As an act of courtesy, Head could be informed at 9.30 am, half an hour before the introduction of the Independence Bill, Goh suggested. He also urged that the Bill be introduced on 9 August 1965, when Parliament reconvened, with all three readings to take place on that date.

A bemused Razak accepted Goh's suggestions, remarking that "perhaps PAP tactics were the best". To avoid any security leakage, Ismail said that his civil servants should not be brought in to work on the constitutional amendments needed to effect Singapore's separation. Goh replied that Barker, Singapore's Minister for Law, would draft a Separation Agreement for their consideration.[211]

The next day, when Goh met at the golf course Ghazali Shafie, the Secretary-General at the Malaysian Ministry of External Affairs, he received confirmation that the Tunku was indeed "fed-up … and quite willing to chuck us out".[212] Ghazali said he had a message from the Tunku: "If no way to avoid communal trouble can be found, return Singapore to Lee Kuan Yew." Ghazali, however, attributed the Tunku's message to his "depressed state of mind" during his hospitalisation.[213]

As Razak wanted proof of Lee's agreement to secession, Goh felt it prudent to request a written undertaking from Lee. This was given on 26 July, with Lee authorising Goh to discuss with federal ministers "any proposal for any constitutional re-arrangements of Malaysia", provided the matter could be carried out in the shortest possible time with the minimum risk of leakage; in the event of leakage, Goh was to deny "any allegation of any agreement on his part".[214] By now, Goh "was pretty sure that Razak was in favour and that this thing was on". But Goh had another, more tactical, reason for extracting the letter of authorisation from Lee. "I also wanted Lee to commit himself: Look, if this is on, there's no backing away."[215] Lee later put it this way: "[H]e feared I would balk at separation."[216]

Soon after Goh reported on his meeting of 15 July, Lee asked Barker to draft the Separation Agreement and limit the number of persons who needed to know.[217] To prevent any leak, Barker did all the research himself,[218] and told no one, not even his wife. He could not even entrust the drafting to the State Advocate-General, Ahmad Ibrahim, who would normally be the "best man" to do the job. As he put it: "It's not that we didn't trust the man; we did. But the State Advocate-General[219] does not type, he's got a secretary, and it gets through the office, no more a secret. For that same reason, I did not dictate to my secretary."[220] Enlisting only the help of his next-door neighbour in City Hall — trusted Cabinet Secretary Wong Chooi Sen, who took dictation and served as his typist — Barker completed the first draft of the Agreement in "three or four days" and circulated it to Lee, Goh, and Stanley Stewart, Head of the Singapore Civil Service.[221]

Lee approved the drafts for submission to Razak after amending them with the help of his wife, Kwa Geok Choo, a conveyance lawyer. He asked her to include Singapore's water agreements with Johor, upon which Singapore depended for its water supply.[222] Kwa recalled Lee showing her a draft before they left Singapore for their holiday in the Cameron Highlands and asking her to run through it. "I knew what it was all about. I knew that there had been talks about pulling apart, and getting some other arrangement. I am not sure that I would have known the details of the arrangement, what was actually planned. But when I saw this, of course I must have understood what it meant."[223] The whole process of circulating, amending and finalising the draft Agreement took about 10 days.[224]

Meanwhile, holidaying in France,[225] the Tunku received Razak's reply of 22 July that the senior Malaysian ministers had agreed to separation.[226] Razak also reported ominously that his talk with Lee on 29 June "did not get very far" and that it was clear that Lee "will continue with his campaign against us, or as what he calls a crusade against a feudal Malay-dominated Alliance Party".[227] Writing back on 25 July, the Tunku instructed Razak to proceed with his negotiations with Goh and Barker on the terms of the Separation Agreement. He expressed concern that the troubles with Singapore "might cause misunderstanding among the non-Malays" and spoke of the need to "convince the Chinese … particularly in Malaya, that when Singapore is out of Malaysia, they can live in peace and harmony and friendship with the Malays".[228] Razak replied by cable that he would be convening Parliament on 9 August to go through the readings of a bill to amend the constitution on a certificate of urgency.[229]

When Goh called on Razak (who was on a four-day visit to Singapore)[230] at Federation House

on 26 July, he brought along the letter from Lee authorising him to negotiate with Razak, but did not use it. He found Razak depressed and having misgivings about hiving off, which Goh attributed to his "dithering" disposition.[231] "In a way he's like Hamlet," Goh reckoned. "Having decided to do something then he'll think it over and think of all the possible snags."

Razak was doubtful, for instance, about whether the Independence Bill could be arranged for 9 August, as various interested parties like the Sultans had to be consulted. Nor was he confident Umno's support for the Bill could be taken for granted. He was also worried about the consequences of an independent Singapore. What if Singapore entered into a deal with China? Would not independence for Singapore be construed as a resounding victory for Sukarno? Why not a partial disengagement instead, he wondered? To stiffen Razak's resolve, Goh said he found it necessary, from time to time, to "apply psychological pressure" on him:

> **I told him we are willing to have it any way he liked, even going on as at present. Our position is strengthened day by day. With support of Commonwealth countries, we see a bright political future. This depressed him even further and he said that there is no other solution than a complete hiving off. …**
>
> **I stressed the need for early decisive action before our commitment to [the Malaysian] Solidarity Committee becomes irretrievable. He agreed that early action is necessary, then harped on his various misgivings on the whole scheme.**[232]

By their next meeting on 3 August, Razak, having received the Tunku's go-ahead, wanted to "go through with the exercise as quickly as possible". He was less reticent and came straight to the point: the Tunku was agreeable, subject to certain conditions, mainly pertaining to defence issues, which Goh interpreted as Kuala Lumpur's wish to limit the size of Singapore's defence forces and have a voice in controlling them.[233] Goh played along and said that Singapore could not afford an extensive military force anyway, which pleased Razak. Goh was clear in his mind that his role as a negotiator was to "get the Malay leaders into a mood in which they will accept [a] Separation Agreement with the minimum fuss and bother". He was therefore anxious to avoid a discussion on defence as this "might get the whole thing unstuck".[234] Goh showed Razak the draft Agreement, which Razak carefully scrutinised and asked for some revisions.[235]

Goh proposed that he and Barker return with a new draft on 6 August so that they could settle things by 7 August, sign the Agreement on 8 August, and Parliament pass the constitutional amendments on 9 August. Razak said that he wanted his own Attorney General to examine the drafts. There was still the tricky problem of informing the chief ministers of the various states of the Federation, including Sabah and Sarawak. Ismail suggested using the pretext of a home welcoming party for the Tunku to summon them all to Kuala Lumpur. Goh insisted that signatures to the Agreement must first be secured before anybody was informed.[236]

Meanwhile, Lee had left Singapore for meetings with party members in Malacca and Seremban and to take part in a PAP rally in Kuala Lumpur on 1 August.[237] After the rally,

he drove to Cameron Highlands for a week's holiday with his family[238] — and to wait for the call from Goh, indicating that they should meet in Kuala Lumpur. "I did not want Head to suspect that I was back in Kuala Lumpur and up to something," Lee wrote.[239] As Kwa remarked: "[W]hen we went up to Cameron Highlands, I knew things were coming to the boil. My husband was there playing golf … [and] we went down to the village sometimes together. … But one day in the evening, he had a phone call. … And we were expecting the phone call."[240] Goh had earlier arranged with Lee that "if it looks as if the thing is going to succeed, I'll phone him and tell him to come down to KL".[241]

Goh had called Lee earlier in Cameron Highlands after Goh had returned to Singapore from Kuala Lumpur on 3 August. Calling from Barker's office in City Hall and speaking in Mandarin to prevent the Malaysian telephone operators from eavesdropping, Goh told Lee that the Tunku had agreed to Singapore's separation from Malaysia.[242] Goh and Barker then spent the afternoon working on the revisions requested by the Malaysians.[243] Goh said decades later that he knew by this point that "separation was on" — or as he put it, it was "a won game", using a chess term.[244]

The Tunku returned on 5 August, his plane touching down at 3.50am in Singapore — 12 hours late because of engine trouble which had necessitated an emergency landing at Karachi airport.[245] The next day, 6 August, he met his senior ministers in Kuala Lumpur and agreed on the inevitability of separation.[246]

By then, Goh and Barker had also returned to the Malaysian capital for their scheduled meeting with Razak. While Goh took the night train to Kuala Lumpur on 5 August, Barker flew in on the morning of 6 August.[247] Leaving Cameron Highlands by car the previous evening, Lee had also quietly slipped into Kuala Lumpur, while his wife and children stayed behind in Cameron Highlands — "so people would see them and think I was still there", Lee said in his memoirs.[248] Or as Kwa put it: "I was there just as a camouflage. As far as the world knew … he was on holiday in Cameron Highlands. So when they asked me, 'where's your husband?' [I would say] 'He's … on the golf course.' … [W]hether you are on the golf course or not, cannot be proved, because it's a big rambling place."[249]

All three — Lee, Goh and Barker — met at Temasek House where Lee studied and approved Barker's latest draft. They agreed that they would hide Lee's presence in Kuala Lumpur from the Malaysians and maintain the ruse that he was still on holiday in Cameron Highlands. "[I]f the Prime Minister was in Kuala Lumpur, they would have asked him to come that night," Barker thought.

Barker's biographer, Susan Sim, suggested that this was part of the Singapore team's negotiating strategy. By leaving the impression that Lee was still in Cameron Highlands, there would be no need for him to be involved in the negotiations. "Lee's presence would have changed the personal dynamics, the Malaysian animus towards him being such that they were likely to harden positions as soon as he objected to anything," she argued.[250]

Each side might also have wished to have its "advance party" negotiate separation, with "the two Prime Ministers in the know but keeping far away", suggested Barker. "It was after the documents were signed that they came into the picture." Lee reckoned that Goh and

Barker "probably felt it was better to keep up the air that having signed it, they would have to present it to me. … So there could not be any watering down of the Agreement". Lee would not have agreed, for instance, to the clause on the water agreements being removed from the Separation Agreement.[251]

Goh and Barker proceeded to Razak's office at 4 pm, where the draft agreement was read carefully by Razak, Ismail and Kadir Yusof, the Attorney-General. They expressed satisfaction. Barker recalled that Razak felt the British ought to be informed, but was dissuaded by both Ismail and Barker, who told him: "Tun, you do not realise what they are capable of."[252] Goh, however, remembered it was Ismail who wanted to inform Head. "And we told him, 'For Heaven's sake, do no such thing.'"[253] As absolute secrecy was paramount, the Malaysians were advised to call their printers to work in the government printing office on Sunday, 8 August, lock them in until Monday morning, and cut off all means of communication. Singapore would do likewise.[254]

After the afternoon meeting, they adjourned to Sri Taman, Razak's Lake Gardens home, where they were joined by MCA president Tan Siew Sin and MIC president VT Sambanthan. Tan insisted on a clause to release Malaysia from liabilities and obligations entered into by Singapore while in Malaysia. Goh also secured their agreement to provide for both countries to cooperate in economic matters. After he phoned Lee to get his agreement, Barker drafted both clauses.[255]

Goh was so relieved that "the thing had been buttoned up" that he began "sweating profusely although we were in an air-conditioned room". As he put it: "Felt like a prisoner condemned to death and had a last-minute reprieve. Such were my feelings." Also "greatly relieved" was Razak, who "passed round drinks to celebrate the occasion". When he found Goh perspiring, he offered him a shirt. "A sports shirt, which I still keep with me today," Goh noted. "Very high quality, British-made sports shirt."[256]

As Razak's typist, not accustomed to legal documents, made too many mistakes, Barker contacted Wong Chooi Sen, the Cabinet Secretary. He arrived with a typewriter and Teo Ban Hock, Lee's personal assistant, who typed the documents. The Singaporean and Malaysian leaders "drank till past midnight" as they waited for the documents to be ready. According to Barker, they all got drunk while waiting. None of them, including Goh, bothered to read the documents before they signed. Fortunately, Teo had not made a single typographical error, as Barker found to his relief when he read the documents later.

Razak was the first to sign, followed by Ismail, Tan and Sambanthan. Barker remembered that he was the only one sober enough to want to read the documents before he signed — only for Razak to chide him: "Eddie, it's your draft, it's your chap who typed the final document, so what are you reading it for?" So Barker stopped reading and signed — "sign *buta*" or blindly, he said decades later.[257]

Razak still had a nagging concern, confiding to Barker: "As an old friend, Eddie, will you assure me that Harry will sign?" Barker reassured him: "Of course he will sign. I assure you that he will sign."[258] As it was already past midnight, the papers were dated 7 August. Goh and Barker returned to Temasek House where the documents were handed to Lee, who complimented Barker for pulling off a "bloodless coup".[259] But for the Prime Minister, his troubles had just

begun, Goh commented — "because he had to convince other colleagues to go along with it". "Well, that was his job, not mine."[260]

Lee wanted all his ministers to sign. "[O]therwise there would have been a complete split in the PAP government," he explained. "Rajaratnam, Toh and Ong would have spearheaded a 'stay-on-at-all-costs' faction."[261] He knew he had a difficult task convincing them. While he might be able to persuade them to accept a "re-arrangement which did not take us permanently out of Malaysian politics", Lee reckoned that Separation was different: Rajaratnam had already spoken "very strongly even against a temporary withdrawal, which he thought would become permanent".[262]

Lee went to work immediately. He telephoned Toh and Rajaratnam separately, asking them to get to Kuala Lumpur urgently, even though it was after midnight. Rajaratnam remembered Lee saying that it was "highly secret, nobody must know". Putting two and two together, he suspected it was some kind of re-arrangement but "didn't imagine for one moment that it would be Separation".[263] Lee did not want Rajaratnam and Toh to come up together, to prevent them from "exchanging notes" on what the emergency meeting was about.[264]

Toh was surprised that Lee called from Kuala Lumpur, thinking that he was still vacationing in Cameron Highlands. Toh arrived by car early in the morning of 7 August. As he came in through the front door, Barker, thinking it best to avoid him, left by the back door to catch his flight to Singapore.

The news shocked Toh, who tried to gather his thoughts as he sat in the living room. Shortly after, Rajaratnam arrived in a car driven by Othman Wok. Told by Lee that it was "really the end of the road", Rajaratnam was visibly upset. Goh joined them and they sat down to talk. Both Rajaratnam and Toh did not want to sign. "So PM went through the whole argument all over again, which, as I said, I didn't see it that way, nor did Toh," remembered Rajaratnam.[265] Both were quite prepared to resist Separation.

Would Singapore still have separated from Malaysia if both Toh and Rajaratnam had refused to sign the Agreement? Barker surmised that if "they didn't sign, they'd have to leave the Singapore Cabinet".[266] Rajaratnam, however, felt that if the majority had agreed to Separation, Toh and he would have formed the "dissenting minority". "But our PAP style has always been, with very rare exceptions … always a consensus," he said. "Even where we disagree, we just keep at it until there is a general [consensus], especially [among] the top senior leadership."[267]

Around noon, Lee drove to Tunku's Residency. He waited for some 30 to 40 minutes while the Malaysian premier conferred with a few of his senior ministers. Lee tried to convince the Tunku there were other ways to reduce communal tensions, like a looser federation or a confederation. Lee believed that even at that late stage, had the Tunku agreed to a confederation, "we could have easily altered the Agreement". All it would have needed was "another two or three paragraphs" that Lee and Barker could have drafted. "We could have broken first and then re-confederated with defence and foreign affairs settled by committee," Lee believed.[268]

But the Tunku's mind was made up. "There is no other way … you go your way, we go our own way," the Malaysian premier told him. "Tomorrow, when you are no longer in Malaysia

and we are no longer quarrelling either in Parliament or in the constituencies, we'll be friends again."[269] Interviewed by former Malaysian minister and journalist Abdullah Ahmad many years later as to why he did not entertain Lee's plea for a looser federation, the Tunku said:

> **If I had agreed to what he wanted, he would be a good boy for a while. Then he would go back to his old ways of trying to create ill will between the Malays and the Chinese through the Malaysian Malaysia campaign. I thought for a long time, you know, and I was in close touch with Razak, that the best way was to go on our separate ways but remain good friends. I simply could no longer work with nor trust Lee Kuan Yew.**[270]

The Tunku recalled he had never wanted Singapore in Malaysia in the first place.

> **I gave him [Lee] independence when he wanted so much to be called prime minister. You know fully well no one country can have two prime ministers. But I allowed it for two years because I never intended to keep Singapore anyway.**[271] **…**
>
> **In actual fact, I wanted only Sarawak and North Borneo [now Sabah] at the time. But the British made a condition that if I wanted Sarawak and North Borneo, I must also have Singapore as well, because we would be the influence that could keep Singapore from the communist menace. I said that that was all right; if that was their condition, I would take Singapore in.**[272]

Lee returned to Temasek House to report his discussion with the Tunku. He drew Othman Wok aside and asked if he would sign. As a Malay, he would again become a member of a minority. Othman assured Lee he would sign. Making no progress with Toh and Rajaratnam, Lee asked: "Well, would you accept if you heard it from the Tunku himself?"[273] They said yes. So Lee returned to the Residency to urge the Tunku to see Toh and Rajaratnam.

The Tunku told Lee emphatically that he did not want to see them. Lee asked if he would at least write to them. The Tunku wrote a brief letter to Toh on the spot and in his own handwriting. Underscoring there was absolutely no alternative, he wrote:

> **If I were strong enough and able to exercise complete control of the situation, I might perhaps have delayed action, but I am not, and so while I am able to counsel tolerance and patience, I think the amicable settlement of our differences in this way is the only possible way out.**

Returning to Temasek House, Lee gave the Tunku's letter to Toh and told him that, as he did not want to split the PAP leadership and sow confusion among its followers, he would not

proceed with Separation if Toh did not accept it. But Toh and Rajaratnam would have to take responsibility if racial clashes broke out.[274]

Persuaded by the Tunku's strong hint of trouble leading to bloodshed, both Toh and Rajaratnam signed reluctantly. Recalled Rajaratnam: "[W]e realised we could be responsible for loss of lives and worse."[275] With Toh's help, Lee then broke the news to an equally shocked Minister for Education Ong Pang Boon that afternoon. Ong had been in Kuala Lumpur to help set up PAP branches. He was "extremely upset, very reluctant", recalled Lee. But seeing that Toh and Rajaratnam had affixed their signatures, he eventually signed as well. Lee told him: "Well, there was no other way, otherwise they would not have signed."[276]

The next day, Sunday, 8 August, Lee met the Tunku early in the morning. Lee had prepared a document summarising the points the two premiers had agreed between them during their meetings on 7 August.[277] Still worried about last-minute leaks and of the parliamentary process being "jammed up" at either the Dewan Rakyat or the Dewan Negara (Senate), Lee and the Tunku agreed that the constitutional amendments should be carried "with expedition" through all three readings in the Federal Parliament on the same day. Lee told the Tunku that no PAP MP would attend the sitting in the Dewan Rakyat.[278] The premiers had also agreed that in the event of a need for troops to contain any disorder in the Geylang Serai area, the Malaysian Government would respond immediately with multi-racial troops like the Reconnaissance Regiment.[279] Finally, even though the two proclamations of Singapore's independence — one signed by Lee and the other by the Tunku — would be issued in Singapore and simultaneously announced in the Federal Parliament, at 10 am on 9 August, Separation would have taken effect at midnight on 9 August. "In other words, although it was published from 10 o'clock, in fact from 0001 minutes after midnight, we were on our own," Lee noted.[280]

Lee then flew in a Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) plane to Singapore,[281] where he had arranged for the remaining three ministers — Lim Kim San, Jek Yeun Thong and Yong Nyuk Lin — who had not been in Kuala Lumpur, to meet him at Sri Temasek to sign the documents. Yong had rung Barker to ask why they were being summoned to Sri Temasek. "Well, we've separated," Barker deadpanned.[282] Meanwhile, Toh, Rajaratnam and Ong fanned out to the various states in Malaysia to explain to PAP branches why Separation could not be avoided.[283]

By late afternoon, Lee had one of the two sets of the signed Separation Agreement sent back to Kuala Lumpur by a special RMAF aircraft sent to Singapore for this purpose.[284] The other copy was sent to the Singapore Government printer whose staff were locked and held incommunicado until the document as well as the Proclamation were ready to be issued as a special government gazette at 10 am on 9 August.[285]

While Lee sent encoded messages explaining Separation to the prime ministers of the UK, Australia and New Zealand (to reach them only after Separation had taken place), the Tunku informed his ministers and Mentri Besars about the constitutional amendments to be introduced the next morning. He did this only after the signed agreement was safely back in Kuala Lumpur. By 4 pm, all the rulers were informed.[286] The Tunku also instructed Malaysian MPs to be present in Parliament at 9.30 am the next morning for a special announcement. When the news eventually

leaked to Head,[287] the stunned British High Commissioner made a last-ditch effort to persuade Malaysian leaders to postpone Separation for 24 hours — to no avail.[288]

At 9 am the next morning, Monday, 9 August, Head made another attempt to stop Separation, conveying a message to the Tunku from the British premier, Harold Wilson. It was too late, the Tunku told him.[289]

At 9.30 am, Alliance MPs who had been summoned to Parliament were told the news and asked to vote for the Bill. A few minutes after 10 am, the Tunku informed the Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) of his "painful and heartbreaking" decision to separate Singapore from Malaysia and moved The Constitution and Malaysia (Singapore Amendment) Bill 1965 on a certificate of urgency. It was given its first, second and third readings immediately and passed with 126 votes to nil with one abstention.[290] Seventeen, including Albar, were absent. A few hours later, the Dewan Negara (Senate) approved the Bill unanimously.

In his address, the Tunku said he could not find "any way out" to resolve differences between Singapore and Malaysia: "It appeared that as soon as one issue was resolved, another cropped up. Where a patch was made here, a tear appeared elsewhere, and where one hole was plugged, other leaks appeared. So it does seem completely impossible to arrive at a solution." Of the two courses of action open to him, Separation was preferable to repression, he said, adding:

> **There has also been an inclination on the part of some countries to look upon the Prime Minister of Singapore as an equal partner in the Government of Malaysia and to encourage him indirectly to assert his authority, and this has made the situation rather awkward for us. In a nation there can only be one national executive head. The illustration which I saw in one of the British papers depicting a cartoon of Lee Kuan Yew and myself over the map of Malaysia and with the caption "too many cooks" is to the point. This is a situation which we must avoid. There can only be one Prime Minister for the nation, and so the best course we can take is to allow Lee Kuan Yew to be the Prime Minister of independent Singapore in the full sense of the word which otherwise he would not.**[291]

In Singapore, at 10 am, the Government Gazette containing the two proclamations — one signed by Lee and the other, by the Tunku — was issued together with other Separation documents. News announcers interrupted radio programmes to read out the Proclamation of Singapore that concluded with: "Singapore shall be forever a sovereign democratic and independent nation, founded upon the principles of liberty and justice and ever seeking the welfare and happiness of her people in a more just and equal society."[292]

Indeed, when Singapore proclaimed Independence at 10 am on 9 August, the Malaysian Parliament had not yet passed the Bill allowing Singapore to separate. "[W]e were going to proclaim Independence whether they did it or not," Barker explained. "But in the circumstances, they kept to their promise."[293] Lee briefed senior civil servants and, just before 10 am, informed

diplomats who could be assembled at short notice. Around noon, he left for Caldecott Hill to give his press conference, which was televised at 4.30 pm. A visibly distraught Lee recounted the sequence of events that led to the final break. Choking with emotion, he said: "Every time we look back on this moment when we signed this Agreement which severed Singapore from Malaysia, it will be a moment of anguish. For me, it is a moment of anguish because all my life … the whole of my adult life … I have believed in Merger and the unity of these two territories. … You know, it's a people, connected by geography, economics and ties of kinship. …" Lee wept. "Would you mind if we stop for a while?" he asked.[294]

For the PAP leaders, the break-up was heart-rending. Separation was not only "an admission of defeat"[295] and the "collapse of a vision"[296] but it also meant abandoning their comrades in the MSC who had rallied loyally behind their call to fight for a Malaysian Malaysia. "[M]orally, I think we let them down," Lee reflected.[297]

Lee felt a deep sense of responsibility, particularly for putting Devan Nair, the sole remaining PAP member in the Malaysian Parliament, in a predicament. "Devan is like that spaceman walking out in space," Lee confided to his wife,[298] alluding to Cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov, who had become the first man to do a space walk on 18 March 1965. As Nair was to recall: "[Lee] was distraught, did not sleep for quite a few nights, so much so that his doctors and his wife were very deeply concerned."[299] Mrs Lee remembered her husband being "tense", "distressed", "distraught" and "very, very upset".[300] She added: "That is the nearest I have seen him to being near a nervous breakdown." When Nair came to see Lee, Kwa beseeched him to tell her husband that Lee was "not responsible for your staying behind in Kuala Lumpur". "Look, you've got to convince Kuan Yew that you are staying on in Kuala Lumpur of your own volition," she implored. "It is not his fault."

Indeed, Nair's decision to remain behind in Malaysia was his alone, and not that of the Singapore leadership, let alone Lee's. Nair felt he had to remain behind to lead what was left of the PAP in Malaysia because it was a matter of honour for him to "go through [his] full term", having been elected by his constituents.[301] As Nair's son, Janadas Devan, noted: "It took another two-and-a-half years for Mr Lee to persuade him to return to Singapore. … He was the last among Singapore's leadership of that time to accept that Separation was irreversible."[302] For Nair, Separation was a "terrible … psychological blow". "Although Kuan Yew and company had accepted the collapse of a Malaysian Malaysia as an ideal, I did not accept it," he said. "I personally carried on in Malaysia for the same ideal." He eventually returned to Singapore in 1969 as he realised that the ideal was in shreds. "Like Humpty Dumpty, the pieces could never be put back together."[303]

Conclusion

In retrospect, an off-the-cuff remark from Goh Keng Swee at his meeting with Razak on 15 July had, within a little less than four weeks, set in motion what eventually became a constitutional coup — "an agreement to separate"[304] or a "negotiated separation", as Barker used to say — one

that was to cast Singapore forever adrift in uncharted waters as a sovereign democratic and independent nation. What was also remarkable was that the negotiation — and signing — of the agreement was first carried out by lieutenants on both sides, with the two prime ministers meeting face-to-face only on 7 August, two days before Separation. As Lee put it: "The Tunku did not speak to me, I did not speak to him. … [H]e got Razak to speak to Goh and it was settled between them. And I did not know for sure that Razak carried the Tunku. And Razak probably wasn't quite sure that Goh carried me or would carry me."[305]

In his oral history interview in 1982, Barker stated he had "no regrets" over Separation. He had "no second thoughts" and there was "no going back". "We were determined to get out," he asserted. Goh too believed that Separation was the "best thing that ever happened. We couldn't have prospered under Malaysia."[306] Rajaratnam, who had argued strenuously for keeping Singapore in Malaysia, felt "chastened" decades later that, after believing for "years and years" that Singapore could not work without Malaysia, he was proven wrong and an independent Singapore in fact worked "better than if we had been in Malaysia".[307] It was fortunate that the Malaysians were "just as determined that we should go", Barker reflected. Separation, in this sense, was a mutually agreed decision. "It was not a question of them kicking us out, it was an agreement to separate."[308]

Indeed, as Razak clarified, Singapore was not "ejected". The entire Singapore Cabinet had signed the Separation Agreement, he pointed out.[309] Tan Siew Sin added that the very fact that every Singapore Minister signed the Agreement and played his part by maintaining the veil of secrecy until the very last moment showed that they were as anxious as Malaysian leaders that the Separation should go through without a hitch and with the least possible delay.[310]

For the Malaysians, Merger, too, had been a "mistake".[311] As the Tunku put it: "We are human beings. I say if you marry a pretty girl and don't get on well with her, you've got to divorce her."[312] He added: "We had pledged to form Malaysia with Singapore, but having given it a trial, we found that if we persisted in going on with it, in the long run there would be more trouble to Malaysia than Singapore is worth to us."[313] As Toh had noted earlier in February 1965, Razak, on his part, "now realised that Singapore could not be taken in like one of the states of Malaya" as, over the years, "political positions … [had become] more or less solidified" between the two territories.[314] And as Lee reported at the same time, Ismail too now seemed "convinced that the present constitution could not go on" because of the two Chinese groups — the PAP and the MCA — competing for Chinese support in Singapore and the Federation — a development that was "bound to be trouble" as the MCA would be forced "to be more chauvinist to compete with the PAP", Lee noted.[315]

If Merger had been a mistake, Separation need not be construed negatively, Razak reckoned:

> **Let us not regard the Separation of Singapore from Malaysia as a divorce of two unhappily married people who, after being divorced, indulge in recriminations, and fight for the maximum alimony or compensation for their own support. Let us regard the Separation as similar to the separation of Siamese twins**

— the separation of two children, born together as one body in the womb of Malaysia, by an operation for their own good. You will find in every case of the separation of Siamese twins, there remains a mental bond between them, after their physical separation. They are still brother and sister, or still sister and sister and have an instinctive bond which is thicker and deeper than the skin which originally joined them together. This is how I like to think of Singapore because although there have been differences, there is still a bond that unites us in our differences, and there is no reason whatever why we should not walk forward firmly together towards the future and progress in harmony like separated twins.[316]

But if Separation, indeed, freed Singapore to pursue its own ideals and destiny as an independent state, it also exposed the fledging and resource-poor state to the new politics of survival. Singapore leaders had gone to great lengths to argue, prior to Merger, that an independent Singapore could not survive, either economically or politically. Now, ironically, they had to embark on the difficult task of proving themselves wrong. As Rajaratnam put it: "[We] had convinced ourselves that an independent Singapore is not viable. That was not a device just to have Merger. But I think it was a genuine basic belief. So now we had to prove that what we believed in, is not necessarily so."[317]

Survive, Singapore did. Better than that, the infant republic transformed itself, within the span of a single generation, "From Third World to First", as Lee was to title the second volume of his memoirs.[318] "We disproved that an independent Singapore cannot work," echoed Rajaratnam. "We disproved that Merger was the only solution for Singapore." In retrospect, the former Minister for Culture reckoned that it was Merger that had been the "wrong solution".[319]

Still, in 1965 it was not obvious that Separation was inevitable — or even the right solution. "We came close to getting one country, two systems before we stumbled on Separation," noted Janadas Devan.[320] The trajectory of Singapore's history would have been very different had the Malaysian and Singapore leaders not agreed to go their separate ways. But fortunately, they did — and Singapore has never looked back since. Ⓐ

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ENDNOTES

1 Matthew Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961–1965: Britain, the United States, Indonesia and the Creation of Malaysia* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 126, 196–198, 209.

2 Telegram no. 5, Moore (United Kingdom Deputy Commissioner, Singapore) to Sandys (Secretary of State for the Colonies), 3 January 1963, DO 169/19, cited in Albert Lau, *A Moment of Anguish: Singapore in Malaysia and the Politics of Disengagement* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998), p. 24.

3 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 47.

4 Ibid, p. 41.

5 *The Malay Mail*, 20 September 1963.

6 *The Straits Times*, "Defeat in S'pore shocks Tengku", 23 September 1963. See also *The Straits Times*, "Tengku in Singapore calls for unity", 28 September 1963.

7 Speech by Lee Kuan Yew to Malaysian students at Malaysia Hall in London, 10 September 1964, A1838/280 no. 3024/2/1 Part 13.

8 *Malayan Times*, 30 September 1963.

9 *The Straits Times*, "Togetherness — by the Tengku", 1 October 1963.

10 Head (United Kingdom High Commissioner, Kuala Lumpur) to Bottomley (Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations), "Malaysia: will it succeed and how long will we stay?", 21 July 1965, PREM 13/430.

11 *The Straits Times*, "We'll be loyal opposition in Parliament: Lee", 31 October 1963.

12 Lee Kuan Yew, *The Singapore Story: Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore: Times Edition, 1998)*, pp. 525-538.

13 Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and US-Indonesian relations, 1960-1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

14 *The Straits Times*, "Lee's mission is put off", 14 March 1964.

15 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 540.

16 Lee Kuan Yew, oral history excerpt, p. 388.

17 Ibid.

18 Speech by Lee Kuan Yew at a valedictory dinner on 22 August 1981 at the Istana, printed in *Petir* (March 1982), p. 7.

19 Roderick Pestana, "PAP to contest", *The Straits Times*, 2 March 1964.

20 *The Straits Times*, "Present Umno leadership vital to our survival: Lee", 16 March 1964.

21 *Malayan Times*, 21 March 1964.

22 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 546.

23 Ibid., p. 542.

24 Lee, oral history excerpt, pp. 388–389.

25 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, pp. 546–547.

26 Telegram no. 992, Bell (American Consulate, Singapore) to Department of State, 26 April 1964, RG 59 Box 2454.

27 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 547.

28 Head to Bottomley (Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations), "Malaysia: the first year", 15 October 1964, PREM 13/428.

29 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 389.

30 *The Straits Times*, "Singapore-Malaysia relations rocky due to 'basic differences'", 16 September 1998.

31 Head to Bottomley, "Malaysia: the first year", 15 October 1964, PREM 13/428.

32 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 389.

33 Ibid, p. 390.

34 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, pp. 552–553.

35 Ibid, p. 554.

36 Transcript from tape recording of speech by Syed Jaffar Albar at the Malay convention at New Star Cinema, Pasir Panjang, Singapore, on Sunday, 12 July 1964, cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 148.

37 Lapsley to Chiefs of Staff Committee, "The Internal Security threat to Malaya and Singapore from Indonesia", 8 October 1964, COS 273/64, DEFE 5/154. John Hugh Lapsley was then Secretary of the UK Chief of Staff's Committee, and Director, Defence Operations Staff.

38 See "Speech by Dato Syed Esa Almenoar, The Singapore Umno Secretary General, on the Padang, on 21 July 1964", in Memorandum Submitted by the Government of Singapore to the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in Singapore in 1964 (March 1965), cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 163.

39 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 163.

40 Ibid, p. 162.

41 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, pp. 557–558.

42 Ibid, p. 565.

43 Ibid, pp. 551–569.

44 *The Straits Times*, "Appeal for Calm", 22 July 1964.

45 Devan Nair, oral history excerpt, p. 465.

46 Othman Wok, *Never In My Wildest Dreams* (Singapore: Raffles, 2000), pp. 176–182.

47 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 559.

48 Ibid.

49 Lee gave a briefing to foreign correspondents in Singapore on the third night of the riots (23 July 1964), where he blamed the communal violence on Umno "machinations" (Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, pp. 173-4, citing Telegram no. 237, New Zealand High Commission (Singapore) to Department of External Affairs, 22 July 1964, A1838/280 no. 3024/2/1 Part 12).

50 Airgram no. 60, American Consulate (Singapore) to Department of State, 27 August 1964, RG 59 Box 2457 Pol 23-81/1/64; cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 180.

51 *Merdeka*, 24 July 1964.

52 Telegram no. 51, American Consulate (Singapore) to Department of State, 27 July 1964, RG 59 Box 2456.

53 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 563.

54 Memorandum no. 1082, W B Pritchett (Australian High Commission, Singapore) to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 29 July 1964, A1838/280 no. 3024/2/1 Part 13; cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 180.

55 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 563.

56 Goh Keng Swee, oral history excerpt, p. 343.

57 Adapted from Melanie Chew, *Leaders of Singapore* (Singapore: Resource Press, 1996), p. 146.

58 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 345.

59 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 182.

60 Goh apparently briefed the Australian Deputy High Commissioner based in Singapore, William Pritchett, on his conversations with Razak. See Telegram no. 520, Australian High Commission (Singapore) to Department of External Affairs, 29 July 1964, A1838/280 no. 3024/2/1 Part 12, cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 183.

61 Goh Keng Swee, "Note on Meetings with Tun Razak and others in Kuala Lumpur on 28th and 29th July, 1964", n.d., Albatross Document 2.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid; Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, pp. 182–183; Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 568.

64 Goh, Albatross Document 2.

65 Goh apparently made this comment to Australian Deputy High Commissioner William Pritchett, while briefing him on his conversations with Razak. See Telegram no. 520, Australian High Commission (Singapore) to Department of External Affairs, 29 July 1964, A1838/280 no. 3024/2/1 Part 12, cited in Lau, *Moment of Anguish*, p. 183.

66 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 344.

67 Goh, Albatross Document 2.

68 Ibid.

69 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 345.

70 Head had indeed written to the British Commonwealth Relations Secretary, Duncan Sandys, on 22 July 1964 urging him to leverage Britain's military aid to Malaysia during *Konfrontasi* and try to press the Tunku for a more inclusive government. See Telegram no. 1301, Head to Sandys, 22 July 1964, PREM 11/4909, cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 193.

71 Goh, Albatross Document 2.

72 Ibid.

73 The meeting was reported by the Australian High Commission (Kuala Lumpur) to Canberra in three cables on 2 and 3 August 1964; see Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 184. Goh Keng Swee and Lee Kuan Yew did not discuss this meeting in their oral history interviews.

74 Edwin Lee, Singapore: *The Unexpected Nation* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008), p. 255.

75 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 345.

76 Telegram no. 1362, British High Commission (Kuala Lumpur) to Commonwealth Relations Office, 3 August 1964, PREM 11/4909.

77 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 194.

78 *The Straits Times*, "The Tengku speaks to his people", 21 August 1964.

79 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 195.

80 *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 September 1964.

81 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 198.

82 Ibid, p. 199.

83 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 342.

84 Ibid, p. 341.

85 Ibid, p. 342.

86 Ibid.

87 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 290.

88 According to Lee, "their explanation was they forgot to tell Khir Johari". While it was possible that senior Malaysian ministers were "not as systematic as we are", Lee discounted their explanation. Both the Tunku and Khir hailed from Kedah and were "very close", Lee said. "As long as Khir's duty was to win over the Singapore Malays, he must fire these salvos at us and make us appear as oppressors of the Malays in Singapore and not as friends, not as co-citizens who want to help them" (Lee Kuan Yew, oral history excerpt, p. 398).

89 *The Straits Times*, "Shake-up in PAP 'to get at Malaya' says Toh", 2 November 1964.

90 The payroll tax, for instance, would undermine efforts to create new employment and make it very difficult for unions to obtain better conditions from employers "because every additional dollar paid to the workers will carry a two per cent tax"; the turnover tax, on the other hand, was "inherently a multiple stage commodity tax" which had a snowballing effect that would result in the consumer paying "not only the profit margin at each stage but also the snowballed cumulative tax" (*The Straits Times*, "Minister speaks at 'illegal' rally", 15 December 1964).

91 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 579.

92 *The Straits Times*, "Lee: We can't be intimidated", 5 December 1964.

93 *The Straits Times*, "Minister speaks at 'illegal' rally", 15 December 1964.

94 *The Straits Times*, "PAP has made politics of tax proposals: Tan", 21 December 1964.

95 The Straits Times, "Tengku calls for sane thinking and planning in Singapore", 10 December 1964.

96 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 580.

97 *The Straits Times*, "Protest rally NOT illegal: Goh", 16 December 1964. Goh was addressing the Budget debate for the first time.

98 Tan Siok Sun, *Goh Keng Swee: A Portrait* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2007), p. 116.

99 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 391.

100 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, pp. 581–582; 584

101 Ibid, p. 582.

102 Lee Kuan Yew, "Possible constitutional re-arrangements", Memorandum from Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, n.d., Albatross Document 3.

103 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 400.

104 Both Nasser and Ben Bella had conveyed their good wishes to Lee through Razak, who had returned from a 16-day tour of Africa on 1 December 1964, ostensibly to counter Indonesian propaganda about Malaysia. As Lee put it: "In conveying this to me he [Razak] subconsciously acknowledged that he knew, and we knew, the strong position we are in" (Lee, Albatross Document 3).

105 The Albatross file contains two versions of this draft memorandum for the Tunku. The first draft, titled "Constitutional re-arrangements in Malaysia" and dated 25 January 1965 (Document 4) shows Goh Keng Swee's handwritten annotations. The version Lee delivered to the Tunku was likely to be the one he sent to the Singapore Cabinet for discussion on 27 January 1965, and was titled "Draft Memorandum for Tunku: Constitutional re-arrangements in Malaysia" (Document 5).

106 Lee Kuan Yew, "Draft Memorandum for Tunku: Constitutional re-arrangements in Malaysia", 27 January 1965, Albatross Document 5.

107 Lee, The *Singapore Story*, p. 584; Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 298.

108 S Rajaratnam, "Comments from the Minister for Culture on PM's Memorandum", n.d., Albatross Document 6. Lee surmised that Rajaratnam's undated note was probably written in January 1965 in response to his request for comments on his memorandum (Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 415).

109 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 302.

110 S Rajaratnam, "Comments from the Minister for Culture on PM's Memorandum", n.d., Albatross Document 6.

111 Ibid.

112 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 301.

113 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 584.

114 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 392.

115 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 584.

116 Lee Kuan Yew, "Notes on Meeting with Tunku and Dr Ismail on 31 January 1965 at the Residency, from 8.25 to 11.45 pm", 6 February 1965, Albatross Document 7.

117 Lee Kuan Yew, "Meeting with Dato Ismail on 1 February 1965 at his office, 12 to 12.25 pm", 6 February 1965, Albatross Document 8.

118 Lee, Albatross Document 7.

119 Toh Chin Chye, "Notes of a Meeting with Tun Razak on 9 February 1965", Note from Deputy Prime Minister Toh Chin Chye, 10 February 1965, Albatross Document 9.

120 Lee, Albatross Document 7.

121 Toh, Albatross Document 9.

122 Lee Kuan Yew, Note from Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew on the possibility of Umno continuing in Singapore after constitutional re-arrangements, 11 February 1965, Albatross Document 10.

123 Ibid.

124 Fenner had told Lee that he had advised Ismail against the plan as he believed that the Central Government must be in charge of the police and Special Branch. While Lee surmised that Fenner probably believed that the PAP leaders were "willing to stand up to the Communists and fight them", he suspected the Inspector-General had to consider the possibility that, if the PAP lost in Singapore, then the police and Special Branch apparatus would fall into the hands of a Barisan Sosialis government (Lee, oral history excerpt, pp. 417–418).

125 Ibid, p. 412.

126 Head to Garner (Permanent Under-secretary of State), n.d. (January 1964), PREM 13/429.

127 Memorandum, "Malaysia", in Misc. 36/2 Meeting, 16 February 1965, CAB 130/225.

128 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 413.

129 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, pp. 220-221; Lee Kuan Yew, "Report of meeting between Lee Kuan Yew, Toh Chin Chye, Lim Kim San and Tunku on 15 February 1965 between 10.10 am to 10.45 am", 15 February 1965, Albatross Document 11; Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 587.

130 Lee Kuan Yew, "Meeting with Dato Ismail at his Ministry on 23 February 1965 — 12.00 to 12.35 pm", 25 February 1965, Albatross Document 14; Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 588.

131 Lee Kuan Yew, "Note of a meeting with Lord Head at Temasek [House], Kuala Lumpur on 24 February 1965 — 3.45 to 3.55 pm", 25 February 1965, Albatross Document 17.

132 Lee, Albatross Document 11.

133 Ibid; Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 225.

134 Ibid.

135 Lee, Albatross Document 14.

136 Lee, Albatross Document 11.

137 Lee Kuan Yew, "Meeting with Lord Head, British High Commissioner; Tom Critchley, Australian High Commissioner; Robert Wade, New Zealand High Commissioner; and MK Kidwai, Indian High Commissioner", 5 March 1965, Albatross Document 18.

138 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 227.

139 Lee Kuan Yew, Note from Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew on his meeting in Kuala Lumpur with Tunku on 23 February 1965; and subsequent meetings with Inspector General of Police Claude Fenner, and Australian High Commissioner Thomas Critchley and his deputy William Pritchett, on 24 February 1965, 25 February 1965, Albatross Document 16.

140 Telegram no. 360, Head to Commonwealth Relations Office, 23 February 1965, PREM 13/430; cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 227.

141 Lee, Albatross Document 18.

142 Lee was on a month-long official visit to New Zealand and Australia. He hoped to gauge their attitudes towards supporting Malaysia during Konfrontasi and to urge them to remain committed to Malaysia's defence. See "Transcript of a Press Conference by the Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, at TV Singapura Studios on 5th March, 1965, at 10.30 am", National Archives of Singapore.

143 Ibid.

144 Goh Keng Swee, "Constitutional Re-Arrangements", 9 March 1965, Albatross Document 19.

145 In his margin notes on the document recorded on 27 January 1996, Lee said he had "no hand in preparing the paper" and was unsure whether it was "even discussed at all in Cabinet".

146 Lee, Albatross Document 16.

147 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 602.

148 Ibid, p. 604.

149 Ibid, pp. 602–603.

150 Sonny Yap, Richard Lim and Leong Weng Kam, *Men In White: The Untold Story of Singapore's Ruling Political Party* (Singapore: Singapore Press Holdings, 2009), p. 289.

151 Padmana Krishnan, "Keep calm, says Tengku", *The Sunday Times*, 16 May 1965; Lee, *The Singapore Story*, pp. 607–608.

152 Malaysia Parliamentary Debates, Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) Official Report, 26 May 1965, Col. 84.

153 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 296.

154 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 613.

155 Edwin Lee, *Singapore: The Unexpected Nation*, p. 260.

156 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 296.

157 Malaysia Parliamentary Debates, Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) Official Report, 3 June 1965, Col. 1000.

158 Cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, pp. 250–251.

159 Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, *Looking Back: Monday Musings and Memories* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1977), p. 120.

160 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 613.

161 Ibid., p. 621.

162 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 350.

163 Ibid.

164 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 254.

165 Devan Nair, oral history excerpt, p. 469.

166 Cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 251.

167 Felix Abisheganaden, "Let's talk it over: Tengku", *The Straits Times*, 12 June 1965.

168 *The Straits Times*, "We accept, says Lee", 14 June 1965.

169 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 625.

170 Tunku, *Looking Back*, p. 123.

171 *The Straits Times*, "Tengku: It was my idea...", 10 August 1965.

172 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 625.

173 *The Straits Times*, "The day Lee tried to get the PAP into the Alliance", 28 July 1966.

174 Tunku, *Looking Back*, p. 123.

175 *The Straits Times*, "The day Lee tried to get the PAP into the Alliance", 28 July 1966.

176 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 626.

177 Lee, oral history excerpt, pp. 444–445.

178 Ibid, pp. 447–448, 462. Cambodia supported the formation of Malaysia in the United Nations Committee of 17. Also, in September 1962, Lee paid a three-day official visit to Cambodia as a guest of its head of state, Prince Sihanouk. Lee, in turn, hosted the Prince during his visit to Singapore on 17 December 1962. In Singapore, Sihanouk spoke warmly of the important part played by Lee in promoting closer relations between their two states. Cambodia was one of the first countries to recognise Singapore's independence in 1965. See *The Straits Times*, "Sihanouk: The future for S.E. Asia lies in closer co-operation", 18 December 1962; *The Straits Times*, "Recognition by 8 countries", 12 August 1965.

179 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 446.

180 Ibid, p. 442.

181 *The Straits Times*, "Perils of 'detain move' — by Dr Toh", 9 July 1965. The press conference was held ostensibly to explain the Singapore Government's stand on the expulsion of freelance journalist Alex Josey for allegedly interfering in the internal politics of Malaysia.

182 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 442.

183 Lim Kim San arrived in London with Minister of Home Affairs Ismail Abdul Rahman and Minister for Sarawak Affairs, Temengong Jugah. See *The Straits Times*, "'Use force in Rhodesia' says Kaunda", 23 June 1965.

184 Asad-ul Iqbal Latif, *Lim Kim San: A Builder of Singapore* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), p. 130.

185 *The Sunday Times*, "June 29 — The day of decision", 15 August 1965.

186 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 629; Asad Latif, *Lim Kim San*, p. 131.

187 Lim Kim San, oral history excerpt, p. 274.

188 Lee Siew Yee, "Tengku's illness: It's shingles", *The Straits Times*, 24 June 1965; *The Straits Times*, "Tengku's wife to join him in London", 26 June 1965; Patrick Keith, *Ousted!* (Singapore: Media Masters, 2005), p. 164.

189 Tunku, *Looking Back*, p. 122.

190 *The Straits Times*, "Tengku: It was my idea...", 10 August 1965.

191 *The Sunday Times*, "June 29 — The day of decision", 15 August 1965.

192 Tunku, *Looking Back*, p. 122.

193 *The Straits Times*, "Tengku: It was my idea...", 10 August 1965.

194 Tunku, *Looking Back*, p. 123. Ismail was then in London as part of the Malaysian delegation.

195 "June 29 — The day of decision", *The Sunday Times*, 15 August 1965. The "seniors" were Ismail, Tan Siew Sin, and VT Sambanthan.

196 Goh had been recuperating at the spa town of Bad Kissingen in Germany after being treated for a liver condition. After seven weeks, Goh discharged himself as he was anxious to return to Singapore. See Tan, *Goh Keng Swee*, p. 117.

197 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 347; Telegram no. 1795, Australian High Commission (Kuala Lumpur) to Department of External Affairs, 16 August 1965, A6364/4, cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, pp. 257-8; Savingram no. 40, Critchley to Canberra, 24 August 1965, in Moreen Dee, ed. *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia 1961-1966* (Barton, A.C.T.: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2005), pp. 497–498.

198 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 347; Tunku, *Looking Back*, p. 123. Goh's disenchantment with Malaysia stemmed mainly from the lack of progress on the common market as a result of Tan Siew Sin's efforts to block Singapore's economic growth (Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 600).

199 Tunku, *Looking Back*, p. 123. An excerpt of Razak's report of 22 July 1965 is included in the Tunku's book.

200 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 629.

201 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 432.

202 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 633; Susan Sim, *EW Barker: The People's Minister* (Singapore: Straits Times Press, 2016), pp. 164–165.

203 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 351. See also Tan, *Goh Keng Swee*, p. 118.

204 Sim, *EW Barker*, pp. 165–166.

205 Lim, oral history excerpt, p. 267.

206 EW Barker, oral history excerpt, pp. 377–378.

207 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 336.

208 Ibid, pp. 349–350.

209 Goh surmised that this was because Razak was convinced that Lee intended to capture power in the centre. Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 349.

210 Ibid, p. 352. Goh had good reason to be worried. As he explained in his oral history interview, earlier efforts by Singapore and Kuala Lumpur to negotiate some kind of constitutional re-arrangements between December 1964 and February 1965 were "stymied by Lord Head who wanted none of it". This was why when Goh discussed the negotiations with Lee and Barker, both of them, especially Lee, impressed on Goh that "the British must, under no circumstances, have the slightest suspicion of what was going on". "But the Malaysians, you see, did not understand this."

211 Goh Keng Swee's handwritten note on his meeting with Acting Malaysian Prime Minister, Tun Razak, and Minister of Home Affairs Minister Ismail Abdul Rahman on 20 July 1965, at Razak's office in Kuala Lumpur, 1105 to 1155h, n.d., Albatross Document 20.

212 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 351.

213 Goh, Albatross Document 20.

214 Lee Kuan Yew, Letter of authorisation for Goh Keng Swee, 26 July 1965, Albatross Document 21.

215 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 358.

216 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 633.

217 Barker, oral history excerpt, pp. 368–369.

218 Using the law library of the University of Singapore, Barker found a legal precedent in the break-up of the West Indies Federation (Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 369).

219 Barker gave the wrong title — Attorney-General — in his oral history interview. Ahmad Ibrahim was Singapore's first State Advocate-General from 1959 to 1965. He was appointed Singapore's first Attorney-General after Separation.

220 Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 375.

221 Ibid, p. 373; Sim, *EW Barker*, p. 162. Another person subsequently added was George Bogaars, Head of Special Branch, as Lee wanted his assessment of an independent Singapore's ability to contain any threat from the communists (Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 632).

222 Lee, *The Singapore Story,* p. 632.

223 Kwa Geok Choo, oral history excerpt, p. 477.

224 Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 369.

225 The Tunku was treated at The London Clinic between 24 June and 4 July. Discharged on 5 July, he spent another four weeks convalescing — two weeks in London before leaving on 20 July for a holiday in the French Alpine city of Aix-les-Bains after recovering from his illness. He left France and arrived in Vienna on 30 July for a short private visit. After being away from home for 55 days, the longest absence since he took office in 1955, the Tunku arrived in Singapore on 5 August 1965. See *The Straits Times*, "Tengku leaves clinic today", 5 July 1965; "Tengku returning on Aug. 4, says 'Merdeka'", 17 July 1965; "Fit and cheerful...", 24 July 1965; "Tengku in Vienna", 1 August 1965; and "Tengku plane drama", 5 August 1965.

226 *The Sunday Times*, "June 29 — The day of decision", 15 August 1965.

227 Tunku, *Looking Back*, p. 123.

228 Ibid, p. 124.

229 *The Sunday Times*, "June 29 — The day of decision", 15 August 1965.

230 Razak visited Singapore between 24 and 27 July during which he officiated at a wreath-laying ceremony at the Lim Bo Seng Memorial to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the death of the Malayan war hero, inspected troops of the 2nd Malaysian Infantry Regiment at Camp Temasek before they left for a tour of service in Sarawak, toured the three southern islands — Pulau Ayer Melimau, Pulau Bukom Kechil and Pulau Brani — and addressed the Foreign Correspondents Association of Southeast Asia. See *The Straits Times*, "Why no rural aid for S'pore...", 26 July 1965; and *The Straits Times*, "Razak asks foreign press: Give a balanced account", 27 July 1965.

231 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 354.

232 Ibid, p. 353.

233 The Malaysians wanted: (a) Singapore to make an adequate military contribution to their joint defence and enter into a defence agreement with Malaysia; and (b) no treaty to be entered into that would contravene the objectives of that agreement. They wanted the defence agreement to set out the strength of Singapore's military forces which would be under a joint military command for operational purposes and Kuala Lumpur would help to train them. Ismail also wanted Malaysian embassies and high commissions around the world to conduct Singapore's external relations. The demands led Goh to opine that Razak "really doesn't understand that independent states are independent". See Goh Keng Swee, "Meeting — 3 August 1965, Razak's office, 1120 to 1220h", n.d., Albatross Document 23; Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 355.

234 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 361.

235 Razak wanted the points on the defence agreement and external treaty to be incorporated into the new draft. See Goh, Albatross Document 23.

236 Ibid.

237 *The Straits Times*, "PAP conference to debate move to arrest Lee", 31 July 1965.

238 *The Straits Times*, "Lee on holiday", 4 August 1965.

239 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 636.

240 Kwa, oral history excerpt, p. 478.

241 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 360.

242 Goh, Albatross Document 23. In his memoirs, however, Lee recorded that Goh phoned him from Temasek House (in Kuala Lumpur). See Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 638.

243 Sim, *EW Barker*, p. 162.

244 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 360; Tan, *Goh Keng Swee*, p. 121.

245 Felix Abisheganaden and Soh Tiang Keng, "Foreign policy shift hint by Tengku", *The Straits Times*, 6 August 1965.

246 *The Sunday Times*, "June 29 — The day of decision", 15 August 1965.

247 Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 369. Barker recalled meeting WB Pritchett, the Australian Deputy High Commissioner in Singapore, on the plane. When Pritchett asked him why he was going to Kuala Lumpur, Barker told him that it was for the sitting of Parliament on 9 August and produced the order paper for the day to convince him.

248 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 638.

249 Kwa, oral history excerpt, p. 480.

250 Sim, *EW Barker*, p. 167.

251 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 440.

252 Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 370.

253 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 363.

254 Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 370.

255 These were articles 8 and 6 respectively. See Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 370; Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 638.

256 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 361. For Goh, the exercise ended on 3 August.

257 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, pp. 638–639.

258 Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 371.

259 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 639. In Lee's reckoning, had the British found out, they might have acquiesced to extra-constitutional measures to neutralise the PAP in order to stop Separation.

260 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 361.

261 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 416.

262 Ibid.

263 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 306.

264 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 260; Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 640.

265 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 307.

266 Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 374.

267 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 308.

268 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 441.

269 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 640.

270 Abdullah Ahmad, *Conversations with Tunku Abdul Rahman* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International, 2016), p. 103.

271 Ibid, p. 99.

272 Ibid, p. 101.

273 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 307.

274 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 643.

275 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 262.

276 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 438.

277 Ibid, p. 448. The document was titled "Summary of Points Agreed Between the Prime Minister, Malaysia, and the Prime Minister, Singapore".

278 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 448. Lee told the Tunku that no PAP MP would attend to vote on the bills, as it would have been "too painful" for them to face the other MSC leaders who were left behind. He had instructed the PAP MPs who were not ministers, and therefore unaware of the purpose, to also stay away. Lee, however, could not assure the Tunku that the Barisan Sosialis members would not attend as they could not be brought into his confidence. In the event, Devan Nair — the sole PAP MP to have been elected to the Malaysian Parliament from a seat in Malaya — did attend Parliament and spoke. See also Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 645.

279 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 449. Sending a multi-racial force was crucial, Lee said, because if they had sent the Malay Regiment down, there would have been "more trouble".

280 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 448.

281 Ibid, p. 438. The Tunku had arranged for a small military plane to fly Lee to Singapore as Lee did not want to take a commercial flight to avoid running into any British, Australian or New Zealand diplomats. The Singapore premier had arranged for his family to come down by road from the Cameron Highlands to Kuala Lumpur on the afternoon of Saturday, 7 August. They left by car for Singapore early next morning. Arriving late in the afternoon, they were housed at Sri Temasek for security reasons. "We would be safe there if any Umno Malays in Singapore should riot when the news broke the next morning." See Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 645.

282 Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 375.

283 Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 262.

284 John Drysdale, *Singapore: Struggle for Success* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1984), p. 393.

285 Lee, *The Singapore Story*, p. 645.

286 Leslie Fong, "The week before separation", *The Straits Times*, 9 August 1990.

287 Head came to know about the decision after a federal cabinet minister asked him at about 7.30 pm what he thought of the latest decision, and that if he did not know, then the minister must not tell him. Head "got it out of him" and immediately rushed to the Tunku's house. Not finding him there, Head searched for him and finally found him at a party in a penthouse with Razak, Tan and Ismail. See Telegram no. 1340, Head to Commonwealth Relations Office, 8 August 1965, PREM 13/589, cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 263.

288 Telegram no. 1340, Head to Commonwealth Relations Office, 8 August 1965, PREM 13/589, cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 263.

289 Telegram no. 2021, Commonwealth Relations Office to British High Commission (Kuala Lumpur), 8 August 1965, PREM 13/589, cited in Lau, *A Moment of Anguish*, p. 263.

290 Umno Secretary-General Syed Jaffar Albar revealed that he was about to enter the chamber to criticise the Bill when he was stopped by Ismail, who warned him that if he spoke against Separation, there was a risk that both Sabah and Sarawak would follow Singapore out of the Federation. As it turned out, Albar spoke only briefly during the debate to ask Devan Nair if he wanted a sovereign and independent Singapore after the Member for Bangsar argued that, despite the 'ejection' of Singapore, the "logic" which sustained the people of Singapore and all in Malaysia who believed in the "ultimate emergence of a Malaysian Malaysia" would not be defeated. Albar subsequently absented himself from the vote, making it possible for the decision for Separation to be unanimously made. See Malaysia Parliamentary Debates, Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) Official Report, 9 August 1965, Col. 1479; Interview with Syed Jaffar Albar, cited in Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation: Political Unification in the Malaysia Region 1945-65, 2nd Edition* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1976), p. 212.

291 *The Straits Times*, "A dream shattered...now a parting of the ways", 10 August 1965. Asked many years later if he would have accepted Lee into the Alliance or PAP as a coalition partner "if he [Lee] had agreed to call himself chief minister instead of prime minister" or "if Singapore had agreed to be a state in the federation, like Penang or Malacca", the Tunku replied: "Yes. But that was up to him. But he and I couldn't be prime ministers simultaneously. As I said, there couldn't be two prime ministers in a nation. That was impossible." See Abdullah, *Conversations with Tunku Abdul Rahman,* p. 93.

292 Yap, Lim and Leong, *Men In White*, p. 301.

293 Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 382.

294 "Transcript of a Press Conference given by the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, at Broadcasting House, Singapore, at 1200 hours on Monday, 9 August 1965", National Archives of Singapore.

295 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 439.

296 Nair, oral history excerpt, p. 469.

297 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 439.

298 Kwa, oral history excerpt, p. 481.

299 Nair, oral history excerpt, p. 469.

300 Kwa, oral history excerpt, pp. 481–482.

301 Nair, oral history excerpt, p. 470; Yap, Lim, and Leong, *Men In White*, p. 303. The PAP in Malaysia became the Democratic Action Party (DAP), with Nair as its first Secretary-General.

302 Janadas Devan, text of a speech delivered at the Institute of Policy Studies' Singapore Perspectives, 26 January 2015.

303 Nair, oral history excerpt, p. 470.

304 Barker, oral history interview, p. 376.

305 Lee, oral history excerpt, p. 441.

306 Goh, oral history excerpt, p. 364.

307 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 309.

308 Barker, oral history excerpt, p. 376.

309 *The Straits Times*, "Razak denies 'ejection' of S'pore: Bill passed 126-0", 10 August 1965.

310 *The Straits Times,* "Tan: Break first considered eight months ago", 16 August 1965.

311 Toh, Albatross Document 9.

312 *The Straits Times*, "Tengku: It was my idea...", 10 August 1965.

313 *The Straits Times,* "A dream shattered ... now a parting of the ways", 10 August 1965.

314 Toh, Albatross Document 9.

315 Lee, Albatross Document 8.

316 *The Straits Times*, "Singapore separation like Siamese twins operation: Razak", 2 September 1965.

317 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 309.

318 This is the title of volume 2 of Lee's memoirs. See Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story 1965-2000* (Singapore: Times Edition, 2000).

319 Rajaratnam, oral history excerpt, p. 310.

320 Devan, text of a speech delivered at the Institute of Policy Studies' Singapore Perspectives, 2015.